

# A CALL FOR SMES TO TRANSIT TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

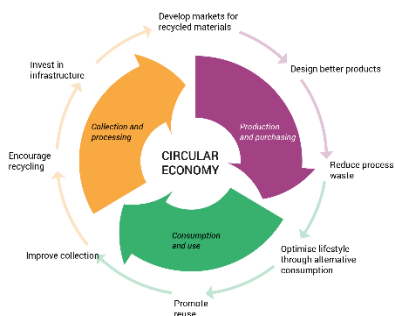
## THE NEED TO TRANSIT TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

With its abundant resources, young and fast-growing population, and rich cultural heritage, Uganda has great potential. It does, however, still face many challenges, including extreme inequality, environmental degradation, climate change, and poor waste management practices.

One possible solution is to adopt the principles of circularity or circular economy

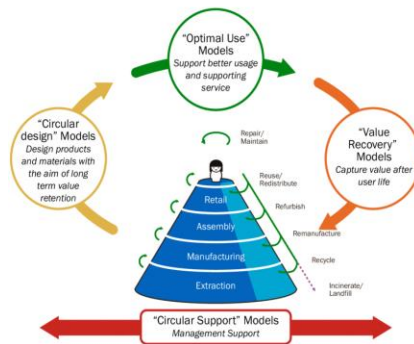
## THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The circular economy is a system where materials never become waste, and nature is regenerated. In circular economy, products and materials are kept in circulation through processes such as maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling, and composting.



Uganda can achieve sustainable development by implementing circularity principles, and reduce its reliance on imported materials, create new jobs and income opportunities for its rapidly growing young population, improve resource

efficiency and productivity, protect the environment, improve human health, well-being and social inclusion.



## SUPPORTING SMES TO TRANSIT TO CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Oxfam recognises the potential and benefits of a circular economy for the country and its people. It is working to promote circular economy practices among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in various sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services. Oxfam believes that SMEs are key drivers of economic growth and social development in Uganda and can play a vital role in advancing circular economy solutions.

To support SMEs in adopting circular economy principles, Oxfam in partnership with Open Capital Advisors and Circle Economy Netherlands, recently organised a circular economy training workshop for SMEs and train-the-trainer workshop for circular economy trainers.



### The workshops aimed to:

- Raise awareness and build capacity on circular economy concepts, strategies, and best practices among SMEs and trainers
- Encourage networking, learning, and collaboration among the SMEs.
- Equip SMEs with the knowledge and skills to adopt circular economy principles and practices in their business operations.
- Support SMEs to transit into a more inclusive and sustainable circular economy.
- Build capacity of local facilitators to scale up the circular economy approach and training amongst the SMEs owners.

*'It is important for SMEs to learn from each other, dive into this new model and feel proud as designers of their own circular economy-themed businesses that can stand the test of time,'*

**ILEKTRA KOULOUMPI - A STRATEGIST AT CIRCLE ECONOMY**



❖ **20 TRAINERS OF TRAINEES**  
❖ **32 SME REPRESENTATIVES**

**WERE TRAINED IN SECTORS:**

- Trade
- Services
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture

The trainings focused on topics such as circular economy opportunities and benefits for SMEs, circular business models and strategies, circular design, and innovation, and translating circular economy principles into action.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS TO FACILITATE THE GROWTH OF A CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR SMES

- The realization that the circular economy is good for the environment but also for the business, thus can help SMEs reduce costs, increase revenues, enhance customer loyalty, improve competitiveness, and create social value.
- For SMEs to co-create circular solutions that meet their needs and expectations, they need to engage with different stakeholders. This is because a circular economy requires a systemic change that involves collaboration among different stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, regulators, financiers, local and national government, and civil society.
- Circular economy is not a one-size-fits-all approach but rather a context-specific and tailor-made process that depends on the characteristics and challenges of each SME. SMEs thus need to assess their current situation and identify their circular potential and gaps.
- SMEs need to monitor and measure their circular performance and impact and seek feedback and support from experts and peers. The trainers can play an important role in providing much-needed support to them. Circular economy is not an end but a journey that requires continuous learning and improvement.



## TRANSITIONING TO CIRCULAR ECONOMY

### WE CALL UPON ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO:

- Collaborate with other organisations, institutions, or networks that are working on circular economy or related topics to create synergies and leverage resources.
- Develop and implement a communication and outreach strategy to showcase, raise awareness and generate interest among the public, media, policymakers, and other potential stakeholders about circular economy.
- Organise and participate in events and platforms that promote dialogue, learning, and collaboration on the circular economy among different stakeholders.
- Invest in educating and empowering youth and women on the principles and benefits of circular economy and provide them with the skills and tools to implement circular solutions in their daily lives, businesses, or communities.
- Advocate for policy changes or incentives that can support or encourage SMEs to adopt circular economy principles and practices.

### WE CALL UPON GOVERNMENT TO:

- Create and implement a national circular economy strategy and action plan aligned with the Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan III.
- Establish a circular economy coordination unit within the Ministry of Environment or the Office of the Prime Minister to oversee and monitor the implementation of the circular economy strategy and action plan as well as work with various stakeholders to popularize circularity.
- Provide policy and regulatory support to enable circular economy practices among SMEs and other actors, including creating incentives for resource efficiency, waste reduction, reuse, and recycling; enforcing standards and regulations for product design, quality, and safety.
- Invest in circular economy infrastructure and innovation to improve access to waste management and recycling facilities, support research and development of circular economy solutions, and foster a culture of creativity and entrepreneurship especially among the youth and women.