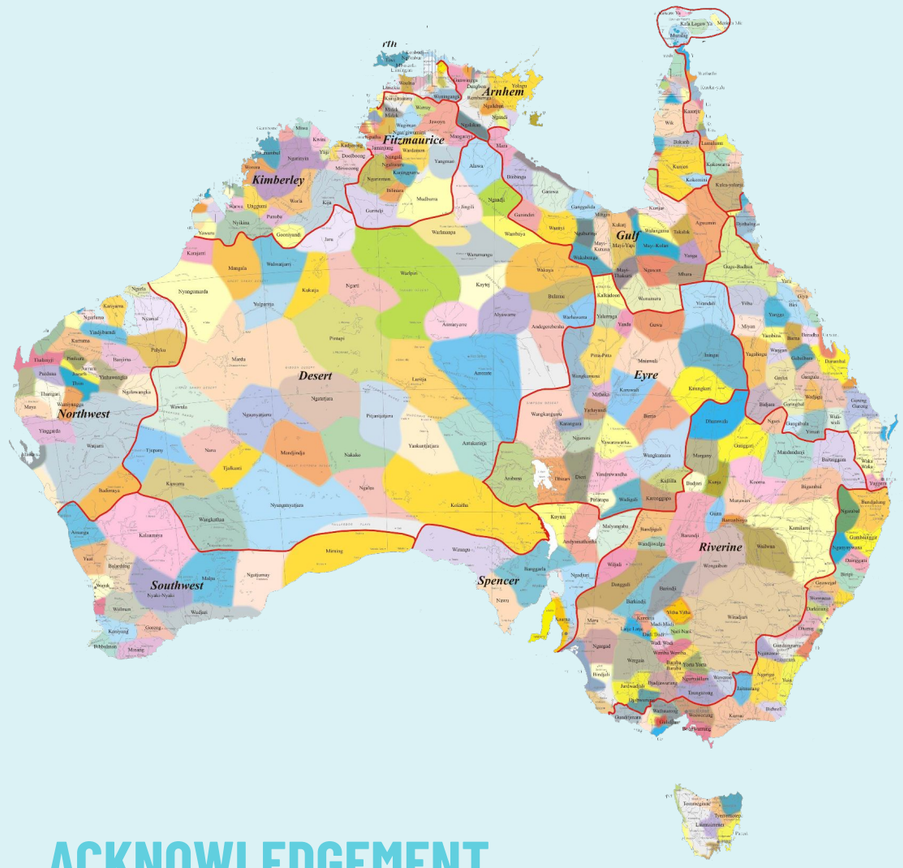
BASS COAST

BASS COAST CIRCULAR CASE STUDIES

DECEMBER 2024

Developed by Coreo



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the first and continuing custodians of the countries and the grounds upon which we collectively work, create, live and dream.

Bass Coast Shire Council acknowledge the Bunurong as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and Lore.

Bass Coast Shire Council celebrates the opportunity to embrace and empower the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island Communities in their diversity. Bass Coast Shire Council will create opportunities for future recognition and respectful partnerships that will honour the Traditional Owners and Custodians, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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FOREWORD

Regional Communities and the Circular Economy

Victoria is on a transformative journey toward a circular economy, guided by the Recycling Victoria policy, the state's 10-year action plan to reduce waste, conserve resources, and achieve climate resilience. This plan aligns with Victoria's ambitious targets of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 and a 75-80% reduction by 2035. As the population grows to an expected 11.2 million by 2056, including significant growth in regional communities, addressing the pressures of waste generation and resource scarcity is essential.

Regional communities, like Bass Coast, play a critical role in this transition, as they face unique challenges and opportunities in managing waste, conserving resources, and supporting local industries.

Recycling Victoria emphasises systemic change across supply chains—from production design to disposal—and prioritises collaboration among governments, industries, and communities to create a sustainable, circular economy.

For regional areas such as Bass Coast, this means not only improving material recovery rates but also leveraging local solutions to turn waste into economic value, support jobs, and strengthen climate resilience. By addressing challenges in key material streams, such as textiles, plastics, and emerging issues like batteries and solar panels, regional communities can lead the way in creating a cleaner, smarter future while contributing to Victoria's statewide vision.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Program Overview

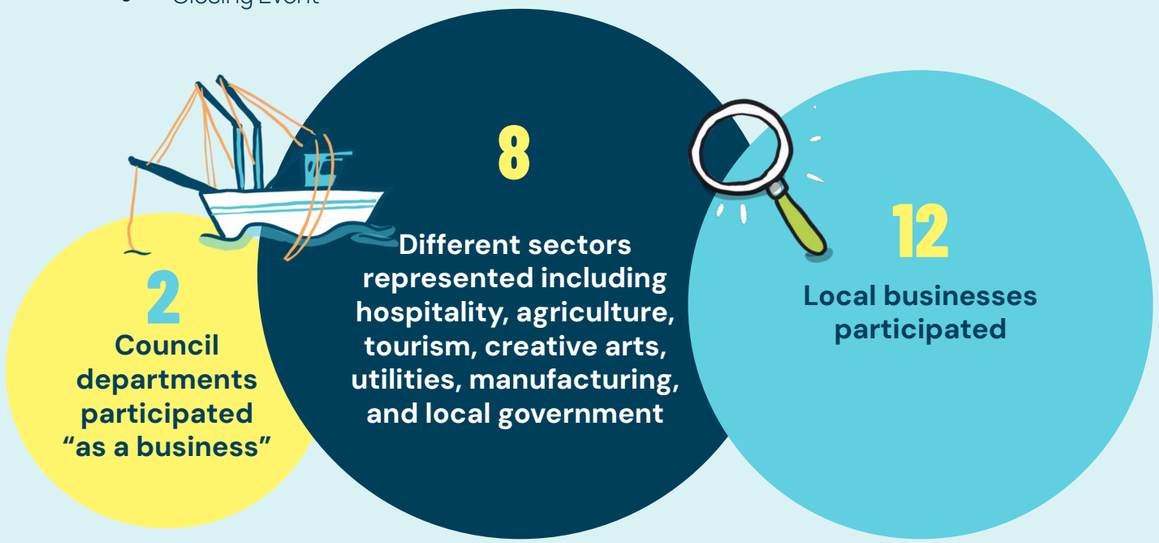
Bass Coast's Circular Economy Business Accelerator Program was supported by the Circular Economy Innovation Fund as part of the Circular Economy Business Innovation Centre (CEBIC). CEBIC is delivered by Sustainability Victoria on behalf of the Victorian Government. The program was launched in response to Bass Coast Shire Council's commitment to support local businesses in transitioning to circular economy models. This initiative aims to inspire wider adoption of circular practices across Victoria, promoting sustainability and economic resilience.
To achieve this, Coreo delivered a tailored program to accelerate the uptake of circular design and business models within the Bass Coast region and beyond. The program included:

- Launch Event
- One-on-one's & Action Plans
- Circular Check In's
- Case Studies
- Closing Event

Through this Accelerator Program, the following businesses from across the region participated, significantly enhancing the circular maturity of their operations:

- Clay & Co. Phillip Island
- Ecoliv Buildings
- Esplanade Hotel – Inverloch
- Genesta House Bed & Breakfast
- Phillip Island Community and Learning Centre Inc. (PICAL)
- Phillip Island Winery
- Ripples n Tonic Farm
- San Remo Fisherman's Co-operative
- San Remo Hotel and Motel
- Watersure
- Wildlife Coast Cruises

This diverse group of businesses embraced circular practices, advancing sustainability and contributing to the wider goals of Victoria's circular economy transition.



WHAT IS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY?

A new operating model for industry, one that can transform the future of business, supply chains, investors, and community for the better.

While there are many definitions of a circular economy, they all align on core elements. The definition we have adopted is from Australian business leaders within the Climate Leaders Coalition: A circular economy is an ecosystem of stakeholders working together to eliminate waste and pollution, circulate products and materials at their highest value, and regenerate nature and society.

The circular economy represents the ultimate goal—a macroeconomic transformation. However, no single entity can "enact" the economy. Rather, it is something we all contribute to. Circularity, therefore, is how each of us can play a role in reaching that end goal, guided by the three, globally accepted principles of a circular economy:

1. ELIMINATE WASTE & POLLUTION
First, we eliminate waste and pollution. This means designing waste and pollution out of the system from the start—like turning off the tap instead of mopping up an overflowing bathtub.

2. CIRCULATE PRODUCTS & RESOURCES AT THEIR HIGHEST VALUE
Next, we circulate products and resources at their highest value. The goal is to keep materials in the system longer, avoiding downcycling, which degrades their value.

3. REGENERATE NATURAL & SOCIAL SYSTEMS
Finally, we regenerate natural and social systems. This principle shifts us from doing 'less harm' to actively designing 'more good' into the system, regenerating what has been extracted from society and nature.

WHY ARE WE TRANSITIONING TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY?

Transitioning to a circular economy in Australia is expected to add $1.9 trillion[1] in economic benefits over the next 15 years, and deliver long term resilience to communities.

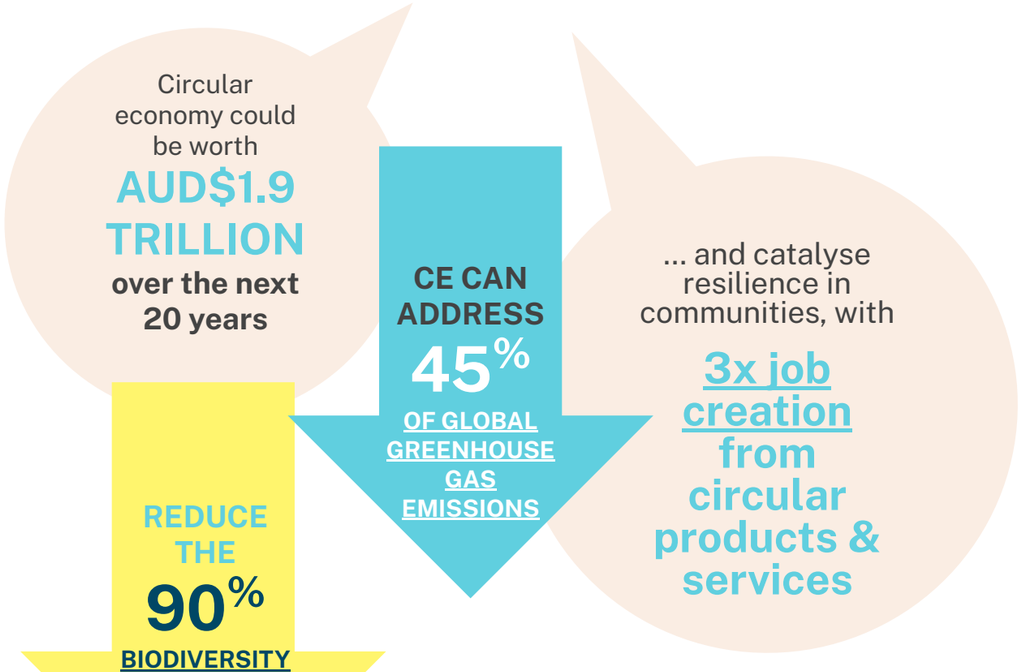
The circular economy is a new economic model that promises to unlock huge value for strong, community-based economies such as the Bass Coast.

Beyond the financial value, economies fundamentally need to transition to a circular economy because the traditional 'take, make, waste' model—deeply ingrained in our way of doing business—is no longer sustainable, posing significant risks to our economy, industries, businesses, health, and ecosystems.

To move forward, we must establish a shared understanding of what a circular economy truly entails, springboarding off the Circular Economy Business Accelerator Program to lay the foundation for future progress.

"Australia's transition to a circular economy is more than an environmental goal. It's a chance to secure our unique natural heritage for future generations while growing the economy and reaching net zero."

DCEEW on a circular economy in Australia



[1]PWC REPORT BY Coreo

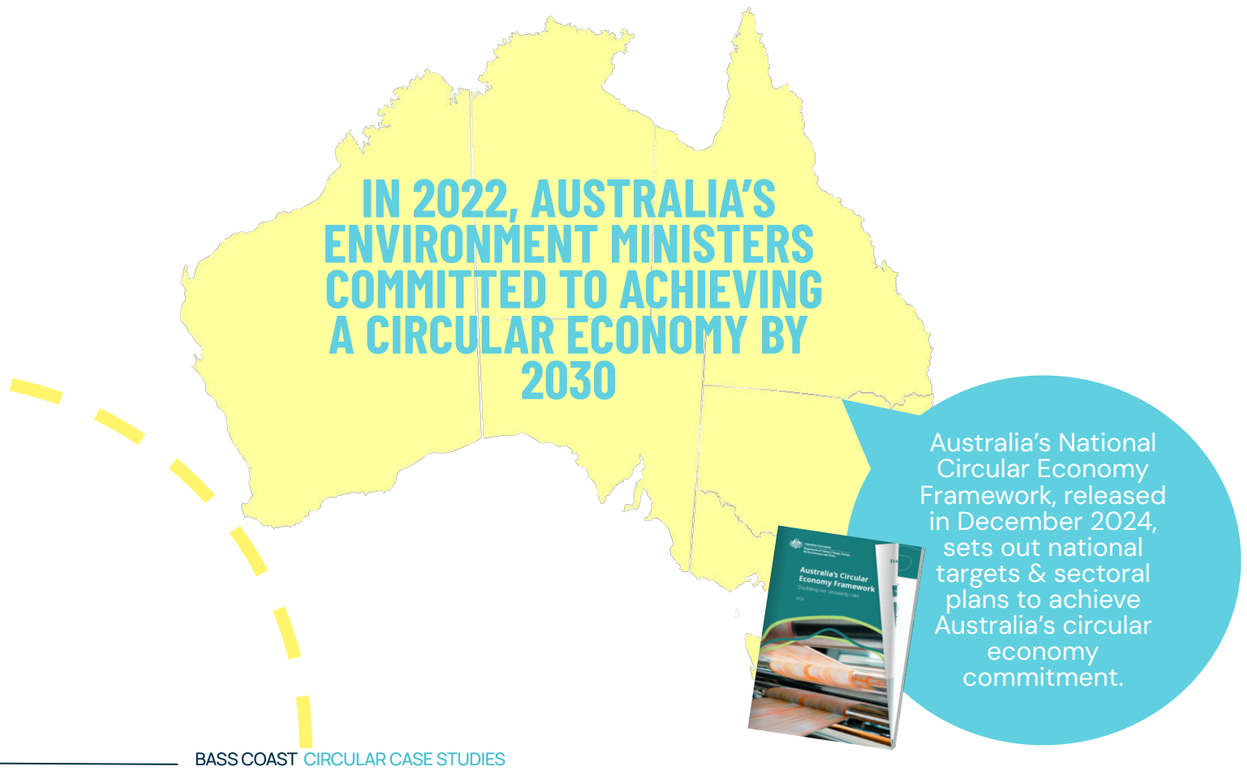
COUNTRIES ARE TRANSITIONING

Rapid uptake of strategies & regulation worldwide, catalysing the adoption of circularity in business.

75 COUNTRIES have a National Circular Economy Policy (up from 40 in 2023) Live map here

The Australian government is increasingly prioritising circular economy practices as a strategic response to environmental challenges and economic opportunities. Recent high-level policy announcements underscore a significant shift towards a circular approach, with the release of the Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group Interim Report, the New Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy with circular procurement criteria, and the Future Made in Australia Act. The Australian Government has just released a National Circular Economy Framework, marking the first time Australia will have a national policy on circular economy to guide Australia's transition.

These strategies collectively aim to embed circularity into national, state, and local frameworks, governance structures, and procurement practices, reflecting a growing commitment to sustainability and resource efficiency. This transition not only addresses pressing environmental concerns but also positions Australia to enhance its economic resilience and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving global landscape.



. . . AND THE VICTORIAN ECONOMY IS GOING CIRCULAR TOO

The Victorian State Government has introduced several policies & programs supporting the transition to a circular economy.

Victoria's plan for a circular economy

Victoria's circular economy plan, Recycling Victoria: A new economy, steps out the systemic change that's needed to cut waste and boost recycling and reuse of our precious resources. It lays out a plan for a cleaner, greener Victoria with less waste and pollution, more jobs and a sustainable and thriving circular economy.

Regional Circular Economy Plans (RCEPs)

Regional Circular Economy Plans (RCEPs) set out five regions' aspirations for a sustainable and thriving circular economy to 2030. They identify local investment priorities to help achieve the community's aspirations.

Reducing Plastic Pollution in Victoria

Victoria's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan tackles single-use plastics to protect the environment, wildlife, and community health. Since 2023, items such as straws, cutlery, plates, drink stirrers, cotton buds, and expanded polystyrene food and drink containers are banned across the state. This applies to all types of plastic, including degradable and compostable varieties.

The Circular Economy Business Innovation Centre (CEBIC)

CEBIC is one of the key actions from Victoria's circular economy policy that aims to invest in and support businesses and organisations in Victoria to 'go circular'. This involves transforming how they use resources, adopting innovative approaches to sustainability, and developing future-proof models that design out waste.

Container Deposit Scheme

Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme (CDS Vic) increases the recycling of drink cans, bottles and cartons by offering a financial reward for returning drink containers for recycling. It lowers clean-up costs for councils and makes producers more responsible for their products once used.



PROGRAM METHODOLOGY

Methodology and results

The Circular Economy Business Accelerator Program, which ran from August to December 2024, achieved several key milestones in promoting the adoption of circular economy. The program began with a successful launch event, attended by 18 participants, followed by 14 one-on-one consultations where businesses developed tailored action plans. The businesses then implemented their action plans in a challenge as part of the program. Additionally, five case studies were created, highlighting businesses that demonstrated exceptional progress in circular economy initiatives.

Throughout the Accelerator Program, a variety of valuable resources and learning materials were produced for the businesses, designed to support ongoing circular practices beyond the program's conclusion. These included an **online workshop recording**, which participants can revisit for further insights, as well as several practical, editable templates including the 4-Minute Shower Song Signage; a Circular Economy Action Plan template to guide business strategy; a Circular Economy Action Plan Timeline template; and circular communications copy that can be adapted for wider use. Together, these resources equip businesses with the tools and knowledge they need to continue to implement and track circular economy initiatives, ensuring lasting impacts.

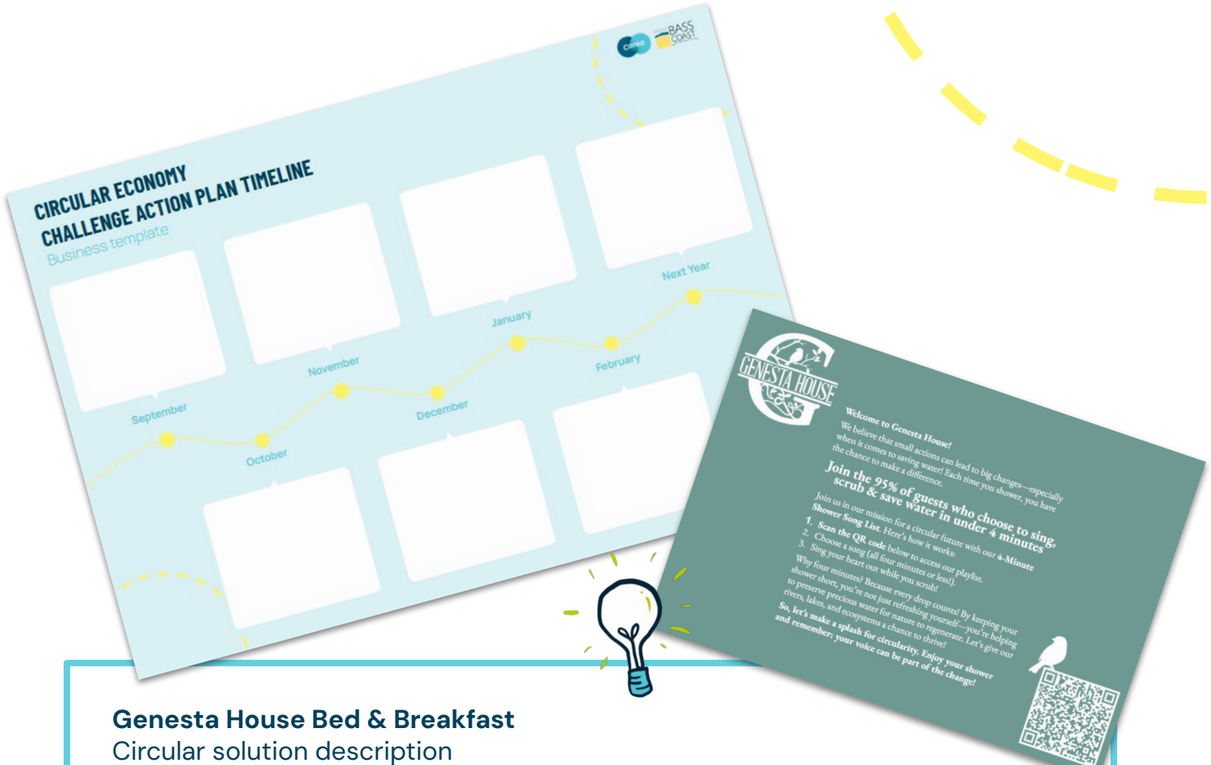
An initial workshop, attended by 18 participants, featured an educational session on the circular economy, followed by an interactive activity designed to help businesses ideate innovative circular economy opportunities

One on one check ins for personalised advice and guidance

Five case studies were developed on participating businesses

Launch event	4 September
One on one's & action plans	Early September - Mid October
Organisation check-ins	Mid October - Early December
Case study development	November - Early December
Closing event	9 December

Closing event to wrap up, sharing the five case studies, successes, and learnings from the program & next steps for continued engagement.



Genesta House Bed & Breakfast
Circular solution description
Briefly describe your circular idea. Integrate any improvements or refinements you have considered since initial ideation (Include how it will work and what circular economy design principles or business models it will use)

Increase guest satisfaction, foster a positive environmental impact, and strengthen the Genesta House brand by:

1. **Expanding the 4-Minute Shower Song List:** Curating a more diverse and engaging playlist to appeal to a wider range of guests.
2. **Creating Physical Copies:** Providing printed and laminated copies of the song list for guests to take with them.
3. **Improving Signage and Branding:** Designing eye-catching and informative signs that align with the Genesta House aesthetic and messaging.
4. **Developing a Shareable Template:** Creating a customisable template that allows other businesses in the region to adopt the 4-minute shower initiative, promoting a collective effort towards sustainability.

KEY INSIGHTS

Five key shared challenges among program participants

UNSUPPORTED SELF-STARTED INITIATIVES	Many passionate businesses and individuals have started their own circular initiatives. However, these efforts are rarely supported or recognised, leaving them disconnected and under-resourced.
LOW AVAILABILITY OF MATERIAL CIRCULATION SERVICES & SPACES	Resources and services to enable material recovery are often inaccessible or unavailable. For example, equipment sharing, local processing infrastructure, and convenient drop-off or collection points are limited, creating barriers to scaling circular initiatives.
LIMITED BANDWIDTH	The everyday demands of running a business leaves little room for innovation or experimentation. Many businesses are stretched thin, with limited time and resources to explore or implement circular economy opportunities.
LACK OF FUNDING	Financial constraints are a persistent barrier to circular initiatives. Without adequate funding, businesses struggle to invest in the infrastructure, tools, and processes needed to transition toward more sustainable practices. There is currently very little public funding for small businesses available.
GAPS IN CIRCULAR KNOWLEDGE	Businesses in the region are at various stages of their circular journeys. While some are already implementing circular practices, others face challenges in measuring their impact, ideating new initiatives, or weaving circularity into their core narrative.

KEY INSIGHTS

Five key opportunities to drive the transition to a circular economy in Bass Coast

COLLABORATION PLATFORMS	Creating platforms that enable businesses to connect, share resources, and collaborate on circular initiatives can foster a thriving ecosystem of innovation. These platforms could provide businesses with access to materials, ideas, and partnerships, while also offering a way to track and help provide visibility to their efforts.
MATERIAL CIRCULATION SPACES & SERVICES	Expanding the availability of accessible, well-distributed local material circulation spaces & services, such as equipment sharing programs, storage, processing infrastructure, and convenient collection points, presents a significant opportunity to scale circular initiatives.
FOCUS CIRCULAR EFFORTS WHERE IT CAN RELIEVE BUSINESS PRESSURE	Facilitating easier access to quality, reused, or shared materials can allow businesses to tap into local material flows in a more efficient, timely, and affordable way to alleviates operational burdens and reduce procurement & waste management costs.
TARGETED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	Developing grants, subsidies, or investment programs tailored to small businesses can unlock significant potential for circularity. Accessible funding can help businesses invest in critical infrastructure and pilot innovative circular initiatives, while also encouraging private sector investment.
CIRCULAR RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESS	Offering education, tools, and practical examples that meet businesses where they are on their circular journey can accelerate progress. This could include ideation workshops, measurement tools, and storytelling guidance to help businesses connect their circular efforts to their core strategies and stakeholder expectations.

Report
prepared by



for

