

RREUSE comments on Horizon 2020 alignment to Green Deal Objectives

3rd June 2020

Introduction

[RREUSE](#) is pleased to provide comments to the current [consultation](#) on how this year's Horizon 2020 call can reinforce Green Deal objectives. Given the breadth of the consultation, and the horizontal nature of these comments, we are providing this response as an addendum to the consultation itself.

1. Include specific reference to social enterprises

Throughout the majority of the 11 Call areas and their sub-topics RREUSE welcomes the intention to financially support research projects and pilots contributing to social innovation, inclusiveness, social justice as well as inclusive job creation. However, it would be much appreciated to have explicit references to social economy actors or social enterprises directly given their direct contribution to these goals through their activities. Justification for this can be found in the recently published Circular Economy Action Plan which states:

*“Circularity can be expected to have a positive net effect on job creation provided that workers acquire the skills required by the green transition. The potential of the **social economy**, which is a pioneer in job creation linked to the circular economy, will be further leveraged by the mutual benefits of supporting the green transition and strengthening social inclusion”. COM(2020) 98 final*

Having specific references to social enterprises would encourage their participation in project consortia and directly support the objectives of social inclusion, equality and fairness. Social economy actors are active in all sectors, including the circular economy, and therefore should be referenced in multiple call priorities. These would include:

- Call Area 1: Increasing climate ambition: cross sectoral challenges
 - Topic: Towards climate-neutral and socially innovative cities
- Call Area 3: Industry for a clean and circular economy
 - Topic: Demonstration of systemic solutions for the territorial deployment of the circular economy
- Call Area 6: Farm to Fork Strategy
 - Topic: Testing and demonstrating systemic innovation for sustainable food from farm and fork
- Call Area 10: Empowering citizens for transition towards a climate neutral, sustainable Europe
 - Topic: Behavioural, social and cultural change for the Green Deal

In addition, the European Commission is currently working on an EU Action Plan for the Social Economy, to be published next year. It would be highly appreciated if this ongoing work to support social enterprise was also recognised explicitly in the Horizon Call.

2. Reuse and repair should be top priority in supporting circularity

Political support for re-use and repair activities is prevalent in the European Commission's Circular Economy action plan, both from the perspective of the environment and job creation. Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, also recently recognised that "although there is a great further economic potential in striving to achieve waste management and recycling targets, (...) potentially even greater rewards would come from investments further up in the hierarchy of circularity"¹. This is where repair and re-use activities are.

However, when reviewing Call Area 3: Industry for a clean and circular economy, references to both are lacking while recycling is prominent. Despite the welcome inclusion of support for community based innovation actions such as 'local repair schemes', we feel the call should encourage a more holistic approach to supporting systems, services and initiatives promoting product-lifetime extension. Such activities should be explicitly referenced in the call. Approaches could focus on projects maximising job creation potential and promoting social value in the circular economy as well as more focussed projects such as new digital tools to help optimise re-use and repair operations.

Furthermore, circular activities resulting in product lifetime extension contribute directly and indirectly to a number of specific and horizontal call areas. As such they should be recognised in a number of call areas, not only in call area 3 directly linked to the circular economy. RREUSE believes that in all the projects aiming to support increased climate ambition (Call Area 1); the circular economy (Call Area 3); the Farm to Fork Strategy (Call Area 6); Strengthening knowledge in the green deal (Call Area 9); Empowering Citizens (Call Area 10), reuse and repair activities should be recognised.

3. Extra clarity on how circular clusters link to the Commissions wider work on Industrial Clusters

RREUSE is aware of the significant amount of support the Commission is giving to industrial clusters, through its Cluster Collaboration Platform programme. The focus of Call 3, topic 2 is on supporting circular territorial clusters or 'circular economy basin' that is a system composed of relevant and complementary territorial actors. It would be helpful to have some clarity as to whether the terminology used in the call is linked to the Commission's general work on clusters and to know whether only those organisations who make up an industrial cluster at the moment can apply for the call. As it stands, it is not entirely sure if one relates to the other.

From RREUSE's perspective if a project partnership consists of a group of actors who wish to form a cluster on a given territory, but which does not yet exist, it would be helpful to make this eligibility criterion clearer and be explicit that this is possible.

¹ ENVI Committee (12/05/2020), Exchange of views with Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries - Presentation of the Circular Economy Action Plan and on the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

About RREUSE

RREUSE is a network representing social enterprises active in re-use, repair and recycling across 25 European countries and the USA. The 850 social enterprises federated by RREUSE's 31 members provide work opportunities for 95,000 employees, volunteers and trainees, collectively diverting 1 million tonnes of goods from landfill per year.

RREUSE's vision is a Europe that supports the role of social enterprise in the transition to a circular economy, prioritising activities in re-use and repair. Actions under the European Green Deal, Circular Economy Action Plan 2.0 and future Action Plan for the Social Economy must ensure a job-rich, just and inclusive circular transition focused on the wellbeing of all individuals

For more information, contact Mathieu Rama, Senior Policy Officer on mathieu.rama@rreuse.org