

RREUSE ANSWERS THE CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON THE LIFE PROGRAMME MIDTERM EVALUATION

As the only EU programme dedicated to environmental and climate actions, RREUSE believes the LIFE Programme should further reinforce the EU objectives of a socially fair and just green transition.

The RREUSE network of social enterprises active in re-use, repair, and recycling activities are an example of actors advancing an inclusive and climate-resilient circular economy. They offer job and training opportunities for vulnerable groups in their green skills workshops, second-hand stores and re-use and repair centers. RREUSE estimates that, on average, a social enterprise creates 70 jobs per 1,000 tonnes collected for its re-use activities, prompting social innovative solutions to tackle unemployment and environmental degradation ([source](#)).

However, RREUSE highlights the following considerations for the mid-term revision of the LIFE Programme:

- Address obstacles social enterprises face in accessing funding that covers both environmental and social objectives.

The European Commission's 2021 Communication launching the EU Action Plan on the Social Economy also highlights this issue. The Communication states *[social enterprises and other social economy actors] report the need for support to identify and adopt greener practices, build capacity and knowledge, including funding opportunities for environmental goals (p.17)*.

Similarly, RREUSE members stress the need for EU funding streams like the LIFE Programme to better align with national social and circular economy strategies. The LIFE's sub-programme "Circular economy and quality of life" should thus ensure support for social and environmental actors like social economy enterprises and help integrate socio-economic considerations into environmental policies and funding.

- Safeguard access to funding for social economy actors.

Alongside other European social economy networks, it proposes to allocate 10% of every relevant fund to social enterprises and other social economy actors across programmes which address circular economy and social inclusion goals such as LIFE, Horizon 2020, Just Transition Fund, Cohesion funds, and European Regional Development Fund. In the current context of rising costs of living and other socio-economic disruptions by the Covid 19 pandemic, the upcoming mid-term revision of the MFF should serve as an opportunity to mobilise the EU Budget for a more Social Europe, including on environmental issues. The 2021 Special Eurobarometer also reveals that nine in ten Europeans (88%) consider a social Europe to be important to them personally (<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2266>). Thus,



funds with a robust green dimension like the Life Programme should play a greater role in supporting an inclusive circular economy.

RREUSE is an independent non-profit organisation representing social enterprises active in the field of re-use, repair and recycling, with 32 members across Europe and the USA. Our main vision is for Europe to support the role of social enterprise in a circular economy, providing meaningful work opportunities to thousands of vulnerable members of our community through innovative economic, social and environmentally beneficial activities. RREUSE's primary mission is to help tackle poverty, social exclusion and a throwaway culture by promoting policies, best practices and partnerships that support the professionalism and development of social enterprises working in environmental services with high potential for local and inclusive job creation, notably re-use and repair.

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