

Annex A. Stakeholder engagement in developing the Circular Economy Roadmap for North Macedonia

Roadmap development approach and stakeholder engagement

Transitioning to a circular economy is a long-term process requiring broad societal consensus. The Roadmap Towards Circular Economy of North Macedonia was developed through a multi-step process which involved a wide range of stakeholders in a continuous dialogue. The design of the roadmap was undertaken as described below.

Establishment of the circular economy co-ordination mechanism

As part of the inception phase of the “Supporting Green Transition through Circular Economy Roadmaps”, the OECD reached out to its existing contacts in respective ministries responsible for green economy, inviting them to nominate a circular economy (CE) co-ordinator.

The OECD held meetings with the CE co-ordinator from the Ministry of Economy and his team. During the discussions, the ministry and the OECD agreed to form a CE working group and to maintain a wider CE stakeholder platform to steer the roadmap design process and ensure that all parts of society were involved in the CE transition (Table A.1). To support the establishment of the working group and the CE platform, the OECD provided an initial list of relevant stakeholders from all parts of society to ensure an inclusive process: government institutions, international organisations (locally present and those working on the circular economy in North Macedonia), academia, civil society and the private sector. Additional members suggested by the co-ordinating ministry complemented the list and became members of the working group and the CE stakeholder platform.

In addition to the North Macedonia-specific CE platform, the OECD established a Regional Circular Economy Peer Dialogue platform at the Regional Kick-off event in Istanbul, comprised of the CE co-ordinators from all six Western Balkans economies and representatives from their respective CE working groups, supported by the OECD/EU member countries (e.g. Hungary, Italy and Türkiye). Participants endorsed the regional platform, whose objective is to facilitate bilateral and multilateral exchange, peer learning, and policy dialogue on circular economy transition efforts in the Western Balkans and beyond. Members of the platform contributed to the development of the CE roadmap of North Macedonia by sharing their feedback and lessons learnt in the design of their respective CE roadmaps during different phases of the development process (e.g. prioritisation exercise, drafting).

Table A.1. Stakeholders engaged in the North Macedonia Circular Economy Platform

Government institutions	International community	Civil society organisations	Academia	Private sector
Ministry of Economy (leading ministry)	European Union Delegation	In Vivo	Institute for Research in Environment, Civil Engineering and Energy	Economic Chamber of North Macedonia
Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	Macedonian Center for Energy Efficiency	Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food	Macedonian Chamber of Commerce
Office of the Prime Minister	Swiss-funded Increasing Market Employability Programme	National Centre for Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurial Learning Skopje	Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Faculty of Architecture	Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum
Agency for Foreign Investments	United Nations Development Programme	Organization for Social Innovation ARNO	Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Faculty of Civil Engineering	Brebo Ekotex LLC Bogdanci
Agency for Promotion of the Entrepreneurship of the Republic of North Macedonia	World Bank	Textile Trade Association – Textile Cluster	Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy	Kostal
Fund for Innovation and Technology Development	Helvetas		Sustainability Institute EKOS Skopje	Macedonia Export
Directorate for Technological Industrial Development Zones				Normak Investment Group
				Small Business Chamber

Kick-start meeting with key circular economy stakeholders in North Macedonia

After the establishment of the circular economy co-ordination mechanism, jointly with the CE co-ordinator, the OECD facilitated several stakeholder meetings to officially establish the circular economy platform and gather initial takeaways on the circular economy in North Macedonia. The main objectives of these meetings were to clarify the roles of the members of the platform, collect data and information on the development of strategic circular economy documents and activities, and consult stakeholders on economy-specific aspects to be considered during the drafting of the roadmap. During these meetings, the

OECD presented the main pillars, objectives and timeline for the project and outlined the steps that would be taken to support the design and implementation of the circular economy roadmap. The co-ordinator informed about government initiatives and priorities concerning the circular economy and moderated the discussion with the stakeholders. The OECD also liaised with locally present international actors (e.g. the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank) working on circular economy-related projects to create synergies and avoid any duplication of efforts in driving the transition to a circular economy in North Macedonia.

Further to these meetings, the circular economy co-ordinator established a working group comprised of representatives of the key circular economy-related government and non-governmental institutions.

Identifying the state-of-play of the circular economy in North Macedonia

The first step in designing North Macedonia's Circular Economy Roadmap was dedicated to identifying the state-of-play of the circular economy in the country. The diagnostic built on the latest findings of the OECD *Competitiveness Outlook 2021* (see Chapter 16 on Environment policy [Dimension 13]) and the OECD *SME Policy Index 2022* (see Chapter 11 on SMEs in a green economy [Dimension 9]) and was complemented by extensive research. In particular, the OECD conducted a literature review of relevant policies, strategies and laws in North Macedonia; desk research on OECD and other renowned institutions' reports covering circular economy trends in North Macedonia; an analysis of circular economy strategic documents and roadmaps in OECD countries; and compiled statistical data. The diagnostic was further enriched with the feedback obtained during the meetings with stakeholders.

The diagnostic maps all policy and regulatory frameworks in North Macedonia relevant to the circular economy while outlining key economic features, recent circular economy and environmental trends, ongoing initiatives and projects, critical sectors, and horizontal policy areas for addressing the barriers to a circular economy.

Throughout the drafting process, the CE working group members provided written comments, feedback and any additional information that would enhance the analytical depth and comprehensiveness of the mapping documents. In addition, the OECD held a virtual meeting with the CE working group to discuss the draft roadmap and fill in remaining data gaps on the *status quo* of the circular economy in North Macedonia.

Reaching consensus on the priority areas for the Circular Economy Roadmap

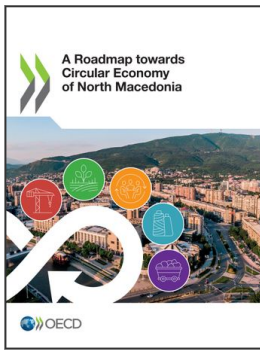
The OECD presented a total of 11 pre-selected priority areas to the working group in a prioritisation meeting in September 2023 in Skopje, explaining their rationale and providing a set of preliminary recommendations set over the short, medium and long term. Lively discussions revealed a tentative preview of priorities and were enriched further by first-hand insights from experiences presented by an expert from Hungary, an OECD country and active member of the Regional Circular Economy Peer Dialogue platform.

Based on this, in a follow up meeting, the working group members selected five areas for the Circular Economy Roadmap of North Macedonia.

Wide consultations on the draft Circular Economy Roadmap and publishing

Further to the working group's final decision on the priority areas, the OECD developed detailed policy recommendations for each of the priority areas, which were largely accompanied by good practice examples. The OECD shared the draft roadmap with all members of the working group for review and

comment. It was also sent to a broader group of stakeholders for consultation, including international community representatives, the European Commission and the members of the Regional Circular Economy Peer Dialogue platform. Before its publication in the first quarter of 2024, the roadmap was validated by the Editorial Board of the OECD Global Relations and Co-operation Directorate.



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