CASCADE

**Co-funded by
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HANDBOOK

DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT & E-LEARNING

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CASCADE

FIRST STEPS

EXPLORE CASCADE: THE UNIVERSAL DIGITAL TRAINING FOR SMES IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY! FROM GARNERING INITIAL INSPIRATION, EXPLORING THE ART OF SYSTEM INNOVATION, UNLOCKING POTENTIAL FUNDING AVENUES, TO MASTERING PROJECT AND APPLICATION MANAGEMENT— CASCADE IS YOUR HOLISTIC GUIDE.

Welcome to the Handbook for the Digital Environment and E-Learning Courses of the CASCADE project! Our mission is clear: to empower companies, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), in crafting IT-enabled innovative Circular Economy (CE) solutions. We aim to provide you with the knowledge and tools to initiate impactful projects. To that end, this guide emphasizes the applicability of models such as platform-based marketplaces tailored for waste reuse, collaborative consumption techniques fit for community-driven recycling, and product-as-a-service solutions that can redefine ownership and resource utilization in both B2C and B2B contexts.

Here's what you can expect to achieve:
Understanding Circular Economy Principles: Grasp the core tenets of Circular Economy, including resource optimization, and sustainable consumption. Understand how these principles intersect with digital technologies and the digital economy landscape.

Exploring Circular Economy Solutions: Delve into IT-enabled innovations, such as platform business models, sharing economy concepts, and product-as-a-service models. Learn how digital technologies can enhance the circularity of products and services, fostering sustainable business practices.

Innovation and Project Development: Cultivate your innovation skills and learn how to ideate, conceptualize, and develop projects rooted in circular economy principles. Gain insights into project management, finance, and proposal management.

HOW TO USE THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

GETTING STARTED WITH THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- **Creating an Account:** Sign up to access our complimentary CASCADE online course. By joining, you'll be part of a thriving network of forward-thinking peers from ERASMUS+ CASCADE participating countries: Austria, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Romania, Czechia, and Belgium.
- **Search:** Use this feature to connect with professionals, peers, and companies across these countries.
- **Profile Significance:** Enhance your visibility with a comprehensive profile. The platform then tailors content suggestions based on criteria such as your interests, funding, industry, and more.
- **Interactive Map:** Explore insights from various global regions, with a spotlight on our ERASMUS+ CASCADE participating countries, for a more informed perspective.
- **Group Collaboration:** Follow our best practices for effective group discussions and collaborative project development, ensuring your Circular project application's success.
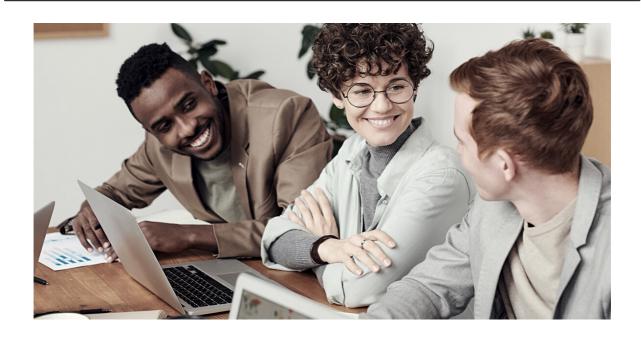
UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF ARTICULATE RISE

- **Course Overview:** The content menu on the left allows for efficient navigation between sections.
- **Progress Tracking:** The progress bar located above the course overview provides a clear indication of completion. Individual sections will be marked upon conclusion.
- **Website Linkages:** External links will consistently open in a new window to maintain course continuity.
- **Inter-Module Navigation:** At certain points, we advise transitioning to other module sections for enhanced understanding. To return to your initial location, utilize the content menu.
- **Auto-Save Functionality:** To enhance user experience, the platform is equipped with an auto-save feature, ensuring course progress is retained, and allowing seamless continuation in subsequent sessions.

Dive into Rich Resources: Thoroughly engage with a broad array of resources available directly within Articulate, and access supplementary downloadable materials in each chapter. Please note that all primary course content is provided in multiple languages, while additional details, particularly within the "Surf" section, are presented in English.

COURSE STRUCTURE

NAVIGATION: A COMPREHENSIVE EXPLORATION OF FOCUS, DELVE INTO, SURF, AND PRACTICE

The e-learning consists of 5 modules, namely:

- **Module 1:** Inspiration and breaking barriers for circular economy
- **Module 2:** System Innovation methods
- **Module 3:** Funding and financing options
- **Module 4:** Project management basics
- **Module 5:** Proposal management

In the end, you will be able to submit your final project proposal for funding.

You can jump anytime between the modules. To navigate through the course, use the navigation bar on the left side.

Each module has four sections - Focus, Delve into, Surf and Practice (Sometimes Delve into and Surf is directly connected).

Focus: Starting with an introductory video, contents and learning objectives are presented concisely.

Delve Into: In-depth exploration of theories, case studies, and applications, offering comprehensive insights.

Surf: A wide-ranging exploration of related topics and trends, providing a holistic perspective on the subject matter.

Practice: Hands-on application of knowledge through exercises, enhancing practical abilities and transferability skills.

You may need 30 minutes to work on Focus and Delve into, Surf and Practice may take up to 10 hours. But of course, you do not have to work on everything at once. Your progress is automatically saved.

SPRINT

The CASCADE course starts from the beginning, guiding you to create a project proposal from scratch. While we advise following this path, if you're already in the application process or revisiting a proposal, we offer a navigational guide with essential questions for each module.

1&2   CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND SYSTEMS THINKING

- Are you familiar with the concept of circular economy already?
- Do you already have a team?
- Are you looking for partners or did you build a consortium already?
- Do you already have a clear and defined business idea?
- Do you have a clear view of the business model you want to develop?

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3   FUNDING AND FINANCING

- What is your budget?
- What budget do you aim for?
- Do you know what (national/international) funds you would like to apply to?

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4   PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Do you use any project management digital tools?
- What communication platform suits you best?

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5   PROPOSAL MANAGEMENT

- Are there any specific projects or initiatives you intend to propose in the near future, and what support do you think you might require in the proposal development process?

NEXT STEPS

THE ROAD AHEAD: MAPPING YOUR FUTURE STEPS

WHEN YOU FINISH THE COURSE

Congratulations on completing your transformative journey with CASCADE! Your learning adventure doesn't end here; in fact, it's just the beginning of your exciting endeavor into the world of Circular Economy. Here's what awaits you after the course:

1. Share Your Success!
One of the most fulfilling aspects of learning is sharing your achievements. We encourage you to put your newfound knowledge and innovative projects into practice. Share your success stories, challenges overcome, and innovative solutions on social media, professional networks, and industry forums. Your success not only inspires others but also contributes to the wider conversation about sustainable practices in the digital economy.

2. Check the Platform Regularly!
CASCADE not just offers a course; it's a dynamic hub of knowledge and collaboration. Even after completion, the platform remains a valuable resource. Regularly check the platform for updates, new resources, and advanced courses. Stay informed about the latest trends, case studies, and expert insights in the Circular Economy field. Continuous learning ensures you stay ahead of the curve and continue to refine your skills.

3. Stay in Touch!
The connections you've built during the course are invaluable. Network and collaborate! Keep in touch with course peers and industry experts. Engage in discussions, share ideas, and explore potential partnerships. Your connections are key to future opportunities and collaborations.

Remember, the learning journey with CASCADE is not just a chapter. Stay engaged, stay curious, and stay connected. Together, we continue to shape a future where circular approaches thrive in the digital landscape. Happy learning!

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