

The circular economy (CE) has wind in its sails. Exponentially increasing academic attention (Goyal et al., 2021); interest among policy makers, industry and financiers (Dewick et al., 2020); increased trade (CircularEarth.org). Momentum and a bandwagon effect are propelling the implementation of CE principles and practices, well beyond the industrialized Global North. But is the pace of transition too fast? Have the wider, second order consequences of the adoption and scaling-up of circular practices been fully evaluated?

There is already concern over the extent that social factors are being integrated into circular thinking (Mies and Gold, 2021; Schroder et al., 2020). The rebound effect, Jevons' paradox, and boomerang effect suggest limits to the potential for environmental burden reduction following CE initiatives (Korhonen et al., 2018). Biodiversity consequences of CE is particularly poorly understood. Buchmann-Duck and Beazley (2020) critique the conventional wisdom assuming CE and biodiversity are synergistic. They point to strategies of biomimicry, eco-system services, bioeconomy and renewables, that—under certain circumstances—not only do not contribute to conserving biodiversity, but can harm biodiversity. Others are more optimistic. Forslund et al. (2022) model how the interventions based on CE principles – narrowing, slowing, closing, regenerating – can “halt and partly reverse” biodiversity loss by 2035, especially in the Global South (even when the circular initiatives are in the North).

Context matters. The types of circular interventions, and consequential impacts on biodiversity in Finland (Ruokamo et al., 2022) are different from those in Brazil (Paes et al., 2021). We need to understand better the biodiversity impacts – both locally and globally – of circular practices. At the (Bio-) Diversifying Circular Economy Research and Innovation session we invite interdisciplinary academics and non-academic stakeholders to share their experiences and reflect on the challenges of fostering circular economy projects while contributing to enhanced biodiversity.

Format

At the (Bio-)Diversifying Circular Economy Research and Innovation session we will hear the perspectives of researchers and practitioners from a diverse set of organisations, all of whom are considering the implications of circular practices for biodiversity:

- Tim Forslund – [SITRA](#) – will share insights from a recent project that has modelled circular changes to sectors with the largest potential for halting biodiversity loss and regional biodiversity improvements;
- Enni Ruokamo – [Finnish Environment Institute](#) – who has been working on a project looking at circular actions that reduce raw material extraction and relieve land use pressures to promote biodiversity in Finland;
- Sentele Tabane - [Kusala Green and Biodiversity](#) – who supports natural resources management projects in South Africa where the focus is also on communities and women/youth development;
- Henrique Pacini - [Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution, UNCTAD](#) – who will share insights from UNCTAD initiatives on circular economy and biodiversity; and
- Shallinney Ramirez – [Terra Nouva](#) – who is Director of the Project "Circulating in the Amazon", which is exploring the implementation of Circular Economies and Safety

Standards in Agroindustrial Plants of 5 value chains in the San Martin and Ucayali regions of Peru.

In the second half of the session, participants will join facilitated breakout sessions and discuss challenges raised by the speakers.