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CIRCULAR BUSINESS MODELS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS

Course Guide

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<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/circular-business-models-for-sustainable-urban-food-systems/1>



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About this MOOC

It is estimated that by **2050**, there will be approximately **9 billion people** living on Earth, with almost 70% of them projected to live in urban areas. This increase in the global population is projected to require three times more resources than we currently use. This is problematic since around 80% of all materials are directly discarded after usage, thus highlighting the need for a circular alternative to the linear “take, make, and dispose” model of production. **However, only 8,6% of the world can be currently defined as circular.**

Considering the central role that global food systems have in the context of population growth, urbanization, and economic development, this MOOC investigates how we can help design and build circular food systems that foster the transition toward sustainable cities. The course provides first a practice-oriented introduction into the Circular Economy concept as applied to food systems in the context of SDGs. It then leads you toward discovering the key challenges and opportunities involved in designing circular food systems. Thereafter, you will discover novel business models and business model innovation as a tool for circularity. Finally, the course explores the catalytic role of cities and how they can seize networked and product-service combination opportunities to drive the sustainability of Urban Food Systems.

Who is this MOOC for?

This course is for professionals with an active interest in disseminating strategies and techniques that guide the development of circular, healthy, and sustainable food systems policies in urban regions, where systems thinking, Urban Food Policies, and Circular Economy Business Models are at the core.

Whether you work in public or private sectors, a start-up or corporation, this course will give you the skills to generate and implement innovative ideas to achieve Urban Food System circularity through Circular Business Models.

By participating in this MOOC you will:

- Gain increased knowledge about Circular Economy principles and policies, and concepts and measurements in the context of SDGs (with a focus on European Union).
- Identify and assess challenges and opportunities when designing Circular Food Systems.
- Critically assess how Urban Food Policies can support urban-rural linkages and guide the transition to Sustainable Urban Food Systems.
- Develop Circular Business Models and assess their role in creating product-service combinations to achieve Food Circularity.

The course runs over ‘4 Weeks’, and each week consists of a series of Learning Activities in 4 different, but connected, themes regarding Urban Food Circularity. The Learning Activities consist of Steps, which are presented as a variety of videos, articles, reports, and quizzes (one for each Week) that reflect the learning topic for the Weeks.

Weeks and Activities in this MOOC

Week 1 – Thinking and Acting Circular in the Context of SDGs: Why and for Whom

Our first week will introduce you to the concept of the Circular Economy, and specifically, will discuss the Circular Economy in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at various levels. We will identify and discuss challenges and roadblocks with implementing Circular Economy strategies from the local, regional, and national levels, and discuss emerging innovation policies that are designed to facilitate transitions toward a Circular Economy.

- **Welcome to Week 1**
- **Activity 1 | Thinking Circular in the context of SDGs: Definitions, Origins, and Concepts**
- **Activity 2 | Acting Circular: Implementing interconnected CE thinking at micro, meso, and macro levels - how and why?**
- **Activity 3 | Circular Economy Roadblocks and Enablers**
- **Review and Reflect**

Week 2 – Designing Circular Food Systems: Challenges and Opportunities

In this week we will discuss the various opportunities and challenges around the Circular Economy, from governance issues, policies, and the role of technologies as enablers of the Circular Economy. Specifically, this week will introduce you to the role Circular Economy plays in the transition toward Circular Food Systems, where closing the loop in resource use is the main goal. With this in mind, we will discuss specific food sustainability policies (e.g., Green New Deal) and emerging technologies (e.g., precision farming) as enablers of Circular Urban Food Systems, and define ways to measure Circularity in Urban Food Systems.

- **Welcome to Week 2**
- **Activity 1 | Circular Food Systems: Tools and Measurements**
- **Activity 2 | Urban and Local Food Policies**
- **Activity 3 | Drivers and Barriers for Food Systems Circularity**
- **Review and Reflect**

Week 3 – From Theory to Practice: Unlocking Value Creation through Circular Economy Business Models

By participating in this week you will gain increased knowledge and a deeper understanding of Business Model Innovation and how this fosters the emergence of Circular Business Models as tools to ensure sustainability in Urban Food Systems. The transition towards Circular Business Models is fundamental, and requires novel ways of thinking about, and doing business. Circular Business Models keep products and materials in use, by design, for as long as people in order to exploit their maximum value. In this week you will conclude with applying a working framework for Circular Business Models that can be applied in practice.

- **Welcome to Week 3**
- **Activity 1 | From Business Model Innovation to Circular Business Models**
- **Activity 2 | Best Practices of Circular Business Models in Urban Food Systems**
- **Activity 3 | Circular Business Models Design and Approaches**
- **Review and Reflect**

Week 4 – Engaging Food System Stakeholders Effectively: Educational and Training Initiatives

Our final week will build on material from the previous 3 weeks and move toward identifying educational initiatives and training programs that successfully disseminate awareness of the Circular Economy. You will be taught to identify and discuss tools and instruments to enhance capacity building, knowledge sharing and measurement in regards to the Circular Economy, and we will discuss how the transformation of Urban Food Systems can inform, empower, and protect citizens. Finally, we will discuss the skills and capabilities needed, at individual, organizational, and city levels, in order to ensure a successful transition to Circular Urban Food Systems.

- **Welcome to Week 4**
- **Activity 1 | Unlocking the Potential of Circular Economy through Systems Thinking**
- **Activity 2 | Educating for Circularity**
- **Activity 3 | Communicating Circularity: Sustainability Reporting & Public Engagement**
- **Review and Reflect**
- **Final exam**

Course Educators and Mentors

In this course, you will meet a diversity of educators from a mix of organizations. The combination of educators and mentors is designed to enhance your learning experience in the course by providing different perspectives and voices. You will meet them across the 4 Weeks in the course.

In addition to the educators in this course, you will interact with mentors and facilitators who will work with you to help make your experience in the course as fruitful and engaging as possible.



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Business case studies and Best Practices

In addition to the educators and mentors, you will explore examples of the circular economy in various cities around the world, including Helsinki, Torino, and Amsterdam. You will be inspired by real-life and cutting-edge initiatives from international organizations, think tanks, startups and corporates working towards circularity, including **Too Good To Go** and **Agricolus**.



For more information or specific questions please don't hesitate to contact us!

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