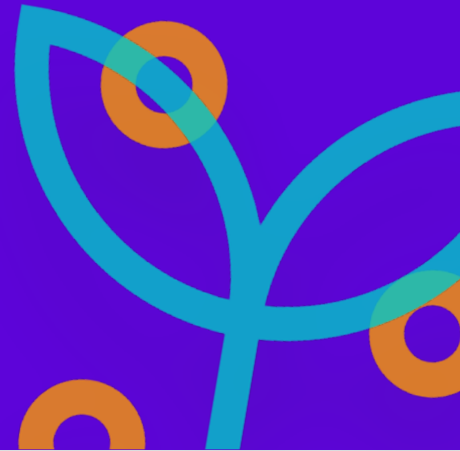


CIRCULAR JOBS



A shift to a circular economy will impact labour markets around the world: while some jobs will disappear or change in nature, new 'circular jobs' will emerge. Certain combinations of skills will become more important, and workers and employers will be required to develop new mindsets and skills to adapt to changing environments. But what are circular jobs exactly? And how can we ensure the transition to the circular economy is positive for work and workers?

Over the next two pages, we explain how the circular economy changes the world of work and provide a definition and examples of circular jobs. We also clarify why monitoring employment in the circular economy is important for gaining support for the circular economy, and introduce to you our [Circular Jobs Monitor](#).

How does the circular economy change the world of work?

Labour markets are currently deeply rooted in the linear, take-make-waste economy and will change as businesses, cities and countries adopt circular business models and strategies. This is because the circular economy hinges on activities and services that are focused on reusing materials and closing material cycles—processes that are more labour

and skill intensive than many activities in the one-directional linear economy. The recovery of parts for reuse or products leased via a service, for example, demands reverse logistics, resource sorting and the cleaning of components.

The circular economy requires manual and practical labour, just as it requires highly skilled work in the design and engineering of new solutions. If managed well, the circular economy therefore has the potential to create opportunities for all types of workers.

Knowing that the circular economy will change the world of work, we are presented with an opportunity. We have the opportunity to rethink not only how we manage materials flows, but also people. We have the opportunity to restructure labour markets in ways that improve the quality of work, promote inclusive workplaces and provide workers with continuous learning and upskilling opportunities, so that they can adapt to the changing demands that come with new innovation and business models.

WHAT ARE CIRCULAR JOBS?

A circular job is any occupation that directly involves or indirectly supports one of the [strategies of the circular economy](#).

We differentiate between three types of circular jobs: core, enabling and indirectly circular jobs.

- **Core circular jobs** are all jobs that ensure the closure of raw material cycles, including jobs in repair, renewable energy, waste and resource management. They form the core of the circular economy.
- **Enabling circular jobs** are jobs that remove barriers for and enable the acceleration and upscaling of core circular activities, including jobs that arise in leasing, education, design and digital technology. They form the supporting shell of the circular economy.
- **Indirect circular jobs** are jobs that indirectly uphold the circular economy. These jobs occur in other sectors that do not play a direct role in furthering the transition to the circular economy but can still adopt circular strategies. They include jobs that provide services to core circular strategies, including jobs in information services, logistics and the public sector.

CORE CIRCULAR JOBS



PRIORITISE REGENERATIVE RESOURCES

Ensure renewable, reusable, non-toxic resources are utilised as materials and energy in an efficient way.

Agronomic advisors support healthy soil nourishment with organic fertiliser from composted manure and crop remnants. They combine strong interpersonal skills with ecological knowledge.



STRETCH THE LIFETIME

While resources are in-use, maintain, repair and upgrade them to maximise their lifetime and give them a second life through take back strategies when applicable.

Repair technicians repair appliances, machines or vehicles. They possess strong technical and manual skills which can be acquired through a formal and informal education and training.



USE WASTE AS A RESOURCE

Utilise waste streams as a source of secondary resources and recover waste for reuse and recycling.

Process operators sort waste for sellable products, for example to produce livestock feed made from waste flows. Although classed as practical-skill work, knowledge of the quality of incoming raw materials is crucial.

ENABLING CIRCULAR JOBS



DESIGN FOR THE FUTURE

Adopt a systemic perspective during the design process, to employ the right materials for appropriate lifetime and extended future use.

Circular equipment engineers design products to enable parts and resource recovery after the product's use phase. They excel in complex problem solving on a technical level designs for the future.



RETHINK THE BUSINESS MODEL

Consider opportunities to create greater value and align incentives through business models that build on the interaction between products and services.

Demand planners oversee supply and demand to make refurbishment a profitable business model. This role requires logical thinking and reasoning.



INCORPORATE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Track and optimise resource use and strengthen connections between supply-chain actors through digital, online platforms and technologies.

Building information managers maintain data on construction components so as to keep track of these physical assets. They understand how to integrate and interpret virtual information management systems.



TEAM UP TO CREATE JOINT VALUE

Work together throughout the supply chain, internally within the organisation and with the public sector to increase transparency and create shared value.

Procurement professionals stimulate the demand for secondary materials and discern and connect new suppliers in order to do so. This profile points to the need for entrepreneurial, interpersonal skills.



STRENGTHEN AND ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE

Develop research, structure knowledge, encourage innovation networks and disseminate findings with integrity.

Teachers transfer knowledge and skills to the current and future workforce so as to equip workers with skills for circular economy strategies.

INDIRECT CIRCULAR JOBS

Examples of indirectly circular jobs are:

- The **courier**, who uses and maintains a fleet of secondhand bikes to bring packages to and from consumers as part of a reverse logistics scheme;
- The **bank**, which uses repair services to maintain the electrical equipment used in its day to day operations;
- The **farmer**, who utilises renewable energy in the production of their agricultural products.

HOW CAN THIS DEFINITION BE USED?

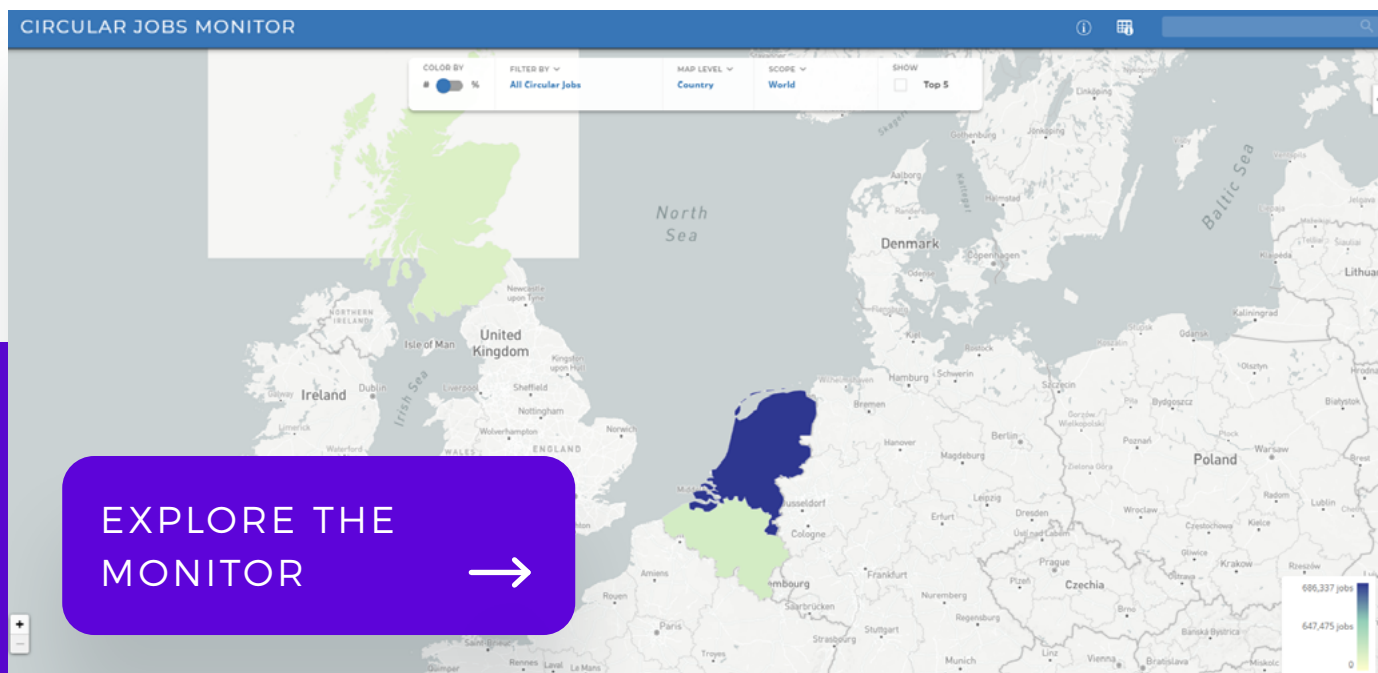
To tap into the opportunities the circular economy presents labour markets, we need to gather evidence on what circular jobs and skills currently exist in specific sectors and territories. Which jobs are already part of the circular economy? Where are these jobs located? How are these jobs distributed across sectors and in relation to circular strategies?

Monitoring employment in the circular economy

To answer these questions, we have developed the [Circular Jobs Monitor](#), an online tool that gathers, displays, and keeps track of the number and range of jobs that are part of the circular economy.

The Circular Jobs Monitor provides policy-makers, economists, and labour organisations with insights into the relationship between jobs and the circular economy. These insights can facilitate the design of evidence-based strategies for promoting the circular economy and decent work opportunities, and a benchmark of current circular activity against which to monitor future progress.

Unemployment is high on political agendas across the world, particularly against the backdrop of the covid-19 pandemic. Quantifying the circular economy in terms of its impact on jobs can strengthen the argument for focusing on circular economy activities.



To learn more about circular jobs, and explore the activities and resources available via Circle Economy's [Circular Jobs Initiative](#)

Would you like to collaborate with us?
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