

Our Route to becoming a Circular Economy nation

A circular economy approach encourages keeping resources in circulation instead of being burned or ending their life in landfill. In a statement to Plenary, the Cabinet Secretary announced the creation of a Plastic Route Map. This will plan Wales' approach to creating a better market for recycled plastic products, made in Wales and reduce our reliance on overseas markets for waste plastic.

Studies have found the adoption of a Circular Economy could save the Welsh economy up to £2bn and has the potential to create up to 30,000 jobs. Earlier this year the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs announced a [£6.5m fund](#) for 2019-20 to help Wales move towards a circular economy.

Lesley Griffiths said:

“Wales is fully signed up to the benefits of the circular economy. The £6.5m fund I announced earlier this year will develop a significant number of small-scale capital projects to assist SMEs in making the transformation towards a ‘Circular Economy’ approach. We need to see more circular economy business models developed in Wales.”

Wales' commitment to the Circular Economy approach is further enhanced by our participation in [Circular Economy for Small and Medium sized Enterprises \(CESME\)](#) project. This European funded initiative will enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities. Last month, Welsh Government was represented at the fifth meeting held in South Ostrobothnia, Finland – where the group visited four different SMEs that apply the circular economy approach in their activities. This included Lapua's Potato who turn waste potatoes into paper. The meeting in South Ostrobothnia follows previous CESME get-togethers here in Wales last May, Denmark, Italy and Greece.

The focus on plastics follows a package of measures the Welsh Government is considering to reduce waste and tackle created by plastic pollution. This includes examining the potential of an Extended Producer responsibility scheme, where producers are responsible for the waste they produce and a possible tax on disposable plastic. The Plastics Route Map will be published by WRAP by Spring 2018.

Further information on CESME can be found on the [Interreg Europe website](#) (external link)