



circular
invest

Information package

Scaling Circular
Investment: From Barriers
to Opportunity |
15 October 2026, Brussels

<http://www.circularinvest.eu/>



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Scaling Circular Investment: From Barriers to Opportunity | Event programme

15 October 2026 | Maison Grand-Place, Grand Place 19, Brussels

9:00	Arrival and registration
9:30	Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katrina Sichel, moderator • Lucie Blondel, Policy Officer, European Commission • Davide Delaiti, Project Advisor, European Commission
9:45	Enabling circular start-ups <i>Keynote presentation and panel discussion on why circular projects with clear environmental and social value still struggle to get funding.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke Bailey, Senior Economist, Circle Economy Foundation • Pietro Maiorana, Senior Strategy and business manager, ING • Marina Manti, Sustainability Reporting Junior Technical Manager, European Financial Reporting Advisory Group - EFRAG
10:40	From the field: Circular investment in practice <i>Presentations and discussion from the start-ups supported through CircularInvest.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alasdair Hood, CEO, Recirculate Systems • Denisa Gibovic, CEO, Blue Room Innovation • Joshua Linn, Co-founder and managing director, The Ocean Package
11:40	Coffee break
12:10	The role of cities and regions in scaling circular start-ups <i>A panel discussion on the role of cities and regions in scaling circular start-ups and businesses, exploring how policy frameworks and local instruments can create the right conditions for them to grow.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon Clement, Head of Circular Economy, ICLEI Europe • Marco Segovia Bifarini, Circular Economy Expert, Climate-KIC • Bart Volkers, Director, Circulair Groningen Drenthe
13:00	Lunch

14:00	<p>Workshop: From barriers to solutions</p> <p><i>Participants will solve business case challenges in groups using stakeholder specific CircularInvest outputs.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Group A – What investors need: understanding and valuing circular business models With the participation of Fredrik Blomquist Lundli (Fundforward) ➤ Group B – What founders need: building investment-ready circular businesses) ➤ Group C – What policymakers need to do: creating the conditions for circular investment
15:30	Coffee break
16:00	<p>Workshop share back</p> <p><i>One representative from each group shares key takeaways and insights.</i></p>
16:15	<p>Stakeholder reflections & closing with commitment</p> <p><i>Attendees reflect on the day, and next step perspectives are introduced.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dora Fazekas, project coordinator, INOVA+
16:30	Networking cocktail

<http://www.circularinvest.eu/>

Access here details on the speakers:



Reaching the event venue

Address

Maison Grand Place

Grand Place 19, 1000 Bruxelles, Belgium

Google Maps: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/xeFKurNjyt6KsJo98>

Maison Grand Place is located directly on Brussels' historic Grand Place, in the heart of the city centre and within walking distance of Brussels Central Station.

How to get there

From Brussels Airport (BRU)

- Follow signs in the airport to the railway station located beneath the terminal.
- Take any direct train to **Bruxelles-Central / Brussel-Centraal**.
- Journey time: approximately **20 minutes**.
- From Brussels Central Station, walk approximately **5 minutes** to Maison Grand Place.

From Brussels Central Station (Bruxelles-Central)

On foot

- Exit the station toward the city centre.
- Follow signs to **Grand Place / Grote Markt**.
- Walking time is approximately **5 minutes**.

From Brussels Midi / Zuid Station (Eurostar, TGV, ICE)

By metro

- Take Metro **Line 3 or 4** toward the city centre.
- Exit at **Bourse/Beurs**.
- Walk approximately **5 minutes** to Grand Place and Maison Grand Place.

From Brussels North Station

By metro or tram

- Take a tram or metro toward the city centre.
- Exit at **Bourse/Beurs**.

- Walk approximately **5 minutes** to Maison Grand Place.

Public transport connections near the venue

Nearest stops to Maison Grand Place include:

- **Brussels Central Station** (railway station)
- **Bourse/Beurs** (Trams 3 & 4; Bus routes 29, 38, 46, 48, 66, 71)

Buy bus, metro or tram tickets via <https://www.stib-mivb.be/home/buy>

Staying in Brussels

The following hotels are all conveniently located within walking distance or a short public transport ride from Maison Grand Place. Prices below are indicative for one night and may vary depending on booking channel, room type, and availability.

Motel One Brussels

3-star | ~10 min walk | €100-€140

A stylish and modern hotel offering excellent value for money. Located close to Brussels Central Station and within walking distance of Grand Place.

ibis Brussels Off Grand Place

3-star | ~2 min walk | €120-€180

Located just steps from Grand Place and Brussels Central Station, this hotel offers a prime city-centre location and easy access to major attractions and transport links.

Aris Grand Place Hotel

3-star | ~1 min walk | €130-€190

Situated in the heart of Brussels, only a few metres from Grand Place.

easyHotel Brussels City Centre

Budget | ~6 min walk | €70-€120

A budget-friendly option offering clean, modern accommodation in a central location.

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre

4-star | ~15 min walk or short metro ride | €110-€220

A modern 4-star hotel with spacious rooms, fitness facilities and panoramic city views. Located near Rogier Metro Station and approximately 15 minutes on foot from Grand Place.

Speakers

Luke Bailey

Senior Economist, Circle Economy Foundation

Luke Bailey is a Senior Economist at Circle Economy, where he focuses on the economic and financial dimensions of the circular economy transition. His work explores how investment, policy, and market mechanisms can accelerate the shift from linear to circular business models. Luke has contributed to international discussions on circular finance and has convened investors, policymakers, and practitioners to identify opportunities for scaling circular solutions. He brings expertise in sustainable finance, economic analysis, and the practical challenges of mobilising capital for a more resource-efficient and resilient economy.

Fredrik Blomquist Lundli

Funding partner, undforward

Fredrik is an impact investor in the circular economy and purpose business. He is a Founding Partner of Fundforward which expertise on how to invest in circular economy, and what to expect from it financing strategies in customized financing for purpose-driven organisations, developer of circular business models and design of circular financing and forefront in impact strategies with focus on effect. He has more than 25 years' experience as an entrepreneur, founder of VC-firm, board member, start-up coach, impact investor, business angel network creator, innovation and venture advisor. Fredrik specializes in regenerative financing and circular business models, system transformation strategies, norm creative engineering, impact and effect, gender equality work in the ecosystem, purpose validation and effect measurement, investment design for purpose, and is part of a global network with leading impact investors, pushing the envelope.

Lucie Blondel

Policy Officer, European Commission

Lucie Blondel is a Policy Officer at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD), where she works on the transition towards a circular economy, with a particular focus on cities and regions. She leads the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI), an EU initiative supporting territories in developing and implementing systemic circular economy solutions and strengthening their access to knowledge, partnerships and investment opportunities. Her work focuses on connecting research and innovation with territorial needs, supporting the uptake and scaling of circular solutions, and strengthening the conditions for implementation. Lucie has a background in environmental and spatial planning and over a decade of experience working on climate, energy and circular economy policies at European and local level.

Simon Clement

Head of Circular Economy, ICLEI European Secretariat

With over 20 years' experience working with cities across Europe on promoting urban sustainability, Simon leads ICLEI Europe's work in the field of circular economy. Simon has co-ordinated many European projects on the topics of circular economy and sustainable procurement including CityLoops, BuyZET, SPP Regions, and Clean Fleets. He has also managed numerous service contracts on behalf of clients such as the European Commission, including the Big Buyers Initiative, the GPP Training and Toolkit, and the development of sustainable procurement criteria for the UN. He is also the coordinator of the European Circular Cities Declaration.

Davide Delaiti

Project Advisor, European Commission

Davide Delaiti is a project and programme management professional with extensive experience in EU research and innovation funding, currently working at the European Research Executive Agency (REA).

He manages Horizon Europe projects in circular economy, bioeconomy and sustainable innovation, covering the full project lifecycle from evaluation and grant preparation to monitoring and review.

As part of his current role, he contributes to the management of the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) in close cooperation with DG RTD and the CCRI Coordination and Support Office.

His portfolio includes Project Development Assistance (PDA) projects supporting cities and regions in developing circular investment projects, strengthening investment pipelines and mobilising public and private finance.

Previously, he worked at Eureka, managing innovation support programmes, expert processes and investment-readiness activities for SMEs and start-ups.

He holds a Master's degree in International Business Economics and Management from KU Leuven and combines strong project management, stakeholder coordination and analytical skills with solid expertise in EU funding and innovation policy.

Dora Fazekas

Head of the Interregional Unit, INOVA+

Dora Fazekas is Head of the Interregional Unit at INOVA+, which supports initiatives for the sustainable development of European regions, cities and other territories. Dora has an established track record in projects funded by EU programmes and in services for several European Commission DGs (DG GROW, DG RTD, DG REGIO). In this work she contributed policy analysis and advice and research-based studies on science, technology and innovation, competitiveness, cluster development, the social economy and education.

In recent years, her own focus has shifted towards collaborative European projects that help territories address sustainability challenges, in thematic areas such as circular economy, climate change adaptation, green hydrogen economy development and sustainable tourism. She also coordinates the CircularInvest project, which focuses on increasing investment readiness in European cities and regions. Dora has a postgraduation in European Studies and Global Affairs from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and a degree in law from Pázmány Peter Catholic University.

Denisa Gibovic

CEO, Blue Room Innovation

Denisa Gibovic is an international entrepreneur, technology leader and sustainability innovator with more than 20 years of experience at the intersection of industry, research and transformation.

As CEO and Founder of Blue Room Innovation, she has built and led high-impact initiatives that connect deep technology, circular economy and business growth. Her work challenges conventional thinking, turning circularity from a sustainability ambition into a strategic engine for competitiveness, innovation and economic progress.

With a PhD focused on technology and sustainability, Denisa combines visionary leadership, entrepreneurial drive and scientific insight to create scalable solutions, build collaborative ecosystems and accelerate meaningful systemic change.

Alasdair Hood

CEO, Recirculate Systems

Ali Hood is the Founder and CEO of Recirculate Systems, the UK fintech building the payment-rails infrastructure for reusable packaging. Recirculate embeds reusable deposits and automatic refunds directly into existing card payment rails, so reuse works without a consumer app, a sign-up, or any change in behaviour at all.

Before founding Recirculate, Ali's background spanned hospitality and sustainability, giving him a ground-level view of exactly where reuse schemes fail in practice, and why the fix had to live inside the payment itself rather than beside it.

Under Ali's leadership, Recirculate has launched the world's first city-wide, app-free reuse network in Sheffield, is going live at Manchester Airport and Heathrow Terminal 2. Recirculate is a JPMorgan Chase & EY FinTech Forward alumnus and an Earthshot Prize nominee.

Joshua Linn

Co-founder and managing director, The Ocean Package

Joshua Linn is Co-Founder and Managing Director of The Ocean Package, a Munich-based circular packaging company developing reusable shipping solutions for e-commerce, retail, healthcare and logistics. Since co-founding the company in 2021, Joshua has focused on turning reusable packaging from a sustainability initiative into a scalable and economically viable alternative to single-use packaging.

Under his leadership, The Ocean Package has developed reusable packaging systems combining durable, recyclable packaging with digital tracking and return logistics. The company works with leading European retailers, logistics providers and industrial partners and is currently expanding its activities across Europe.

With an academic background in politics, history and economics, Joshua brings together entrepreneurship, sustainability and regulatory perspectives. He is particularly interested in how regulation, investment and industry collaboration can accelerate the transition from linear to circular business models.

Pietro Maiorana

Senior Strategy and business manager, ING

Pietro Maiorana is a Senior Strategy & Business Manager within the Risk organization at ING Belgium, where he advises senior leadership on strategic priorities, regulatory developments, risk management, and transformation initiatives. With more than 25 years of experience in financial services, he brings a unique combination of expertise in sustainability, risk, regulation, governance, and strategic advisory.

Prior to joining ING in this role, Pietro was a Senior Manager in ESG Advisory at KPMG Belgium, supporting leading banks, insurers, and financial institutions in navigating the evolving sustainable finance landscape. His work covered CSRD implementation, double materiality assessments, EU Taxonomy, climate and environmental risk management, ESG governance, internal audits, and ESG assurance engagements. He also advised executive committees and boards on the strategic implications of ESG regulations and sustainability trends.

Earlier in his career, Pietro led major regulatory and risk transformation programs at ING and Euroclear, including the integration of ESG considerations into credit risk frameworks and sustainable finance initiatives. He represented ING in industry discussions on sustainable finance and has frequently acted as a speaker and panelist on ESG and regulatory developments.

Known for his ability to translate complex regulatory and sustainability challenges into practical business strategies, Pietro brings a pragmatic perspective on how financial institutions can create long-term value while addressing growing ESG expectations from regulators, investors, and society.

Marina Manti

Sustainability Reporting Junior Technical Manager, European Financial Reporting Advisory Group - EFRAG

Marina Manti is a Sustainability Reporting Junior Technical Manager at EFRAG. She joined the Environment team in February 2024 and primarily works on the Resource Use and Circular Economy topical standard within the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). Marina holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, International Relations and Human Rights from the University of Padua, and a Master of Science in Economics, Finance and Sustainability from Ca' Foscari University of Venice. During her studies, she broadened her international perspective through exchange programmes at Paris-Saclay University in France, where she deepened her knowledge of environmental law, and at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, where she gained further insights into sustainable development practices in Southeast Asia. Prior to joining EFRAG, Marina worked in the sustainability department of a real estate group, where she contributed to the drafting of the Group's sustainability statement.

Marco Segovia Bifarini

Designer and Producer, Circular Economy and Value Chain Expert, Climate-KIC

Marco brings ten years of international experience in circular economy and bioeconomy value chains across Slovenia, the Western Balkans, South America, and Italy. He co-leads the CCRI Communities of Practice on local circular businesses, and has co-authored national circular economy roadmaps for Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, and Chile. His background spans environmental engineering and multi-stakeholder facilitation, with applied expertise in circular value chains and cross-sector coordination.

Katrina Sichel

Moderator

Katrina is a London-born and bred, Brussels-based moderator and communications specialist with a degree in Modern Languages from Oxford University. As part of an eclectic career path spanning steel-trading in West Africa to business development in the post-Soviet states, she spent four years as Director of an award-winning broadcast PR company. There she produced news packages for the BBC, Sky News, Channel 4, ITV, AP and Reuters, interviewing well-known figures from the arts, sport, fashion, business and political arenas.

Since 2007, Katrina has been moderating events covering diverse topics and policy areas spanning R&I, digitisation, social affairs and development issues; agriculture, environment, climate change; energy and transport, fisheries and health. Alongside, until 2017, she managed the creation and roll-out across Europe of multimedia, multilingual communications campaigns targeting the public, and EU and national stakeholders from diverse sectors.

Bart Volkers

Director, Circulair Groningen Drenthe

Bart Volkers is co-founder and director of Circulair Groningen Drenthe, an entrepreneurial based public-private partnership with 170 member organisations aiming at realising the circular economy in the Northern Netherlands provinces of Groningen and Drenthe.

Furthermore, Bart was involved in the foundation and developed of Circulair Friesland, a similar organisation in the neighbouring province. Finally, he was manager at the Dutch Knowledge and Innovation Programme on Circular Economy.

During his career Bart was managing consultant in environmental engineering, regional development and innovation management on behalf of different (inter)national firms. His passion and ambition are to contribute to sustainable business, happy people and a healthy world.