*25 June 2026*

#EU GREEN WEEK



*Partner Event*

# Investing in nature via Circular Green Public Procurement

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE

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CE-PRINCE

# CE-PRINCE PROJECT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | CE-PRINCE -Central Europe Green PRocurementand Innovation Network for Circular Economy |
| Project ID: | CE0200688 |
| Programme Priority | Cooperatingfora greenerCentral Europe |
| Startingdate: | 1stJune 2024 |
| Duration: | 30 months>> 30 November 2026 |
| Partners: | 10 partnersfrom7 Central European countries: ***Italy, Croatia, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Poland& Germany*** |
| WP structure: | 3 WPs: Governance, Public and Private |

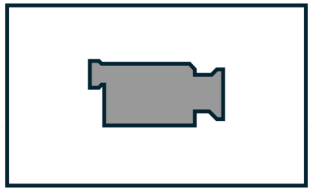
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# The project



***CE-PRINCE project aims to support the transition to Circular Economy in Central Europe leveraging on Circular/Green Public Procurement to improve companies' circularity while reinforcing the public sector capacity to publish tenders containing elements of circularity.***

***No common standards exist so far*** and requirements for incorporating circular criteria into public tenders vary from country to country. ***CE-PRINCE steps in to standardise circular procurement*** approaches and standards across central European countries and industries, ***through a joint strategy.***



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# PROJECT ARCHITECTURE

Demand side
public buyers




Supply side
enterprises

Fourkeyeconomicsectors:

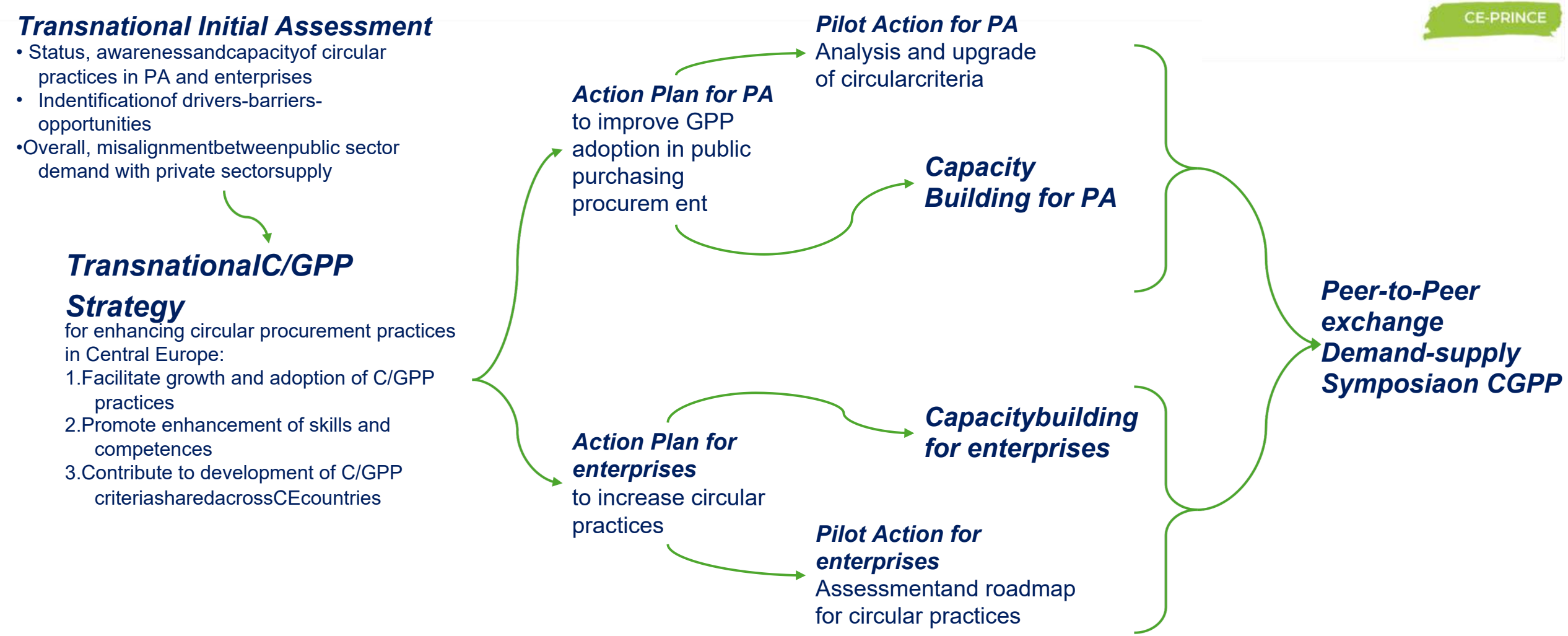
- ➔ agri-food
- ➔ manufacturing
- ➔ construction
- ➔ tourismrelatedservicesand goods






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# The Journeyof CE-PRINCE Activities






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# Transnational cooperationfocusedon:

- Shared approach on planning capacity building activities (training sessions, exchange of experiences,webinars) forenhancing awareness, knowledge, understanding → based on country-specific needsand capacities in thepublicsectorand privatesector
- Joint Development of advanced set of circular criteria in the key economic sectors and their testing in real-case tenders (Pilot Actions with PAs)
- Shared approach to improve enterprises' circularity and capability to better respond to public tenders (pilot Actions with enterprises)





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# CE-PRINCE: Expectedresults

- Improvementin circulareconomypoliciesand practicesrelatedtopublicprocurement
- Spreadofanew visionontheGPPleverstoforceacceleratingthetransitionofthe circulareconomy
- Strengthofcooperationbetweenpublicand private sector
- Reductionof thebarriersthathinderthematchingbetweenthedemandofcircular services/goods(fromthepublicsector) and theirsupply(fromprivate companies)
- Increasedcapacityofpublicprocurersto includecircularеconomyrequirementsinto publictenders
- Enhancement ofsectoralabilitytorespondtotenders



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# Common Circularcriteria, a meansto shift market demand towardsustainablesolutions–introducing the Circular Criteria Sets of CE-PRINCE

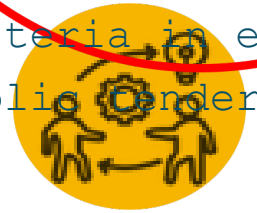
Serena Mancini, Liguria Ricerche

## Investing in nature via Circular Green PublicProcurement

# Practical activities

***Public sector***

- Analysis of current circular principle in existing GPP criteria
- Development of upgraded criteria in the key sectors ofthe project
- Testing of the new criteria in existing public tenders






***Private sector***

- Selection of a sample of companies
- Individual assessment of circularity level of each enterprises
- Development of specific-solutions to improve circularity





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# The Pilot Actions with Public Administrations

## *1. Analysis of circular principles in existing criteria*

***Analysis and comparison of***

- EU voluntary GPP criteria for selected categories of product/services
- National GPP criteria for categories of product/services (equivalent to those selected for EU)
- Their alignment with circular economy principles

***Methodology***

- Analysis through a shared excel-based analytical framework
- Criteria evaluated according to ***19 circular economy principles***, derived from:
  - ISO 59004 . International standard defining key topics, principles and implementation guidelines of Circular economy
  - EU Circular Economy Action Plan
  - EU GPP Framework

***The objective of the analysis*** was to identify:

- which principles are most frequently integrated,
- which remain underrepresented,
- and where the greatest circularity gaps exist across sectors and countries.

***Circular principles included in the assessment***

***Design for circularity***
***Circular sourcing***
***Circular procurement***
***Process optimisation***
***Industrial, regional or urban symbiosis***
***Reduce, reuse and repurpose***
***Resource recovery***
***Life-cycle thinking***
***Product life extension***
***Durability***
***Repairability***
***Recyclability***
***Modular design***
***Waste prevention***
***Sustainable use of resources***
***Renewable materials and energy***
***Reduction of hazardous substances***
***Shared use and service-based models***
***Transparency and traceability of materials***



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# The Pilot Actions with Public Administrations

## 1. *Analysis of circular principles in existing criteria*

### *Mainfindingsof theanalysis*

***Strongest circular integrationobservedin:***

- constructionsector
- technical specifications
- energy and material efficiency criteria

***Most frequent principles:***

- Actions to regenerate ecosystems
- Design for circularity
- EU Ecolabel and certification schemes
- Process optimization

***Least represented principles:***

- Remanufacturing,
- Sharing models,
- Reverse logistics,
- Limited performance-based procurement

***Construction,*** the most mature sector:

- LCA
- Recycled materials
- Energy efficiency
- Durability criteria

***Agrifood***, focus on:

- Local sourcing
- Organic products
- Foodwaste reduction

***Manufacturing***,more emphasis on:

- Eco-design
- Recycled content
- Supplier management

***Tourism***, still less structured:

- Eco-labels dominate
- Fewer measurable circular criteria

***Main challenges identified:***

- Different maturity levels among countries
- Fragmented national GPP systems
- Limited use of measurable circular indicators
- Lack of harmonisedapproaches
- Circular principles often remain indirect or implicit

Overall:

***strongfocus onenvironmental aspects, but weaker focus on systemic circularity***



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# The Pilot Actions with Public Administrations

## *2. Upgrade of circular criteria and guidelines for implementation*

***The development of upgraded criteria followed this approach:***

- GiventhedifferencesamongGPPlegislationinPPcountriesandthedelicate procurement issue, we set up a coherent and accessible method for upgrading existing criteria ***transnationally*** for all partners.
- The analysis of existing circular criteria provided the foundation for developing the upgraded ones.
- Upgraded criteriaare referredtoastheindicationstoprogressivelyintegratecircularprincipleswithineachGPP legislation and depending on the national baseline. Indications are based on ***circular thematic clusters*** and ***priority*** ofcircular principles
- ***Criteria are "upgraded" compared to the regulations in force in each individual country*** and may be inspired by what already exists in other countries (***transnational and cross-border cooperation approach***)
- 3 options to apply upgraded criteria in national legislation:
  - Intensify quantitative thresholds already in force in your country (e.g. % of organic food)
  - "Borrow" and take inspiration from prescriptions effective in other countries
  - Add brand-new prescriptions

# The Pilot Actions with Public Administrations

## *2. Upgrade of circular criteria and guidelines for implementation*

### *Methodology*

- Anoverralltable with criteria from all countries in the selected product/service categories was created
- Single prescriptions were grouped into common thematic clusters and similar contents
- A ***priority from 5 –1*** was given to each content:
  - The criteria have been assessed according to their ***contribution to closing material loops and operationalisingthe R-strategies hierarchy*** (Refuse, Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Refurbish, Remanufacture, Repurpose, Recycle, Recover)
  - Thisisbased on the***EllenMacArthur Foundationdefinition of the circular economy*** as ***a system that is "restorative and regenerative by design, aiming to keep products, components and materials at their highest utility and value at all times, distinguishing between technical and biological cycles"***.
  - ***The scale therefore measures the extent to which a criterion acts directly, indirectly or not at all on material cycles***, and has been applied uniformly across the four sectors to ensure cross-sectoral comparability.
  - The guiding principle of the assessment is that ***circularity and environmental sustainability do not coincide***: a criterion may be environmentally meritorious (energy efficiency, air quality, biodiversity protection) without being circular.



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# The Pilot Actions with Public Administrations

## *2. Upgrade of circular criteria and guidelines for implementation*

| Score | Meaning | What it covers |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | Direct circular priority | Implements an R-strategy: mandatory recycled/reused content, design for disassembly, design for recycling, take-back systems, waste prevention, on-site reuse, substitution of virgin with secondary materials, organic recovery |
| 4 | Strong circular enabler | Durability and service-life extension, structural bio-based substitution, LCA/EPD/LCC frameworks, quality standards for secondary materials, repairability and spare-part availability |
| 3 | Adjacent or supporting contribution | Water reuse and recycling, restriction of hazardous substances that hinder end-of-life recycling, Type I ecolabels with embedded circular content, monitoring of waste flows, traceable sourcing of renewable materials |
| 2 | Addresses other sustainability dimensions | Criteria addressing environmental sustainability goals other than circular economy (climate mitigation, air quality, energy efficiency, occupational training); meritorious but not directly contributing to material loop closure |
| 1 | Outside the circular economy scope | Criteria pursuing legitimate objectives that arenot part of the circular economy framework (biodiversity protection, safety compliance, social/ESG, contract enforcement); their |

# The Pilot Actions with Public Administrations

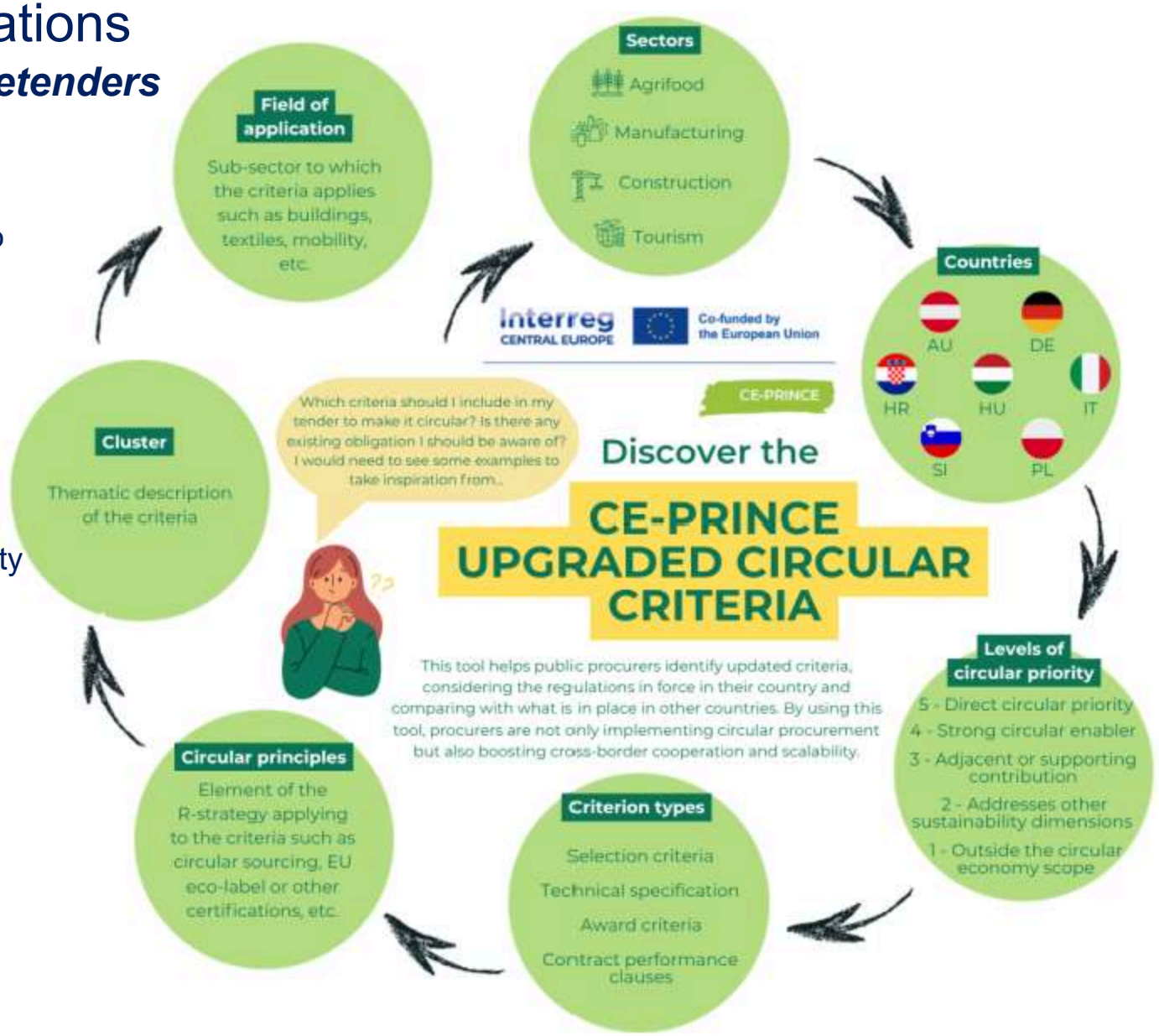
## *3. Testofupgradedcircularcriteriainreal-casetenders*

Upcomingactivities:

- Preparationofpilot procurement procedures: PPs will have to identify forthcoming public tenders and select appropriate upgraded criteria to be included as awarding criteria in the tender.
- Upgraded criteria might need to be formally adapted to be included in the real tender document for the procurement
- Inclusion in the publication of the public tender for real procurement procedure
- Training and support for procurers of the contracting authority for inclusion of upgraded criteria

***FOCUS MOVING FORWARD***

- Implementing upgrade criteria as:
  - practical procurement tools,
  - measurable circular outcomes,
  - and scalable good practices






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# *THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!*

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