

CIRCULAR TOURISM FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

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On behalf of the Competence Center for Sustainability of the Tirol Werbung



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1. CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN TOURISM

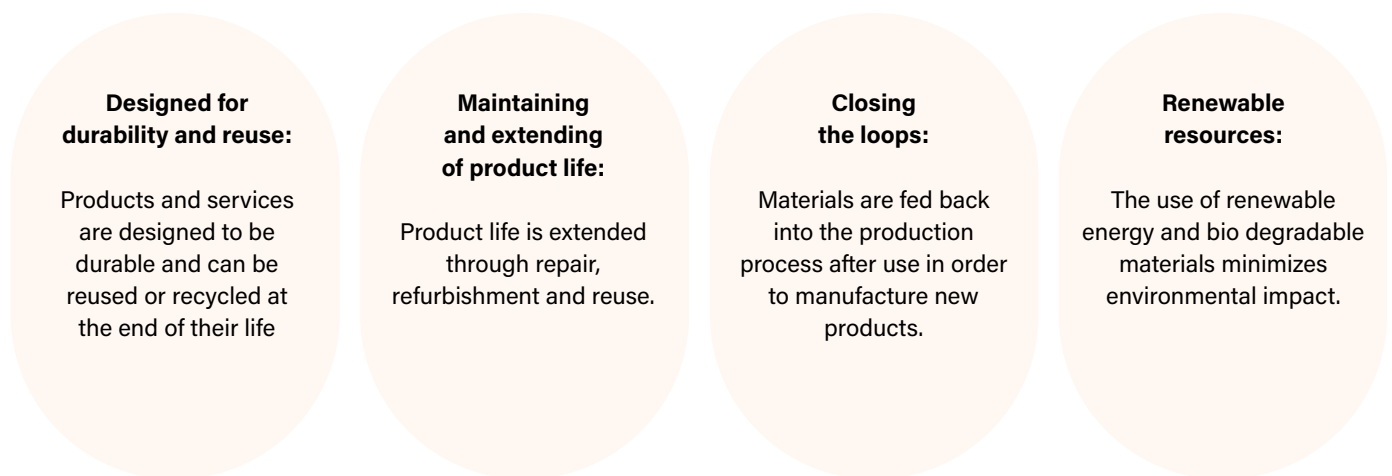
1.1 Background and meaning

The circular economy is an innovative and sustainable economic model that aims to minimise the consumption of finite resources and reduce waste by keeping materials and products in use as long as possible.

In contrast to the traditional linear economy, which is based on the principle of "take, make, dispose", the circular economy follows a regenerative approach, which is particularly relevant for the tourism sector.

The circular economy has the potential to reduce the global tourism footprint by 41% by 2030 compared to a business-as-usual scenario [Oppenheim et al., 2022].

Key aspects the Circular economy:



The 10 R's of the circular economy:

Intelligent production and use

- 1 REFUSE**
The product benefits are provided in a different way (avoid a purchase).
- 2 RETHINK**
Products are designed in an innovative and circular way, for example via the Sharing Economy.
- 3 REDUCE**
The production and use of the product becomes more efficient, using fewer resources and materials.

Product life extension

- 4 REUSE**
Functional products can be reused.
- 5 REPAIR**
Products are regularly repaired or and then reused.
- 6 REFURBISH**
Used products are kept 'up to date' through refurbishment.

7

REMANUFACTURE

Parts from pre-used products can be used for new products that fulfil the same function.

8

REPURPOSE

Parts from pre-used products can be used for new products that fulfil a different function.

Reuse materials

9

RECYCLE

Materials are processed to return them to the material cycle.

10

RECOVER

Materials are thermally recycled through energy recovery.

illustration 1: the 10R's the circular economy

Source: leaning to BMK (ojc), based on Potting et al. (2017)

Focus areas of the circular economy in tourism

1.1.1 Repair and refurbishment

Repair and refurbishment are essential components of the circular economy. They promote the longevity of products while minimising the consumption of resources and the generation of waste. In addition, renovation and repair work can boost the local economy by creating jobs.

Opportunities in tourism:

- Repairing cafés
- Regular maintenance of accommodation
- Renovation/refurbishment of buildings rather than demolition and new construction

1.1.2 Energy and resources

Through circular economy approaches such as recycling, repair or reuse of materials, resources and energy can be used consciously and consumption can be minimised (Martins et al., 2024).

Implementation in tourism:

- Use of renewable energy
- Energy efficient construction
- Efficient water and waste management
- E-mobility

1.1.3 Networking

Networking plays an essential role in the circular economy. Not only the exchange of knowledge, but also the sharing of knowledge and skills create synergies and thus space for innovation (Danvers et al., 2023).

Networking in tourism:

- Participation in regional information events through tourism associations
- Knowledge transfer through sponsored certificate courses
- Consultancy in the field of CSR

1.1.4 Sharing Economy

The sharing economy defines access to resources without ownership. Digital platforms allow users to use products and services for a certain period of time. The focus is on using unused capacity to promote sustainable consumption (Curtis & Lehner, 2019).

Examples of the sharing economy include:

- Car or bike sharing
- Room rental
- Ridesharing
- Equipment rental
- Libraries

1.1.5 Regionality and seasonality

Regionality and seasonality support sustainability by promoting short supply chains and resource-efficient use. A regional and seasonal approach not only uses less energy, but also reduces waste, which are essential characteristics of the circular economy (Klusch et al., 2023).

Examples of implementation in tourism:

- Travel regional
- Offer local food
- Support seasonal and natural activities
- Buying from local markets and farms

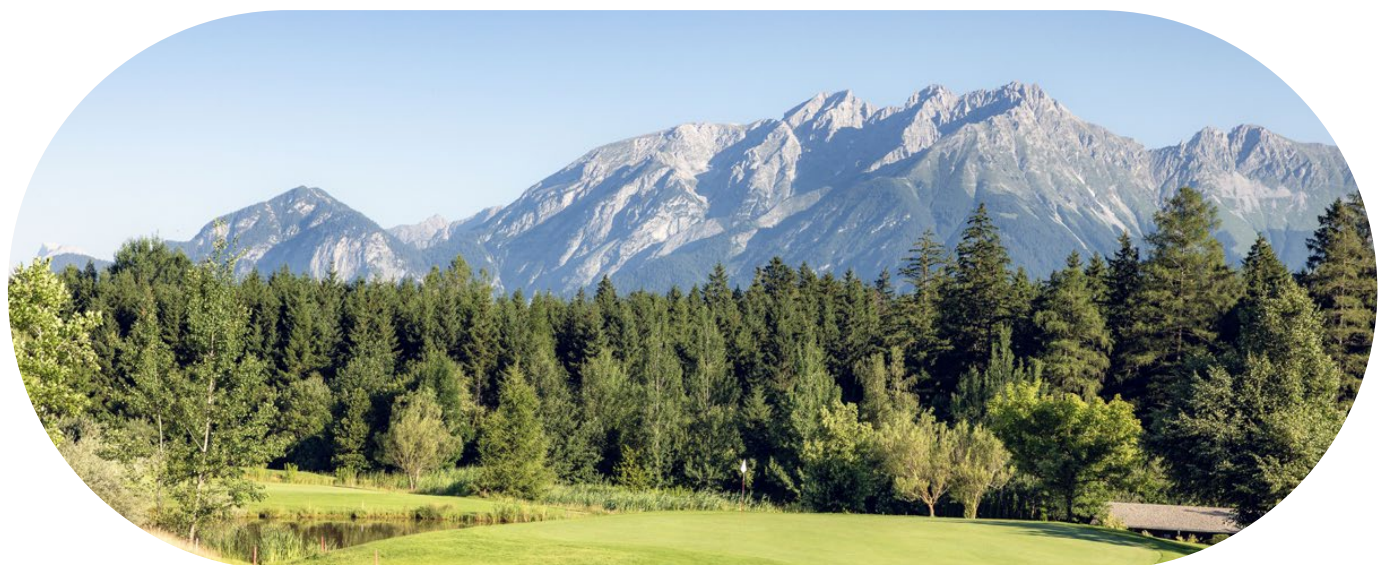
1.1.6 Funding and incentives

Funding supports the implementation of circular practices. It accelerates investment and promotes sustainable business practices. This not only reduces financial risk for businesses, but also strengthens competitive advantage through circular innovation (ICLEI, 2021).

Examples of different funding programmes are explained in more detail in section 3.3.

1.1.7 Sufficiency

Sufficiency is another fundamental issue related to the circular economy. The focus here is not on the efficient use of resources, but on conscious, constantly decreasing, consumption. It is important that the quality of life of individual consumers is not negatively affected (Bocken & Short, 2020).



1.1.8 Knowledge transfer

As the implementation of the circular economy in tourism is still in its infancy, it is crucial to promote knowledge transfer and awareness raising through a variety of measures. By sharing knowledge, all stakeholders can act together and benefit from a sustainable future.

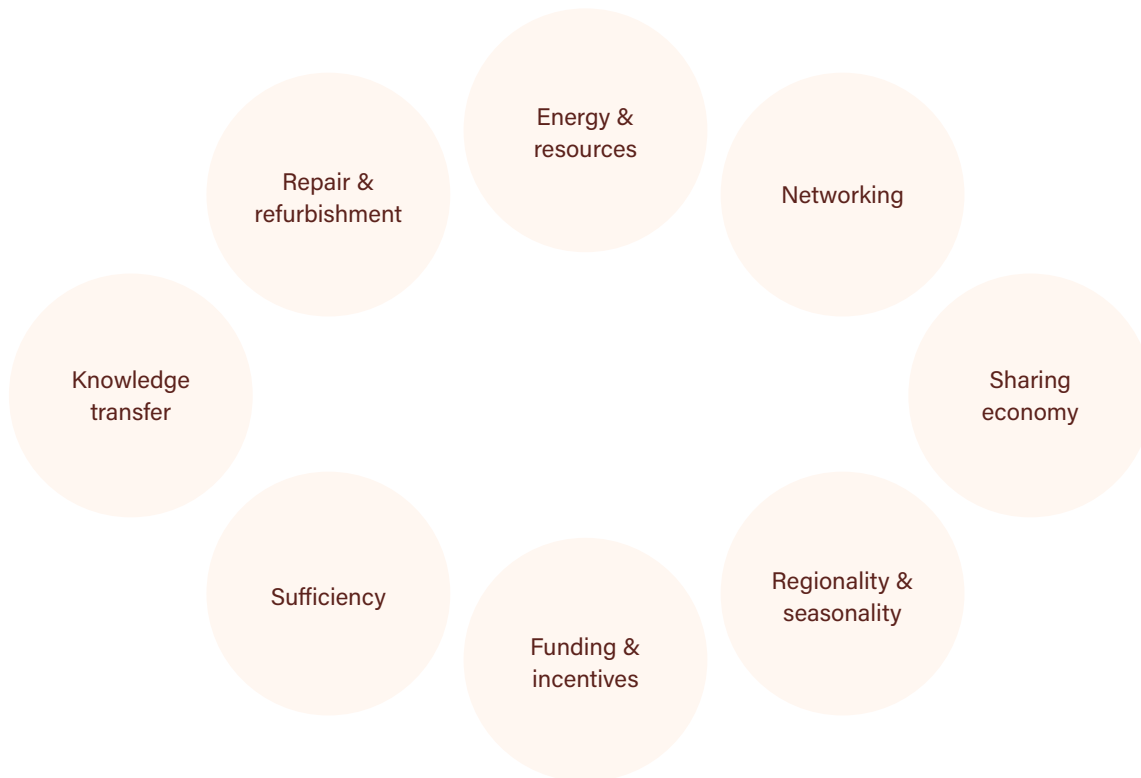


Figure 2: Focus areas of the circular economy in the tourism sector Source: own illustration

Evaluation of the Status-Quo

Austria and Tyrol, as leading tourism destinations, are facing the challenge of making tourism activities more sustainable. The importance of the circular economy in tourism lies in its ability to decouple economic activities from the consumption of finite resources, while at the same time contributing to climate neutrality.

Tourism faces a special situation: many tourism activities are directly dependent on intact nature, and natural services such as fresh air, snowy winters and stable summers are often the reason why guests from all over the world visit. The effects of climate change, such as storms, floods, mudslides or even lack of snow, have a direct impact on tourism and pose a threat to tourism infrastructure. At the same time, the tourism sector is an intensive consumer and user of resources and contributes to environmental degradation.

By implementing circular economy practices, tourism businesses can not only reduce their environmental impact, but also save costs, strengthen their position, develop new sources of income and continue to offer attractive nature-based experiences to their guests.

Tourism also has the potential to act as a multiplier between suppliers and consumers, further advancing the circular economy. Tourism businesses and destinations can act as laboratories for testing and developing circular economy technologies, products and business models. Practical examples include sharing economies such as car and bike sharing, as well as optimising water and energy efficiency in hotels, including circular procurement and structural aspects. In rebuilding and new construction, circular economy aspects are correspondingly important.

Such measures promote sustainability, create innovation and increase the attractiveness for environmentally conscious travellers.

The following pages describe the application of circular economy in the Austrian tourism sector.

1.2 Overview

The circular economy offers a range of incremental to radical potentials along the tourism value chain, from construction, renovation, building operation, equipment to gastronomy, spa and guest transport. Incremental potentials lie in small changes in daily operations, such as the handling of food waste; radical and thus higher revenue potential can be achieved through new business models.

The greatest leverage can be achieved through collaboration on common goals between businesses, along the tourism value chain and within destinations.

Value creation through circular business models

Circular business models create value by integrating the principles of the circular economy into business processes.

In the tourism sector, these models can take different forms:

Sharing economy

Car and bike sharing schemes in tourist areas reduce the need for private vehicles and promote the efficient use of resources.

Product-as-a-Service

Instead of selling products, services are offered that focus on use. One example is the rental of outdoor and sports equipment.

Take-back and recycling programs

Hotels and restaurants can implement programs to take back and recycle packaging and materials.

Circular supply chains

This means, for example, working with suppliers to ensure that materials and products are returned to the production cycle at the end of their life.

Driving innovation with circularity at their core

This category includes the development of new tourism offerings for guests, such as forest tours (as a counterpart to city tours), waste collection activities, tree planting or harvesting assistance.

Circular infrastructure

In refurbishment and new build projects, infrastructure (furniture, kitchen appliances) can be passed on or be refurbished.

These models not only contribute to sustainability, but also offer economic benefits through cost savings and the creation of new revenue streams.

Circular ecosystems as chance

Active cooperation and collaboration between actors in the value chain is the most important prerequisite for any successful circular economy initiative. With the aim of optimising the travel ecosystem, cooperation should therefore be the default relationship between tourism stakeholders, including public and private actors. The comprehensive and overarching tourism value chain offers numerous opportunities to use materials and products used to provide services longer, better and in a more circular way through collaboration.

Applying circular economy principles in tourism

The principles of the circular economy can be applied to different areas of tourism:

Accommodations

Hotels can become more sustainable through measures such as energy efficiency, water management and waste reduction. Examples include the [Boutiquehotel Stadthalle](#) in Vienna, which is believed to be the world's first zero-energy hotel.

Infrastructure

Hotels can extend the life of their furnishings and use refurbished furniture, as at [Hotel Sonnenhof Igls](#).

Gastronomy

Restaurants can use local and seasonal produce to minimise transport and support the local economy. The [Biohotel Retter](#) in Styria focuses on organic and regional food.

Mobility

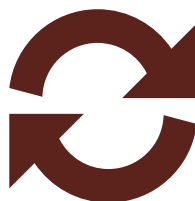
Tourism regions can promote sustainable mobility solutions, such as the [car-sharing programme in Werfenweng](#) or the [KlimaTicket Österreich](#), which makes public transport more attractive.

Leisure activities

Outdoor activities such as hiking and cycling can be promoted through sustainable infrastructure and services. Examples are the [winter hiking trails in Kartitsch](#) and the sustainable [hiking offers in Saalfelden Leogang](#).

Opportunities of the circular economy for tourism

The circular economy offers a wide range of opportunities for the tourism industry. Capital expenditure (CAPEX) can be reduced by optimising facilities and the upstream supply chain. At the same time, increased employee loyalty and satisfaction leads to lower operating costs, while the shared use of facilities and the circular economy creates additional revenue streams. Increased resilience through localised upstream supply chains, a stronger culture of innovation or an optimised risk profile and brand equity are other opportunities for industry through the circular economy.





1.3 Status quo of the circular economy in tourism in Austria and Tyrol

Tourism is an important economic factor in Austria and contributes significantly to the national value added. In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism in Austria had a turnover of around 30 billion euros and was responsible for around 7.3 % of gross domestic product (GDP) [Statistics Austria, 2019]. Tourism also plays an important role in Tyrol: almost 25,000 businesses and around 50,000 employees are directly dependent on it.

Despite the challenging conditions - in particular the massive increase of inflation — Tyrol recorded an increase in overnight stays and added value of € 2.4 billion in the summer of 2023, an increase of 1.9 % on the previous year. [Tirol Werbung, 2024]

Sustainability & recycling as a trend

Sustainability is becoming more and more important in tourism. Austria is a global leader in sustainable tourism and ranks third in the Sustainable Travel Index (Euromonitor, 2023). Initiatives such as the Austrian Eco-label and "Plan T" promote sustainable practices and the use of renewable energy, which has already reached 55 % in the industry. (Österreich Werbung, 2024)

Circular Economy in the "Tiroler Weg"

The circular economy is also an important theme in the "Tiroler Weg". This includes the promotion of repair and reuse initiatives, such as the establishment of repair cafés, as well as the implementation of business models in the tourism industry. By using regional resources, the aim is to create a sustainable economic cycle by using regional resources and reducing waste (Siller et al., 2021).

2. EXAMPLES AND POSSIBILITIES

The circular economy offers many opportunities in tourism to promote sustainable practices and reduce the environmental footprint. This chapter presents the key themes that offer innovative approaches to the implementation of circular models.

Mobility focuses on sustainable transport solutions, such as car and bike sharing, to minimise CO₂ emissions. Accommodation and host advertising can make a significant contribution to sustainability through energy efficiency measures and waste prevention.

Destinations and regions are developing regional economic cycles and educational initiatives to raise awareness of sustainable practices. Finally, outdoor brands and equipment are helping to reduce their environmental footprint through repair and reuse initiatives and the use of sustainable materials. These themes show how circular economy principles can be integrated into tourism to achieve both environmental and economic benefits.



2.1 Mobility

The challenge is that the use of means of transport such as aeroplanes or cars is associated with high CO₂ emissions and environmental pollution, and the travel component in tourism represents a significant ecological challenge right at the beginning of the tourism value chain.


This problem is exacerbated by the trend towards shorter, more frequent holidays and the growth of low-cost airlines. On a business-as-usual basis, mobility 2030 will account for 45% of emissions from the tourism sector. There is therefore significant potential for savings to reduce mobility emissions using circular economy levers (Oppenheim et al., 2022).




Here are some approaches:

- By **reducing the frequency and distance of travel** while increasing the **length of trips**, the mobility-related footprint of travel activities can be reduced. Longer trips can be made more attractive through incentives such as monthly discounts, and additional offers such as co-working/remote working or childcare can be strengthened. One example is the co-working concept of Mountain breakout in Tyrol.

mountain-breakout.at 

- Sustainable mobility solutions:** The Wilder Kaiser region offers a holistic concept of sustainable mobility — from easy accessibility to free local mobility and attractive discounts on public transport

wilderkaiser.info 

- **Energy-efficient infrastructure:** The Hintertuxer Glacier relies on **electric buses in the ski area**, to reduce CO₂ emissions. hintertuxergletscher.at 
- **Digital solutions** A tourist card with integrated public transport ticket and discounts for sustainable offers improves the efficiency and attractiveness of more sustainable mobility solutions. mayrhofen.at 
- **Nudging:** Building on a comprehensive mobility concept, the Seefeld region used the nudging campaign "Freifahrt ins Urlaubsglück" as an important incentive for guests to travel to and from the resort by public transport. austriatourism.com 

Practical applications

Public transport

The development and promotion of public transport is crucial. The use of zero-emission vehicles such as e-buses further enhances sustainability. The integration of digital solutions such as real-time tracking and mobile payment can make public transport more attractive.

Bike and car sharing

Promoting bike and car sharing programmes can reduce the need for individual vehicles. Municipalities and tourism associations can set up bike rental stations and car-sharing parking areas at strategic points to facilitate the use of these services.

Communication

Increased information and incentives ("nudging") will lead to increased use.







Regional/national guests

Focusing on the local target group with shorter travel distances can reduce CO₂ emissions.







Optimise length of stay

Developing attractive offers can lead to longer stays and avoid peak arrival and departure times.

National examples:

- 1 **KlimaTicket Österreich**
Nationwide annual ticket for public transport.
klimaticket.at 
- 2 **Alpine Pearls**
Network of 19 holiday resorts in the Alps with sustainable mobility concepts.
alpine-pearls.com 
- 3 **Ski resort Golm**
Concept to financially support sustainable travel to the ski resort.
golm.at 
- 4 **Werfenweng, Salzburg**
Implements a car-free holiday concept with e-mobility and a shuttle service that minimises environmental pollution.
werfenweng.eu 
- 5 **24/7 e-bike and e-scooter rental**
The Silberregion Karwendel guarantees that guests can use an e-bike or rent an e-scooter in the region seven days a week.
silberregion-karwendel.com 
- 6 **Tyrol's only underground railway**
It is the smallest, highest, air-cushioned subway in the world and is one of the highlights in Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis. It is an important part of the holiday region's car-free mobility concept.
serfaus-fiss-ladis.at 

International examples:

- 1 **Zermatt (Switzerland)**
car-free holiday resort with e-mobility
[zermatt.ch](https://www.zermatt.ch) 
and numerous more car-free places in the Switzerland
[myswitzerland.com](https://www.myswitzerland.com) 
- 2 **Nærøfjord (Norway)**
Emission-free electric ferries
[thefjords.no](https://www.thefjords.no) 
- 3 **Amsterdam (Netherlands)**
bicycle-friendly infrastructure and boat sharing
[iamsterdam.com](https://www.iamsterdam.com) 
- 4 **Pontevedra (Spain)**
car-free city centre with improved quality of life
[berliner-zeitung.de](https://www.berliner-zeitung.de) 
- 5 **Sixt Europe**
Car rental company Sixt is increasing the share of electric cars to 70–90 % by 2030
and invests around €50 million in its own charging logistics
[ecomento.de](https://www.ecomento.de) 

2.2 Accommodations and hospitality industry

Accommodation and the hospitality industry can make a significant contribution to sustainability by implementing circular practices. There are levers in several areas: the operation and organisation, the catering, the spa area (if available) and the building itself, including construction and renovation or modernisation.

Practical applications

Operations and management:

- **Waste prevention and recycling:** Avoid waste by introducing recycling and composting programmes and using reusable or compostable packaging. Close cooperation with suppliers and manufacturers is helpful when using reusable systems.
- The introduction of staff **training workshops** and **KPIs** helps to monitor the success of new initiatives.



Catering:

- **Regional procurement:** Hotels and restaurants can give preference to local suppliers to reduce transport and support the local economy. This can also improve the freshness and quality of the food on offer.
- **Food waste reduction:** Consumption-oriented use of goods, as well as resale or recycling, reduces food waste. Most catering kitchens waste an average of 26 % of the food they buy. In Austria, between 107 and 358 g of food is wasted per meal served. (United Nations Food Index Report 2021).

Collection of best practices and action guide to reduce food waste in the catering sector:

[circular.berlin](https://www.circular.berlin) 

Building, construction, renovation, and modernization:





- **Energy efficiency measures:** Hotels can reduce their use of fossil fuels by installing photovoltaic and solar systems, heat pumps and energy-efficient appliances. The use of smart home technologies can help monitor and optimise energy consumption.
- **Water management:** Implementing water-saving measures, such as water-efficient faucets (aerators) and toilets and using rainwater for garden irrigation and other non-potable uses.
- **Circular procurement:** By focusing on pre-owned (used, repaired, refurbished) inventory, resources can be saved. In addition, modular, easily repairable, and timeless furnishings save resources and are ecologically and economically sound in the long term.
- Use of B2B platforms such as the [noamol – Re-Use Network Tyrol](#)  or the [Circular Inventory](#)  for infrastructure projects.
- **Modular construction:** By using demountable and modifiable construction methods, built resources can be reused or simply redesigned at the end of the first life cycle.
- **Repair & renovation:** By reusing (building) materials and renovating instead of building new, cost-effective access to resources is ensured and the use of primary resources is reduced.

Communication & awareness-raising








- The development of **networks** can stimulate the exchange of experiences and ideas but can also lead to the creation of real platforms for exchange.
- Regular **communication and information** on efforts and initiatives (e.g. image films) are important to raise awareness and encourage imitation.
- **Training opportunities** should be complemented with specific courses/content on circular economy.

National examples:

- 1 **Boutiquehotel Stadthalle (Vienna)**
First zero-energy hotel the World with photovoltaics, solar system and rainwater harvesting
[hotelstadthalle.at](#) 
- 2 **Apenresort Schwarz (Tyrol)**
First certified accommodation for employees in a passive-house construction
[schwarz.at](#) 
- 3 **Naturhotel Waldklausen (Tyrol)**
Timber construction with energy self-sufficiency through biomass and solar energy
[waldklausen.at](#) 
- 4 **Hotel Retter (Styria)**
Organic hotel with circular economy and own Farmyard
[retter.at](#) 
- 5 **Biohotel Stanglwirt (Tyrol)**
Sustainable luxury resort with own organic farming and energy generation
[stanglwirt.com](#) 
- 6 **Hotel Schani (Vienna)**
Smart hotel with digital solutions to resource conservation
[schanihotels.com](#) 
- 7 **Hotel Stern (Tyrol)**
Shared infrastructure between locals and tourists
[hotelstern.at](#) 

- 8 **Circular Inventory**
B2B platform for infrastructure projects
noamol.at 
- 9 **Too good to go**
Platform for sharing food surpluses: Restaurants and hotels can offer leftover food and unused but intact food via app. The offers are found, bought and picked up by users. This can reduce the waste of resources in form of food and money.
toogoodtogo.com 
- 10 **MATR**
All-in-one circular mattress solution for hotels. Return of old mattresses, digital monitoring of the mattress, changing of covers. From standard to premium service, from monthly rental to direct purchase.
matr.eco 
- 11 **Agentur fundus**
Consulting services for the renovation and attractiveness of tourism establishments with an upcycling approach.
agentur-fundus.at 

International examples:

- 1 **Svart Hotel (Norway)**
First energy-plus hotel in the world to produce more energy than it consumes – expected to open in 2026
svart.no 
- 2 **Bardessono hotel (California, USA)**
LEED Platinum certified hotel with water saving and solar energy
bardessono.com 
- 3 **Whitepod Eco-Luxury hotel (Switzerland)**
Geodetic tents with minimal ecological footprint
whitepod.com 
- 4 **Soneva Fushi (Maldives)**
luxury resort with zero Waste program and own recycling plant
soneva.com 
- 5 **Winnow**
Based on a software, camera and weighing system, Winnow reduces food waste and supports catering kitchens in optimizing procurement, supply and processes. A 8-week pilot project in 7 Strathmore hotels in Great Britain led to a reduction in food waste by 36 % or 4.2 tons and 10,900 £ saving per year per hotel.
winnowsolutions.com 
- 6 **Six senses**
CE program "Earth Lab" with three areas: Self-sufficiency (energy from solar and biomass systems, Self-production of food (animal husbandry and beekeeping, use of local plants to obtain treatment oils), waste recycling (e.g. food waste as fertilizer for one's own garden) and local interaction (local workshops with community, use of indigenous knowledge)
sixsenses.com 
- 7 **Crown Plaza Copenhagen Towers**
Denmark's first groundwater-based air conditioning system and intelligent control in connection with the booking system. Food waste is delivered to the company's own biogas plant and residues from the biogas plant are used as fertiliser. A circular procurement policy for furniture and disposable items (focus on durability, reparability, recycling) is established. Overall, the hotel consumes 65 % less energy than comparable hotels.
via.ritzau.dk 

8

Greet (Accor Group)

Circular procurement: The use of local, used materials for interior design enables lower investments, a reduction in the use of primary raw materials, the reduction of GHG and also the creation of jobs for low-skilled workers. In this way, a close, long-term cooperation between suppliers and hotel operators is to be established.

group.accor.com 

9

Green Solution House Denmark

Positioning as "living Laboratory" to demonstration circular construction approaches (Examples: Pyrolysis plant, old swimming pool as energy storage, solar thermal system, guests can analyse their own energy consumption, anaerobic water filtration and earth lung in the Garden; Upcycling: at modernization, old furniture was reused)

bornholmhotels.dk 

10

Circular Economy in the hotel industry: from challenges to action!

green-business.ec.europa.eu 



2.2 Destinations & regions

Tourism associations and local communities play a crucial role in promoting the circular economy in tourism.





Suitable approaches include:



- **Sustainability strategies**
Austria's "Plan T – Masterplan für den Tourismus" and the "Tiroler Weg" establish sustainability as a fundamental principle for tourism development and promote cooperation between different stakeholders.
- **Regional economic cycles**
Initiatives such as "Bewusst Tirol" promote the use of local food in the catering and hotel industry, which strengthens the regional economy and reduces environmental pollution.
- **Education and awareness-raising**
Training and education programmes for employees and guests raise awareness of sustainable practices and the importance of recycling. This contributes to the long-term sustainability of tourism.

Practical applications:





- **Cooperation and networks**
Tourism associations can create networks and platforms that promote the exchange of good practices and cooperation between different stakeholders. This can include the development of joint projects and initiatives.
- **Funding programmes**
Providing funding and incentives for sustainable projects can support the implementation of circular practices. This can include funding for energy efficiency measures, waste management programmes and other sustainable initiatives.
- **Educational initiatives**
Organising training and workshops for employees and local communities can raise awareness of the circular economy and provide practical skills. This can include training in energy efficiency, waste management and sustainable procurement.
- **Communication campaigns**
Tourism associations can run communication campaigns to raise awareness of sustainable practices and encourage travellers to make green choices. This can include the use of social media, websites and other communication channels.

National examples:

- 1 **Eco-label destination Seefeld (Tyrol)**
First destination Austria with the Austrian eco-label for tourism destinations.
seefeld.com 
- 2 **Circular Vorarlberg (Vorarlberg)**
initiative to support the circular economy in the region, including the tourism sector.
wko.at/vlb 
- 3 **Zell am See-Kaprun (Salzburg)**
Comprehensive sustainable mobility concept with free use of public transport for guests.
zellamsee-kaprun.com 
- 4 **Saalfelden Leogang (Salzburg)**
Offering of a climate hiking trail to raise awareness of climate change and sustainable practices.
saalfelden-leogang.com 

- 5 **"Pleasure ambassador" Genussbotschafter:in (Tyrol)**
additional qualification for apprentices and employees of the Ötztaler gastronomy regarding regionality.
oetztal-genussbotschafter.at 
- 6 **Coworkation**
Organised trips, with a combination of location, work-friendly infrastructure, space for exchange and an organised supporting programme (hiking, yoga, cooking...), offer the opportunity to recharge your creativity and leave everyday life behind.
coworkation-alps.eu 

International examples:

- 1 **Green Oslo (Norway)**
Comprehensive Green Guide with sustainable activities and offers for visitors to the city.
visitoslo.com 
- 2 **Copenhagen (Dänemark)**
Innovative Ansätze für nachhaltigen Tourismus wie das "Copenpays"-Programm zur Förderung umweltfreundlichen Verhaltens.
environmentenergyleader.com 
- 3 **Positive Polar**
Positive Polar aims to demonstrate how expedition cruising can have a positive impact on the planet by improving ocean productivity while stepping up the fight against global warming.
positivepolar.com 
- 4 **Andermatt Swiss Alps**
Andermatt Responsible is an initiative for climate-friendly and sustainable tourism in the Andermatt region.
anderlatt-swissalps.ch 

2.4 Outdoor brands and equipment

Outdoor brands and equipment can contribute to the circular economy through circular business models:

Suitable approaches include:

- **Repair and reuse initiatives**
Outdoor equipment manufacturers can implement repair and reuse programmes to extend the life of their products and reduce waste.
- **Sustainable materials**
Using recycled and biodegradable materials in the manufacture of outdoor equipment helps to reduce the environmental footprint.
- **Sharing platforms**
Platforms that support the exchange and sharing of outdoor equipment.

Practical applications

- **Repair services**
Outdoor brands can offer repair services to repair broken equipment and extend its life. This may involve setting up repair centres or partnering with local repair services.
- **Reuse programmes**
Implementing equipment reuse programmes can help reduce waste. This can include taking back used products and refurbishing them for resale.

- **Sustainable production**

Using recycled and biodegradable materials in production can reduce the environmental footprint of outdoor equipment. This can include sourcing materials that are recycled or biodegradable.

- **Sharing platforms**

Developing platforms that encourage the exchange and sharing of outdoor equipment can reduce the need for new products. This can include setting up online platforms that allow users to rent or share equipment.

National examples:

1 Repair Cafe (Tyrol)

Promotes the repair and reuse from products, also in the tourism context.

repaircafe-tirol.at ➡

2 Second Ascent Repairs (Innsbruck)

repair shop for functional outdoor clothing

[instagram.com/second.ascent.repairs](https://www.instagram.com/second.ascent.repairs) ➡

International examples:

1 Patagonia

The Worn Wear™ Field Repair Kit from Patagonia contains everything you need for simple repairs to outdoor products – from a singed sleeping bag to a torn jacket.

eu.patagonia.com ➡

2 VAUDE Rent

rental service for environmentally friendly and fairly produced outdoor equipment

rent-secondhand.vaude.com ➡




3. FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Overview regulatory framework

Green deal

The European Green Deal, to be presented by the EU Commission in 2019, will include measures to make the economy more sustainable by turning environmental problems into opportunities for sustainable development. The measures include a 'European climate law', investment in green technologies, the protection of biodiversity and the promotion of a circular economy. The aim of the agreement is to develop a role model for Europe that will motivate other countries to follow Europe's sustainability initiatives (European Commission, n.d.).

Further information on the importance of the circular economy in the Green Deal: standort-tirol.at 

Fit for 55

The Green Deal stipulates that current greenhouse gas emissions should be significantly minimised in the coming decades up to 2050. In addition, the European Commission has presented the legislative package "Fit for 55" in 2021. This includes a reduction of "at least 55% net" of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 (BMK, oYes). The legal basis for this is the EU **Climate Change Act**.

CSRD / Sustainability reporting

Related to the Green Deal is the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), which defines an obligation for companies to provide information on sustainability issues (WKO, n.d.). From the 2024 financial year, EU law will require all large and listed companies (with the exception of listed micro-enterprises) to provide information on their sustainability initiatives and disclose their impact. The first reports are due to be published in 2025 and national implementation is currently being prepared by the Ministry of Justice (BMJ). In 2021, the European Commission proposed the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). This requires reporting to be prepared in accordance with ESRS, and the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) was selected to provide technical advice (BMK, n.d.b).

Austrian circular economy strategy [Kreislaufwirtschaftsstrategie Österreich]

In order to promote the realisation of a functional, circular economy, the action plan "Circular Economy" was launched in 2015. The Federal Ministry for Climate Protection (BMK), in cooperation with other federal ministries, has developed a national circular economy strategy, which sets targets such as reducing domestic material consumption to a maximum of 14 tonnes per capita by 2030 or increasing the recycling rate to 18 per cent by 2030 (BMK, n.d.).






3.2 Practical guidelines and checklists

Guidelines for tourism businesses




As part of this guide, a roadmap has been drawn up for tourism businesses that want to start implementing the above practices. It includes the following steps:

- 1 Raise awareness**
Awareness that sustainable and circular measures are not only sustainable and therefore competitive, but also make economic sense, can increase motivation in your own company to implement them.
- 2 Determine the status quo**
An analysis of the status quo on the supply and customer side, as well as on the company and employee side, helps to identify opportunities for improvement and savings, thus optimising the company's performance. This includes measuring consumption such as electricity, water and waste, as well as social performance such as guest and employee satisfaction.
- 3 Network & exchange**
It is essential to have access to information about the circular economy and to exchange ideas with industry representatives. It can be helpful to get support from the Tourismusverband (TVB) in networking. Informative links will also be provided later.
- 4 Set measurable goals**
Goals should be set. These can range from short-term goals, such as correct waste separation, to medium- and long-term goals, such as eco-label certification, sustainability reporting or the implementation of sustainable measures in the company's strategy. In addition, the circular economy topics have been divided into different clusters to make implementation easier to understand.
- 5 Assign clear responsibility**
Responsibility for implementation should be assigned to a dedicated team so that full focus can be placed on achieving these goals.
- 6 Implement**
Interaction with other companies, tourism associations or businesses is also crucial to implementation.
- 7 Celebrate success**
Not only is green washing (trying to put a positive spin on something) negative, but so is green hushing (not talking about efforts at all). Successes need to be celebrated and communicated internally and externally. This creates an awareness that can spread throughout the region.

More checklists for the Practice:

- 1 Advantages of circular economy** (location agency Tyrol)
standort-tirol.at 
- 2 Green claims in tourism** (Austria Advertising)
austriatourism.com 
- 3 Transformation guide for seminar hotels with a focus on sustainability and green events and for sustainability communication in tourism** (WKO)
wko.at 
- 4 How to circular economy** (WKO)
wko.at 
- 5 Guide to circular economy and the 9R's** (European Investment Bank)
eib.org 

Contact points and information platforms:

- 1 The Austrian eco-label / Das österreichische Umweltzeichen**
Excellent products and services guarantee high quality, based on the three pillars of sustainability.
umweltzeichen.at 
- 2 Circular Hub Tyrol**
contact point for the implementation of circular practices.
[circular-hub-tirol](https://circular-hub-tirol.at) 
- 3 Change Maker hotels**
information platform for tourists, who want to stay in a sustainable hotel.
changemakerhotels.com 

3.3 Funding for the circular economy & tourism in Austria

There are numerous funding schemes for the circular economy, which differ in terms of their organisational form, the focus of their content, the location of the funding recipients/ consortium and the scope of the project. The types of projects eligible for funding in the circular economy range from feasibility projects and research and development projects to investment funding. The most relevant funding organisations in the area of the circular economy in Austria are the Austrian Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft (FFG), the Austrian Wirtschaftsservice (AWS) and Kommunal Kredit Public Consulting (KPC).

Since the funding landscape is constantly changing, it is advisable to regularly keep yourself informed about the latest news. The following three databases are recommended for this purpose:

Kreislaufwirtschaft AT
kreislaufwirtschaft.at



FTI-Ressourcenwende
fti-ressourcenwende.at




Transparenzportal
transparenzportal.gv.at






The following section provides an extract of the current funding as of December 2024:

Federal environmental funding

Federal environmental funding can be used as a proven funding instrument for the implementation of climate and environmental protection measures. A suitable environmental funding programme for the circular economy is currently available at: umweltfoerderung.at 

FFG funding programs for the circular economy

The FFG has regular tenders for Circular economy funding: ffg.at 

- Circular economy and Production technologies: ffg.at 
- LIFE – Circular economy and quality of life | July 13, 2021 – December 31, 2027: ffg.at 

More information to individual Funding:

Repair bonus (new! Advanced for conventional bicycles, possibly interesting for employees)

tirol.arbeiterkammer.at/Reparaturbonus 

WKO funding program for the nature park region Lechtal-Reutte (Tyrol)

wko.at 

WKO Förderprogramm für Oberes und Oberstes Gericht (Tirol)

wko.at 

Financial support from environmental investments from small businesses (Salzburg):

wko.at 

Financial support "Building in wooden construction – CO 2 - Bonus"

umweltfoerderung.at 

Circular design

umweltfoerderung.at 

WKO CSR consultants

wko.at 

3.4 Conclusions

Implementing circularity in tourism is not only an opportunity to drastically reduce the environmental footprint, but also a significant competitive advantage. Given the growing challenges of climate change and the rising expectations of environmentally conscious travellers, it is becoming increasingly important for tourism businesses to position themselves in a resource-efficient and circular way. However, the path to circular business models requires more than isolated measures – it requires extensive cooperation along the entire tourism value chain.

Innovative approaches such as sharing resources, taking back and reusing materials, and developing new, sustainable experiences can not only reduce costs and open up revenue streams, but also strengthen the resilience and attractiveness of destinations in the long term. The circular economy therefore has the potential to fundamentally transform tourism and serve as a model for other sectors. Only through a consistent shift towards a sustainable economy will it be possible to preserve the natural resources on which tourism is based for future generations and improve the quality of life at the local level.

By positively influencing a wide range of areas, including the design of living spaces and regional value creation, the circular economy can help improve the acceptance of tourism and minimise tensions between tourists and locals. In addition, the circular economy offers exciting approaches to addressing the problems of mass tourism, such as waste pollution and drastic resource consumption. In this way, Tyrol and Austria can secure a fundamental competitive advantage in sustainable tourism.

3.5 Invitation to other tourism regions

The authors invite other tourism regions to get involved in implementing circular practices. As progress is often limited to the local level, there is an opportunity to learn from successful examples and to develop plans, set targets and monitor progress. All stakeholders are invited to participate in this process. The authors are ready to support this exchange and work with the regions to build a sustainable future for tourism.

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