Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE
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CURIOST

Deliverable 2.3.1. Criteria catalogue for the selection of the most encouraged/promising companies

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1. Summary

The CURIOST project supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and small mid-cap companies in Central Europe to accelerate their transition toward sustainable and circular product development. The project focuses on four manufacturing sectors: **mechanics & mechatronics, plastics, packaging, and construction**.

This document presents a **public, non-sensitive version** of the criteria catalogue used to identify the most promising companies for participation in pilot activities. All confidential, commercially sensitive, and personally identifiable information has been removed or generalised. The document is designed to clearly communicate who the pilots are for, what value they deliver, and what results they aim to achieve, using clear messages and outcome-oriented language.

2. Target Groups

This catalogue is relevant for the following target groups:

- **SMEs and small mid-cap companies** interested in circular and sustainable product innovation
- **Innovation support organisations and policy stakeholders** seeking transparent and replicable selection methodologies
- **Project partners and programme authorities** requiring clarity, accountability, and impact orientation
- **External audiences** (e.g. other regions, initiatives) interested in transferable good practices

3. Purpose and Value

The purpose of the criteria catalogue is to ensure that companies selected for pilot activities:

- Are **motivated and capable** of implementing circular innovation ideas
- Represent a **balanced mix of sectors and regions**
- Can generate **demonstration results** that are transferable and valuable beyond the individual company

3.1. Value Created

Through the use of this catalogue, CURIOST:

- Ensures **fair and transparent selection** across countries
- Increases the likelihood of **successful pilot outcomes**

- Enables the creation of **credible stories and examples** of circular innovation in practice

4. Selection Approach

The selection process follows a harmonised approach across all participating countries:

- Companies are assessed using **clear, predefined criteria**
- Each application or candidate company is reviewed by **multiple evaluators**
- Scores are combined with expert judgement to ensure both **objectivity and relevance**

5. Evaluation Criteria

The criteria focus on a company's readiness, openness, and innovation potential.

5.1. Core Criteria (Required)

1. Commitment and Capacity
The company demonstrates sufficient motivation, basic resources, and management support to participate in a pilot activity.

2. Openness to Collaboration
The company is willing to collaborate across borders, exchange knowledge, and engage with external experts.

3. Communication Readiness
The company is able to participate in international exchanges using a shared working language.

4. Digital Readiness for Sustainability
The company shows openness to using digital tools or methods to support sustainable product development.

5.2. Additional Criteria (Value-Enhancing)

5. Clarity of Innovation Idea
The company has a clearly described idea or challenge related to circular or sustainable products.

6. Practical Feasibility
The idea can realistically be explored or tested within the scope of a pilot activity

7. Potential Impact
The idea has the potential to deliver environmental, economic, or innovation-related benefits.

6. Scoring Logic

- Criteria are assessed on a simple five-point scale, from very low to excellent alignment
- Scores support discussion rather than replace expert judgement
- Final selection considers balance across sectors and regions, not only numerical ranking

Exact scoring sheets and internal notes are treated as internal working documents and are not part of this public version.

7. Expected Results and Stories

By applying this catalogue, the CURIOST project aims to achieve:

- Successful pilot projects demonstrating circular product development in real companies
- Concrete results, such as prototypes, redesigned products, or improved processes
- Transferable stories, showing how SMEs can move toward sustainability in a practical and feasible way

These results will be communicated using consent-based case stories, focusing on lessons learned, challenges addressed and value created.

8. Transparency and Ethics

- The selection framework is consistent and documented across countries
- Only non-sensitive, high-level information is shared publicly
- Any data collected during the process complies with relevant programme and data protection requirements

9. Replicability

This criteria catalogue is designed to be:

- Easily adaptable to other regions or sectors
- Understandable for non-expert audiences
- Useful as a reference model for innovation support and pilot selection processes



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