Erasmus+

EYE TO A GREENER FUTURE

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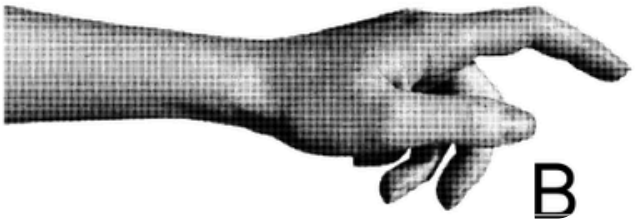
Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Towards A Greener Future»



B O O K

Hand book on young changemakers

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ΕΠΙΜΕΛΗΤΗΡΙΟ ΔΡΑΜΑΣ

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Eye to a Greener Futureproject focuses on promoting environmental awareness, sustainability, and green entrepreneurship among young people through educational activities, international cooperation, and the exchange of innovative practices. The project aims to empower participants with the knowledge, skills, and competences needed to actively contribute to a greener and more sustainable future at local, national, and European level.

The project is implemented within the framework of the Erasmus+ Programmeand brings together partners from different European countries,in order to strengthen cross-border collaboration, intercultural dialogue, and youth participation in environmental initiatives. Through non-formal education methods, workshops, training sessions, study visits, and collaborative activities, participants will explore topics related to sustainability, climate change, circular economy, green lifestyles, and environmental responsibility.

This section provides an overview of the contents of this booklet. More specifically, the material included in this handbook provides further information regarding:

- The “Eye to a Greener Future” Project Aim and Objectives
- The Cross-border Partnership and the Area of Intervention
- The Project Beneficiaries and Target Groups
- The “Eye to a Greener Future” Project Outputs
- The “Eye to a Greener Future” Partnership
- The “Eye to a Greener Future” Work Packages
- The International Exchange Visit Agenda
- The International Exchange Visit Educational Material
- Green Skills and Environmental Awareness Activities
- Digital Tools and Educational Methodology
- Communication, Dissemination and Visibility Activities
- Monitoring and Evaluation of the Project
- Sustainability and Long-term Impact

Overall, the aim of the project activities and international exchanges is not only to familiarize participants with the objectives and results of the project, but also to encourage active citizenship, environmental consciousness, and European cooperation. Through interactive learning experiences and the exchange of good practices, participants will have the opportunity to develop new competences, strengthen intercultural understanding, and contribute to the promotion of sustainable development and green innovation within their communities.

2 THE PROJECT AIM AND ITS OBJECTIVES

The Eye to a Greener Futureproject aims to promote environmental awareness, sustainable thinking, and active youth participation through educational and intercultural activities focused on green development and environmental responsibility. The project encourages young people to adopt environmentally friendly attitudes and practices while strengthening their understanding of sustainability challenges and solutions at both local and European level.

The overall goal of the project is to empower young people with the skills, knowledge,and motivation needed to contribute actively to a greener and more sustainable future. Through international cooperation and non-formal learning methodologies, participants will explore innovative approaches related to environmental protection, climate action, circular economy, green entrepreneurship, and sustainable lifestyles.

The Strategic Objectives of the project are the following:

- To promote environmental awareness and sustainable thinking among young people.
- To encourage active participation in environmental protection and climate action initiatives.
- To strengthen cooperation and intercultural dialogue between young people from different European countries.
- To exchange good practices and innovative ideas related to sustainability and green development.
- To enhance young people's green and digital competences through non -formal educational activities.
- To support the development of environmentally responsible behaviour and active citizenship.

The project specific objectives are briefly described below:

- Increasing participants' knowledge regarding environmental sustainability and climate change.
- Promoting eco-friendly habits and responsible consumption practices in everyday life.
- Encouraging teamwork, collaboration, and intercultural communication through international exchange activities.
- Developing participants' problem -solving, critical thinking, and leadership skills in relation to environmental challenges.
- Supporting youth engagement in local environmental initiatives and community actions.
- Enhancing awareness of European values, cooperation, and sustainable development goals.

- Promoting the use of digital tools and creative methodologies in environmental education activities.

3 THE CROSS-BORDER PARTNERSHIP AND THE AREA OF INTERVENTION

The "EYE to a Greener Future – Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Towards A Greener Future" project brings together educational institutions and local stakeholders from Greece, Spain and Türkiye with the common vision of promoting sustainable entrepreneurship and environmental awareness among young people.

The partnership combines the expertise of vocational education providers, business support organisations and local communities in order to strengthen young people's entrepreneurial mindset and prepare them for the green transition of the European labour market.

The project's activities are implemented across different European regions, each of which faces common challenges related to climate change, youth unemployment, sustainable economic growth and the need for environmentally responsible business practices. Through international cooperation and mobility activities, participants are encouraged to exchange experiences, develop intercultural competences and explore innovative approaches to green entrepreneurship.

The intervention area includes urban and semi-urban communities in Greece, Spain and Türkiye, where vocational education and training institutions play a key role in preparing students for the future labour market. The participating regions are characterized by active local economies, strong cultural identities and increasing interest in sustainable development and circular economy practices.

Special emphasis is placed on:

- promoting eco-friendly entrepreneurial culture among young people,
- strengthening green and digital competences,
- supporting sustainable business initiatives,
- encouraging responsible consumption and production,
- and connecting education with the evolving needs of the labour market.

The project also aims to enhance cooperation between schools, local enterprises, chambers of commerce and community stakeholders, creating a collaborative European network focused on sustainability, innovation and youth empowerment.

Through mobility activities, workshops, collaborative projects and field visits, participants are introduced to real examples of green entrepreneurship and circular economy practices, while developing practical skills that can support their future professional careers and active citizenship.

4 THE PROJECT BENEFICIARIES AND TARGETGROUPS

The "EYE to a Greener Future – Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Towards A Greener Future" project is designed to support young people in developing environmentally responsible attitudes, entrepreneurial competences and sustainable career perspectives aligned with the priorities of the European Green Deal and the green transition of the labour market.

The project particularly focuses on empowering youth through education, international cooperation and practical exposure to green entrepreneurship practices. Through its activities, participants are encouraged to adopt sustainable lifestyles, strengthen their employability skills and explore innovative business ideas that promote environmental protection and social responsibility.

The main beneficiaries and target groups of the project include:

- Vocational Education and Training (VET) students
- Young aspiring entrepreneurs
- Secondary school students and graduates
- Teachers and trainers in vocational education
- Youth workers and career counsellors
- Local business communities and entrepreneurs
- Chambers of commerce and business support organisations
- Educational institutions and training centres
- Local authorities and community stakeholders
- Organisations promoting sustainability and environmental awareness

Special attention is given to young people who wish to improve their entrepreneurial and professional skills in emerging green sectors and sustainable economic activities. The project also supports participants in understanding the importance of circulareconomy principles, responsible production and consumption, digital innovation and environmentally friendly business practices.

In addition, the project promotes intercultural dialogue and European cooperation by encouraging collaboration among students, educators and organisations from different countries. Through mobility activities, workshops, educational visits and collaborative learning experiences, participants gain valuable international experience and practical knowledge related to green entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

The project also aims to strengthen the connection between education and the labour market by introducing participants to modern business environments, innovative green practices and future-oriented professional opportun ities. By doing so, "EYE to a Greener

Future" contributes to the creation of a new generation of environmentally conscious and socially responsible European citizens and entrepreneurs.

5 PROJECT OUTPUTS

During the implementation period of the "EYE to a Greener Future – Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Towards A Greener Future" project, a series of educational, networking and dissemination outputs are expected to be developed in order to support young people in acquiring green entrepreneurial skills and sustainable development competences.

The project outputs focus on enhancing environmental awareness, promoting eco-friendly business practices and strengthening cooperation between educational institutions and local stakeholders across the participating countries.

The main expected outputs of the project include:

- Development of educational and training material related to green entrepreneurship and sustainability.
- Organisation of international mobility activities, workshops and educational visits.
- Exchange of good practices among participating schools, organisations and local communities.
- Promotion of circular economy principles and environmentally responsible business models.
- Strengthening participants' entrepreneurial, digital and intercultural competences.
- Creation of collaborative learning activities focused on sustainability and innovation.
- Development of awareness campaigns related to environmental protection and green habits.
- Enhancement of cooperation between vocational education institutions and the labour market.
- Promotion of active citizenship, social responsibility and European values among young people.
- Dissemination of project results through digital platforms, social media, presentations and local events.

The project also aims to create long-term impact by encouraging participants to transfer the acquired knowledge and skills into their educational, professional and everyday environments. Through practical learning experiences and international collaboration, the project contributes to building a more sustainable and environmentally conscious entrepreneurial culture among European youth.

6 THE EYE TO A GREENER FUTURE PARTNERSHIP

The partnership of the "EYE to a Greener Future – Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Towards A Greener Future" project was established in order to combine expertise from the fields of vocational education, entrepreneurship, sustainability and youth empowerment. The participating organisations contribute complementary knowledge, experience and educational practices that support the successful implementation of the project objectives.

A brief presentation of the partnership members is provided below.

LP: 1st EPAL of Drama | Greece

The 1st EPAL of Drama is a Vocational Upper Secondary School located in Drama, Greece. The school provides vocational education and training opportunities to young learners in several professional sectors, aiming to equip students with practical knowledge, technical competences and skills relevant to the modern labour market.

The institution actively participates in European educational initiatives and Erasmus+ projects, promoting innovation, inclusion, digital transformation and environmental awareness within the educational community. Through its participation in international collaborations, the school encourages intercultural dialogue, mobility experiences and the development of entrepreneurial competences among students.

Within the framework of the "EYE to a Greener Future" project, the school contributes to the coordination of educational activities related to green entrepreneurship, sustainability and youth empowerment.

Chamber of Commerce of Drama | Greece

The Chamber of Commerce of Drama is a local business support organisation that promotes entrepreneurship, economic development and cooperation between enterprises and educational institutions in the region of Drama.

The Chamber supports local businesses through consulting services, networking initiatives, training opportunities and participation in European projects that foster innovation and sustainable economic growth. It also plays an important role in connecting education with labour market needs and promoting modern entrepreneurial practices.

Within the project, the Chamber contributes expertise related to entrepreneurship, green business development and cooperation with the local business community.

Şehit Emre Karaaslan Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School | Türkiye

Şehit Emre Karaaslan Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School is a vocational education institution base d in Türkiye. The school focuses on providing students with technical education, professional skills and practical learning experiences that prepare them for future employment opportunities.

The institution participates in international educational collaborations that promote innovation, sustainability, intercultural learning and digital competences. Through Erasmus+ activities, the school encourages students to develop active citizenship, environmental responsibility and entrepreneurial thinking.

Its contribution to the project focuses on vocational training practices, student participation and the promotion of green skills and sustainable lifestyles.

IES Vega de Atarfe | Spain

IES Vega de Atarfe is a secondary and vocational education institution located in Spain. The school has extensive experience in European educational programmes and promotes innovative teaching methodologies, inclusion, sustainability and international cooperation.

The institution actively supports projects related to environmental awareness, entrepreneurship, digital education and student mobility. Through collaborative learning activities and European partnerships, the school encourages students to become active, responsible and environmentally conscious citizens.

Within the “EYE to a Greener Future” project, IES Vega de Atarfe contributes educational expertise, intercultural perspectives and experience in sustainability-related initiatives and mobility activities.

7 WORK PACKAGES

The implementation of the "EYE to a Greener Future – Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Towards A Greener Future" project is structured around a series of interconnected Work Packages (WPs), designed to ensure the successful coordination, implementation and sustainability of the project activities and outcomes.

The Work Packages focus on project management, the development of green skills, international cooperation and the dissemination of project results, while promoting sustainable entrepreneurship and environmental awareness among young people.

WP1: Project Management & Implementation

This Work Package(WP1)focuses on the effective coordination and smooth implementation of all project activities throughout the project duration (2024 –2026).

The coordination of the project is carried out by Şehit Emre Karaaslan Girls Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (Türkiye), in close cooperation with all project partners.

Main activities include:

- Organisation of virtual and physical partner meetings
- Coordination of project activities and timelines
- Financial monitoring and budget management
- Internal communication among partners
- Preparation of progress reports and evaluation procedures
- Monitoring of project quality and implementation progress

The Work Package ensures effective collaboration among partners and supports the achievement of the project objectives according to the Erasmus+ programme requirements.

WP2: Development of Green Skills & Educational Material

This Work Package focuses onstrengthening green competences, entrepreneurial thinking and sustainability awareness among young people.

Special emphasis is placed on sustainable production, eco-friendly business practices, digital entrepreneurship and innovative educational approaches that support the green transition of the labour market.

Main activities include:

- Development of educational and training material
- Workshops and learning activities related to green entrepreneurship
- Promotion of sustainable lifestyles and environmental awareness
- Activities focused on circular economy and responsible consumption
- Enhancement of digital and entrepreneurial competences
- Creation of learning resources supporting young entrepreneurs towards a greener future

Through these activities, participants are encouraged to develop practical skills and environmentally responsible attitudes that can support their future professional development.

WP3: Transnational Mobility & Exchange of Practices

This Work Package supports international cooperation and intercultural learning through mobility activities, workshops and the exchange of good practices among the participating countries.

The mobility activities provide participants with opportunities to collaborate, share experiences and gain practical knowledge related to sustainability and green entrepreneurship.

Main activities include:

- Organisation of learning, teaching and training activities
- International mobility activities hosted by project partners
- Educational workshops and collaborative projects
- Exchange of good practices among partner organisations
- Field visits and interactive learning experiences
- Intercultural communication and networking activities

One of the planned mobility activities of the project is scheduled to take place in Bursa, Türkiye, in May 2025, bringing together participants from the partner countries for collaborative educational activities and practical workshops.

WP4: Dissemination & Sustainability

This Work Package focuses on promoting the project activities, increasing the visibility of the project results and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project impact.

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The dissemination activities aim to reach students, educators, local stakeholders and the wider community, encouraging the adoption of environmentally friendly practices and sustainable entrepreneurial approaches.

Main activities include:

- Promotion of project activities and outcomes through digital media and social platforms
- Publication of project results and educational resources
- Dissemination through the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform
- Organisation of local presentations and awareness events
- Sharing of good practices and success stories
- Sustainability planning for future use of the developed materials and practices

The Work Package also aims to ensure that the environmental awareness and green entrepreneurial practices promoted through the project will continue to be implemented beyond the official completion of the project.

8 THE INTERNATIONALLEARNING MOBILITY PROGRAM

Within the framework of the "EYE to a Greener Future – Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Towards A Greener Future" project, a series of international mobility activities, workshops and collaborative learning events are organised in order to strengthen participants' green competences, entrepreneurial mindset and intercultural communication skills.

The mobility activities provide students and educators with the opportunity to exchange experiences, explore innovative sustainability practices and participate in educational activities related to green entrepreneurship, circular economy and environmental responsibility.

One of the project's planned international mobility activities is hosted in Bursa, Türkiye, in May 2025.

The mobility programme includes:

- Welcoming and networking activities among participants
- Presentations of partner organisations and local educational systems
- Workshops on green entrepreneurship and sustainable business practices
- Activities related to circular economy and environmental awareness
- Group work and collaborative learning exercises
- Exchange of good practices among participating countries
- Visits to local businesses and organisations implementing sustainable practices

- Cultural and intercultural learning activities
- Evaluation sessions and participant feedback activities

The mobility activities aim to encourage active participation, teamwork and creativity while helping participants develop practical skills connected to sustainability, innovation and responsible entrepreneurship.

Through these activities, participants are also given the opportunity to strengthen their communication skills, improve their confidence in international environments and better understand the importance of cooperation in addressing global environmental challenges.

The international mobility experiences represent a significant part of the project's educational approach, combining experiential learning, cultural exchange and practical knowledge development within a European cooperation framework.

9 THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE VISITEDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

This section includes the educational, training and informative material developed and used during the implementation of the "EYE to a Greener Future – Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Towards A Greener Future" project activities.

The educational material is designed to support participants in understanding the principles of sustainability, green entrepreneurship and environmentally responsible business practices, while also promoting innovation,creativity and active citizenship.

The training material developed within the project focuses on the following educational themes:

- Green Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Business Models
- Circular Economy Principles and Applications
- Environmental Awareness and Climate Responsibility
- Sustainable Production and Responsible Consumption
- Eco-friendly Business Practices
- Digital Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Green Skills for the Future Labour Market
- Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurial Mindset
- European Cooperation and Intercultural Communication
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and European Green Policies

The educational activities combine theoretical knowledge with practical learning approaches, including workshops, group activities, case studies, presentations, discussions and field visits.

Special emphasis is placed on experiential learning and collaborative participation, encouraging students and young participants to actively engage in discussions related to sustainability challenges and innovative green solutions.

The project also promotes the use of digital tools and interactive educational methods,in order to strengthen participants' communication, teamwork and problem -solving skills.

Overall, the educational material developed through the project aims to support the creation of environmentally conscious, socially responsible and entrepreneurially active young European citizens who are capable of contributing to a greener and more sustainable future.

10 What is Circular Economy and its benefits

A circular economy is a sustainable economic system designed to minimize waste and make the most efficient use of natural resources. Unlike the traditional linear economy — based on the model *"take, make, dispose"* — the circular economy promotes a continuous cycle where materials, products, and resources are reused, repaired, recycled, and regenerated for as long as possible.

The concept of circular economy is based on the idea that economic growth and environmental protection can coexist. Instead of relying on the constant extraction of new raw materials, this model encourages smarter production methods, responsible consumption, and innovative solutions that reduce environmental impact while supporting sustainable development.

One of the most important goals of the circular economy is to reduce the enormous amount of waste generated every year. Products are designed to last longer, be easier to repair, and eventually be recycled into new products. In this way, fewer materials end up in landfills, andfewer natural resources are wasted.

Environmental Benefits

The environmental benefits of the circular economy are significant. By reducing waste and promoting recycling and reuse, it helps decrease pollution in land, water, and air. It also contributes to lowering greenhouse gas emissions, which are one of the main causes of climate change.

In addition, the circular economy helps protect biodiversity and natural ecosystems because it reduces the need for excessive mining, deforestation, and overexploitation of natural resources. Saving energy and raw materials also means a smaller environmental footprint and a healthier planet for future generations.

Some major environmental benefits include:

- Reduction of waste and plastic pollution
- Lower carbon emissionsand energy consumption
- Protection of natural resources and biodiversity
- Reduced environmental degradation
- Promotion of renewable and sustainable materials

Market and Economic Benefits

Beyond environmental protection, the circular economy also creates important opportunities for markets, businesses, and local communities. Companies that adopt circular practices can reduce production costs by reusing materials and improving resource efficiency. This makes businesses more competitive and resilient in a rapidly changing global economy.

The circular economy also encourages innovation and the development of new green technologies, products, and services. As industries invest in sustainable solutions, new jobs are created in sectors such as recycling, renewable energy, eco-design, repair services, and sustainable manufacturing.Consumers also benefit from higher-quality, longer-lasting products and from a growing market focused on sustainability and responsible production.

Key market and economic benefits include:

- Creation of green jobs and new business opportunities
- Support for innovation and sustainable entrepreneurship
- Reduced production and material costs
- Greater resource efficiency and economic resilience
- Development of more sustainable consumer markets

Circu lar Economy and the ‘’Eye to a Greener Future’’

The project “Eye to a Greener Future” aims to raise environmental awareness and inspire young people to take action for a more sustainable world. Circular economy principles are directly connected to the goals of the project because they encourage responsible lifestyles, environmental protection, and active participation in creating positive change.

Through education, awareness, and sustainable practices, young people can become more conscious consumers and future leaders who support greener communities and environmentally responsible choices.

The transition to a circular economy is not only an environmental necessity but also an opportunity to build a fairer, cleaner, and more sustainable future for everyone.

“Reduce – Reuse **– Recycle”**

Small everyday actions can make a big difference.

By reducing consumption, reusing materials, repairing products, and recycling correctly, we can all contribute to protecting the environment and creating a greener future.

11 Why CircularEntrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship plays a key role in shaping the future of society and the economy. Today, businesses are not only expected to generate profit, but also to contribute positively to the environment and local communities. This is where circular entrepreneurship becomes important.

Circular entrepreneurship focuses on creating businesses and innovative ideas that reduce waste, use resources responsibly, and promote sustainability. Unlike traditional business models that often rely on excessive production and consumption, circular entrepreneurs aim to design solutions that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and economically sustainable.

One of the main reasons why circular entrepreneurship matters is because it encourages innovation. Entrepreneurs are developing new ways to reuse materials, create eco-friendly products, reduce packaging, and design services that support a more sustainable lifestyle. These innovations help solve environmental problems while also creating new market opportunities.

Circular entrepreneurship also supports long-term economic growth. Sustainable businesses are often more adaptable to future environmental regulations and changing consumer preferences. As more people become environmentally conscious, there is increasing demand for sustainable products and ethical companies. This creates opportunities for entrepreneurs to build successful businesses that combine economic value with environmental responsibility.

In addition, circular entrepreneurship contributes to job creation and local development. Green businesses can generate employment in sectors such as renewable energy, recycling, sustainable fashion, eco-design, repair services, and environmental technology. These sectors are becoming increasingly important in the transition toward a greener economy.
Another important aspect is the positive social impact. Circular entrepreneurs often promote responsible consumption, community collaboration, and environmental education. Their work helps inspirepeople to adopt more sustainable habits and understand the importance of protecting natural resources.

Within the framework of **“Eye to a Greener Future”** , circular entrepreneurship encourages young people to think creatively and develop solutions for a more sustainable world. It

empowers the new generation to become innovators, problem-solvers, and responsible leaders who can transform environmental challenges into opportunities for positive change.

Circular entrepreneurship proves that business success andenvironmental protection can work together. By combining creativity, sustainability, and innovation, entrepreneurs can help build a future that is greener, smarter, and more resilient for everyone.

12 Key Points for Building a Successful Circular Economy Business

Building a company based on circular economy principles requires more than simply offering sustainable products. It involves adopting a different way of thinking about production, consumption, resources, and long-term business value. Successful circular businesses focus not only on profit, but also on environmental responsibility, innovation, and sustainable growth.

One of the most important factors for success is creating products and services with durability and sustainability in mind. Products should be designed to last longer, be easily repaired, reused, or recycled. Businesses that focus on quality and long-term value build stronger trust with consumers and reduce unnecessary waste.

Another key element is efficient resource management. Circular companies aim to minimize the use of raw materials, energy, and water throughout the production process. Using recycled or renewable materials whenever possible helps reduce environmental impact and production costs at the same time.

Innovation is also essential for circular entrepreneurship. Companies must continuously search for new ideas, technologies, and sustainable solutions that improve efficiency and reduce waste. Innovation can involve eco-design, renewable energy use, sustainable packaging, or digital technologies that support smarter production systems.

Strong customer awareness and communication are equally important. Modern consumers increasingly support businesses that demonstrate environmental responsibility and transparency. Companies should clearly communicate their sustainability goals, values, and actions in order to build trust and long-term relationships with customers.

Collaboration and partnerships also play a major role in achieving success. Circular businesses often work together with suppliers, local communities, environmental organizations, and other companies to create sustainable networks and share resources more effectively. Cooperation helps businesses develop stronger and more resilient systems.

Another important point is adaptability. Markets, technologies, and environmental policies are constantly changing. Companies that are flexible and willing to evolve are more likely to remain competitive and sustainable in the long term.

Education and employee engagement are also critical. A successful circular company encourages employees to participate in sustainable practices and innovation. Building a company culture based on environmental responsibility helps strengthen motivation, teamwork, and long-term vision.

Without a doubt, this project will highlight **"Eye to a Greener Future"** how businesses can become part of the solution for a more sustainable future. Circular economy companies are not only contributing to environmental protection, but also creating new opportunities for innovation, economic development, and social progress.

Key Success Factors for Circular Businesses

- Sustainable and durable product design
- Efficient use of resources and energy
- Innovation and eco-friendly technologies
- Transparency and responsible communication
- Collaboration and sustainable partnerships
- Flexibility and long-term strategic thinking
- Environmental awareness within the company culture

A successful circular business proves that economic growth and environmental protection can work together, creating value for both society and the planet.

13 Global Policies and Actions for the Circular Economy

In recent years, the circular economy has become a global priority as governments, international organizations, businesses, and environmentalinstitutions recognize the urgent need for more sustainable economic systems. Around the world, important policies, agreements, and strategies have been established to support the transition from a linear economy to a circular and sustainable model.

One of the most important supporters of circular economy policies is the European Union (EU). Through the European Green Dealand the Circular Economy Action Plan, the EU promotes sustainable production, recycling, waste reduction, and responsible consumption across its member states. These policies encourage companies to design products that are more durable, reusable, and easier to repair and recycle.

In addition, the European Union has introduced regulations aimed at reducing single-use plastics, improving waste management systems, and increasing the use of renewable materials. Member countries are encouraged to invest in green innovation, sustainable technologies, and environmentally friendly business models.

On a global level, the United Nations (UN)also supports circular economy principles through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially those related to responsible consumption and production, climate action, clean energy, and sustainable cities. The circular economy is considered an importantstrategy for achieving a more balanced and sustainable future worldwide.

Many countries around the world have already adopted national circular economy strategies. Countries such as the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Japan, and China are investing heavilyin recycling systems, renewable energy, sustainable manufacturing, and green innovation. These countries are developing policies that encourage businesses and citizens to reduce waste and use resources more efficiently.

International organizations and environmental networks are also helping promote circular economy practices globally. They support research, education, cooperation between countries, and the exchange of sustainable solutions and technologies.

Another important development is the growing involvement of the private sector. Many global companies are now setting sustainability goals, reducing plastic use, investing in eco-design, and adopting circular production methods. Consumers are also becoming more environmentally conscious, encouraging businesses and governments to take stronger action.

Within the framework of the **"Eye to a Greener Future"** project, we aim to help young people realize that sustainability is not only an individual responsibility but also an international effort. Governments, organizations, businesses, and citizens all play a role in creating a greener and more sustainable future.

Understanding global circular economy policies helps young people

Important Global Initiatives for Circular Economy

- The EuropeanGreen Deal
- The EU Circular Economy Action Plan
- The UnitedNations SustainableDevelopmentGoals(SDGs)
- National recycling and waste reduction strategies
- Global actions against plastic pollution
- Investments in renewable energy and green innovation

The global transition to a circular economy shows that sustainable development is becoming one of the most important priorities of the modern world. Through cooperation, innovation, and responsible action, societies can move toward a future that is cleaner, smarter, and more sustainable for everyone.

14 Waste Management

Waste management is one of the most important pillars of a sustainable and circular economy. As the global population and consumption levels continue to grow, the amount of

waste produced every day is increasing rapidly. Poor waste management leads to environmental pollution, climate change, health problems, and the destruction of natural ecosystems. For this reason, effective waste management has become a global priority for creating a cleaner and more sustainable future.

Waste management refersto the collection, sorting, transportation, recycling, treatment, and disposal of waste materials in a safe and environmentally responsible way. In a circular economy, waste is not viewed simply as something useless to throw away, but as a valuable resource that can be reused, repaired, recycled, or transformed into new products.

One of the main goals of waste management is to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills and oceans. Recycling systems, composting, and reuse practices help keep materials in circulation for longer periods and reduce the need for extracting new raw materials from nature.

Types of Waste

Waste can exist in many different forms, and each type requires proper management. The most common categories include:

- Household waste
- Plastic waste
- Food waste
- Electronic waste (e-waste)
- Industrial waste
- Hazardous waste
- Organic waste

Among these, plastic and electronic waste are considered some of the biggest environmental challenges today because they take many years to decompose and often contain harmful substances.

The Importance of Recycling and Reuse

Recycling plays a central role in waste management and circular economy systems. Materials such as paper, glass, plastic, and metal can often be processed and transformed into new products. This reduces pollution, saves energy, and conserves natural resources.

Reuse is equally important. Instead of throwing products away after one use, many items can be repaired, donated, redesigned, or reused for different purposes. Reuse practices help reduce overconsumption and promote more sustainable lifestyles.

Waste Management and Businesses

Businesses also have a major responsibility in reducing waste. Companies can adopt sustainable packaging, reduce unnecessary materials, improve production efficiency, and invest in recycling systems. Many modern businesses are now applying "zero waste" strategies to minimize environmental impact and support sustainability goals.

Effective waste management can also create economic opportunities. Recycling industries, repair services, and waste recovery systems generate jobs and support green innovation and entrepreneurship.

Individual Responsibility

Waste management is not only the responsibility of governments and companies. Individuals also play an importantrole through everyday actions and choices. Small habits such as separating recyclable materials, avoiding single-use plastics, reducing food waste, and using reusable products can have a significant positive impact on the environment.

Education and environmental awareness are essential in helping communities understand the importance of responsible waste management and sustainable living.

Waste Management and Eye to a Greener Future

The project "**Eye to a Greener Future**" encourages young people to become environmentally conscious and active in protecting the planet. Waste management is a key part of this mission because it teaches responsibility, sustainability, and the importance of reducing environmental impact through practical actions.

By promoting recycling, reuse, and responsible consumption, the project helps build a generation that values sustainability and contributes to a greener and healthier future.

"Waste is not waste until we waste it."

Through responsible waste management, innovative solutions, and sustainable habits, society can move toward a cleaner environment and a more circular and sustainable future for all.

15Circular Economy Success Stories

Case Study 1: ASOP– Circular Pomegranate Production

ASOP Agiou Athanasiou Dramas is one of the most important examples of circular agricultural entrepreneurship in Northern Greece. The cooperative was created to support pomegranate cultivation and production while strengthening the local economy through

sustainable agricultural practices. According to the company presentation, ASOP includes more than 900 producers and manages approximately 8,033 acres of pomegranate plantations across many regions of Greece. The cooperative became one of the main intervention institutions for pomegranate cultivation in the country, representing almost 50% of the sector's production activity.

The company focuses on the "Wonderful" pomegranate variety and produces a range of natural products, including 100% natural pomegranate juice, organic juices, mixed juices, and pomegranate jams. The philosophy of ASOP is based on producing natural products without preservatives, additives, or concentrated juice processing. This approach supports healthier food systems while reducing excessive industrial processing.

ASOP demonstrates circular economy principles through the complete utilization of agricultural production. In traditional agricultural systems, parts of the fruit that are not used for commercial products are often discarded as waste. However, ASOP recognizes that pomegranate peels, seeds, and organic residues still contain valuable nutrients and antioxidant compounds. These by-products can be reused in the production of fertilizers, cosmetics, animal feed, and nutritional supplements. In this way, waste materials become secondary raw materials that create additional economic value.

The cooperative model itself also contributes to sustainability. By organizing producers collectively, ASOP helps reduce transportation costs, improve distribution efficiency, and support local employment. The presentation also emphasizes the health benefits of pomegranate products, including antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, cardiovascular protection, and support for healthy nutrition. Through sustainable production and responsible resource management, ASOP shows how agriculture can combine economic development with environmental responsibility.

Case Study 2: Nico Lazaridi– Sustainable Wine Production and Smart Agriculture

Nico Lazaridi winery represents an important example of how traditional agricultural industries can adopt modern sustainable technologies. The winery participated in the research project "Personalized Optimal Grape Harvest by Autonomous Robot," which aimed to improve viticulture through artificial intelligence, robotics, drones, and precision agriculture systems.

The project was developed through collaboration between universities, wineries, researchers, and technology specialists. The main objective was to create an intelligent robotic harvesting system capable of identifying grape maturity, removing unhealthy grapes, and optimizing vineyard management. The use of drones and machine vision systems allowed researchers to map vineyards, monitor crop conditions, and improve harvesting precision.

This technological innovation supports circular economy principles because it reduces unnecessary waste of resources such as water, fertilizers, pesticides, and energy. The robotic systems were designed to harvest only grapes with the appropriate ripeness level, improving product quality while minimizing crop losses. In addition, autonomous monitoring systems help wineries detect diseases earlier and apply targeted treatments rather than excessive chemical spraying.

An important circular aspect of wine production involves the reuse of winery by-products. According to the biotechnology presentation included in the handbook, grape pulp and grape skins still contain valuable compounds even after fermentation. These substances include phenolics, gallic acid, and resveratrol, which are highly valuable in pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and nutritional industries. Instead of discarding grape residues, wineries can recover these substances and transform waste intoprofitable secondary products.

The project also highlighted how artificial intelligence and digital technologies can improve sustainability in agriculture. Researchers developed systems for ripeness estimation, autonomous navigation, and vineyard mapping using thousands of digital images and machine-learning models. Through these innovations, Nico Lazaridi and its research partners demonstrate how smart agriculture can contribute to environmental protection, waste reduction, and sustainable economic growth.

Case Study 3: Raycap– Sustainable Industrial Innovation

Raycap is an important industrial and technology company operating in Drama, Greece, and internationally. The company demonstrates that circular economy principles can also be applied successfully in modern industrial production and advanced technology sectors.

Raycap invests in sustainable industrial infrastructure, energy-efficient technologies, and responsible manufacturing systems. Unlike traditional industrial models that rely heavily on resource consumption and waste generation, the company focuses on improving efficiency and reducing environmental impact throughout the production process.

One important aspect of Raycap's sustainability strategy is the design of durable and long-lasting products. By producing infrastructure systems with long operational lifespans, the company reduces the need for frequent replacement and decreases material waste. This approach supports one of the key principles of the circulareconomy: extending the life cycle of products and reducing unnecessary consumption.

The company also invests in energy-efficient production systems and advanced technologies that optimize industrial performance while minimizing energy losses. Sustainable industrial management allows companies like Raycap to reduce emissions, improve resource efficiency, and lower operational waste.

Raycap's example is especially important because it proves that sustainability is not limited to agriculture or environmental organizations. Heavy industry and technology companies

can also contribute significantly to environmental responsibility through innovation, efficient production methods, and long-term sustainable planning.

Case Study 4: Biotechnology Applications for Circular Economy

One of the most innovative presentations included in the educational material was delivered by Professor Yannis Gounaris and focused on biotechnology applications for waste management within a circular economy framework. The presentation demonstrated how materials traditionally considered waste can become valuable economic resources through scientific innovation.

The presentation explained that lignocellulose biomass, grape pulp, olive mill wastewater, milk whey, and green biomass all contain important chemical compounds that are often wasted in traditional production systems. Biotechnology can help recover these compounds and transform waste into high-value products.

For example, grape pulp generated during wine production still contains important substances such as gallic acid and resveratrol. These compounds are widely used in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and nutritional supplements because of their antioxidant properties. According to the presentation, one ton of grapes can produce approximately 20 grams of resveratrol with significant market value. This demonstrates how agricultural waste can become a profitable secondary product instead of being discarded.

Another important example concerns olive mill wastewater, which is normally considered a dangerous pollutant because it contains substances that inhibit plant growth. However, the presentation explained that this wastewater also contains valuable phenolic compounds such as hydroxytyrosol and tyrosol. These compounds are used in cosmetics, medicine, and food supplements. By extracting these valuable substances, companies can reduce environmental pollution while generating additional economic benefits.

Milk whey also represents an important circular economy opportunity. In traditional dairy industries, whey is often treated as low-value waste after protein extraction. However, the presentation explained that whey can be reused as a bacterial culture medium, for biogas production, or for industrial fermentation processes. This reduces pollution while creating renewable energy and additional industrial products.

The presentation further emphasized the economic potential of green biomass such as leaves and plant residues. Materials containing chlorophyll and carotenoids can be used in the food, pharmaceutical, and cosmetic industries. Instead of treating plant residues as agricultural waste, biotechnology allows industries to recover valuable substances and improve resource efficiency.

Overall, the biotechnology presentation clearly demonstrated that circular economy systems are closely connected with scientific research and innovation. Waste materials are

no longer viewed simply as environmental problems but as opportunities for sustainable development, green entrepreneurship, and new economic activity.

Everyday Sustainable Practices

Sustainability is not only achieved through governments and large companies; it also begins with everyday actions and personal choices. Small habits practiced daily byindividuals can have a significant positive impact on the environment and contribute to a more circular and sustainable society.

One of the simplest sustainable practices is reducing unnecessary consumption. Before purchasing new products, people can ask themselves whether they truly need them or whether existing items can still be used. Responsible consumption helps reduce waste and limits the excessive use of natural resources.

Reusing products is another important habit. Reusable bottles, shopping bags,containers, and clothing help decrease the use of single-use plastics and disposable materials. Repairing products instead of replacing them also extends their life cycle and reduces waste generation.

Recycling correctly is equally essential. Separating paper, glass, plastic, and metal allows materials to be reused and transformed into new products. Composting organic waste is another effective practice that reduces food waste while creating natural fertilizer for plants and gardens.

Sustainable transportation choices can also reduce environmental impact. Walking, cycling, car-sharing, or using public transportation help lower carbon emissions and improve air quality in cities.

Energy and water conservation are additional important practices. Turning off lights, reducing unnecessary electricity use, and saving water contribute to environmental protection and resource efficiency.

Supporting local and sustainable businesses is another way individuals can promote circular economy principles. Choosing eco-friendly products and ethical companies encourages markets to adopt more responsible production methods.

The project **"Eye to a Greener Future"** encourages young people to understand that sustainability starts with everyday decisions. Even small actions, when practiced consistently by many people, can lead to meaningful environmental change and help build a greener future.

Simple Sustainable Habits

- Reduce unnecessary consumption
- Reuse and repair products
- Recycle correctly
- Avoid single-use plastics
- Save energy and water
- Support sustainable businesses
- Reduce food waste
- Choose environmentally friendly transportation

Everyday sustainable practices show that everyone has the power to contribute to environmental protection and create positive change in their community.

16Future Challenges & Opportunities

The transition toward a circular and sustainable economy brings both important opportunities and significant challenges. As societies continue to face environmental, economic, and social pressures, the need for innovative and long-term solutions becomes increasingly urgent.

One of the biggest future challenges is climate change. Rising global temperatures, extreme weather events, pollution, and resource depletion are already affecting ecosystems, economies, and human health worldwide. Unsustainable production and consumption patterns continue to place enormous pressure on the environment.

Another major challenge is overconsumption. Modern societies consume large amounts of products, energy, and raw materials, often generating excessive waste. Changing consumer behavior and encouraging more responsible lifestyles remain essential for achieving sustainability goals.

Technological and economic inequalities also create difficulties in the global transition toward circular economy systems. While some countries and businesses can invest in green technologies and sustainable innovation, others may lack financial resources, infrastructure, or environmental policies.

However, alongside these challenges, there are also major opportunities. Technological innovation is opening new possibilities in renewable energy, recycling systems, smart cities, sustainable manufacturing, and environmental technologies. Digital tools and artificial intelligence are increasingly being used to improve resource efficiency and reduce waste.

The growing global awareness of sustainability is also creating opportunities for green entrepreneurship, sustainable careers, and environmentally responsible businesses. More

consumers are demanding ethical products and sustainable services, encouraging companies to adopt greener practices.

Young people will play a critical role in shaping the future. Through education, creativity, and active participation, the new generation has the power to drive innovation and promote environmental responsibility at local and global levels.

Within the framework of **"Eye to a Greener Future"**, understanding future challenges and opportunities helps participants realize that sustainability is not only about solving today's problems, but also about preparing for a better future. Building a greener world requires cooperation, innovation, and a shared commitment to positive change.

Future Opportunities

- Green innovation and technology
- Renewable energy development
- Sustainable entrepreneurship
- Creation of green jobs
- Smart cities and sustainable infrastructure
- Environmental education and awareness
- International cooperation for sustainability

The future of sustainability depends on the choices societies make today. By embracing circular economy principles and investing in sustainable solutions, communities can transform challenges into opportunities for a healthier, cleaner, and more resilient world.

17 Conclusion

The **"Eye to a Greener Future – Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Towards A Greener Future"** project highlights the importance of sustainability, environmental responsibility, and green entrepreneurship in shaping a better future for society and the planet. Through international cooperation, educational activities, mobility experiences, and collaborative learning, the project encourages young people to become active participants in the transition toward a more sustainable and environmentally conscious world.

Throughout the project, participants have the opportunity to develop valuable green, digital, entrepreneurial, and intercultural competences that can support both their personal growth and future professional development. By exploring topics such as circular economy, waste management, sustainable business practices, and environmental awareness,young people are encouraged to think critically, act responsibly, and contribute positively to their communities.

The project also demonstrates the importance of European cooperation and the exchange of good practices between educational institutions, organizations, and local stakeholders from different countries. Through teamwork, cultural exchange, and shared experiences, participants strengthen their communication skills, broaden their perspectives, and better understand the global challenges related tosustainability and climate change.

In addition, the project promotes the idea that economic development and environmental protection can coexist through innovation, responsible entrepreneurship, and sustainable practices. Young people are inspired to become future entrepreneurs, professionals, and citizens who value sustainability, creativity, and social responsibility.

The educational material and activities developed within the framework of the project aim to create long-term impact by encouraging environmentally friendly attitudes, sustainable lifestyles, and active citizenship beyond the duration of the project itself.

Ultimately, "**Eye to a Greener Future**" is not only an educational initiative but also a collective effort to inspire positive change, strengthen environmental awareness, and empower the younger generation to build a greener, smarter, and more sustainable future for all.

"The future depends on what we do today."

Through cooperation, education, innovation, and responsible action, every individual can contribute to creating a more sustainable world and protecting the environment for future generations.

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