

# CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN ROMANIA

**A FRD CENTER BRIEF - 2021**



# INTRODUCTION

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The Sibiu International Theatre Festival is the most complex festival  
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important performing arts festivals in Europe, alongside Edinburgh  
International Festival (Great Britain) and Avignon Festival (France).**



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Covers markets such as Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Czechia, Serbia, Lithuania, Turkey etc.

For over 20 years, provides assistance to:

- Foreign companies, SMEs, corporations
- Foreign export promotion agencies, international trade organisations, global consulting groups, chambers of commerce, commercial sections of embassies

FRD Center is an Enterprise Ireland trade consultant, an accredited Expert Consultant with: Switzerland Global Enterprise Expert Network, [Business Finland Consultants Network](#), [Sweden on the Go Consultants Network](#), Red de promocion exterior, Instituto de Fomento Region de Murcia and an EU commission approved partner of “[EU GATEWAY | BUSINESS AVENUES](#)”

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### Services include

Multi-country market research, sector studies  
Local business partners search and selection  
Players identification and detailed profiles  
Comparative analysis  
Data collection, interviews with KOLs  
B2B, Trade mission - physical, virtual

[www.frdcenter.ro](http://www.frdcenter.ro)





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# MAJOR EVENTS 2020 - 2021

examples

CIRCULAR ECONOMY  
IN ROMANIA



Two of the most important events related to the Circular Economy in Romania in 2020 were the Circular Economy Forum where the effects of the European Green Deal for Romania were discussed and the adoption of Law 181/2020 on biodegradable waste

In 2021, the business magazine The Diplomat Bucharest organised the first edition of the “The Circular Economy Roadmap 2021” online event, followed by the “Sustainability in Business” conference and Sustainability Awards Gala

During 30 - 31 March 2021, the digital platform dedicated to environmental education [Guerilla Verde](#) organised in partnerships with institutional and non-governmental partners the Forum of Circular Economy

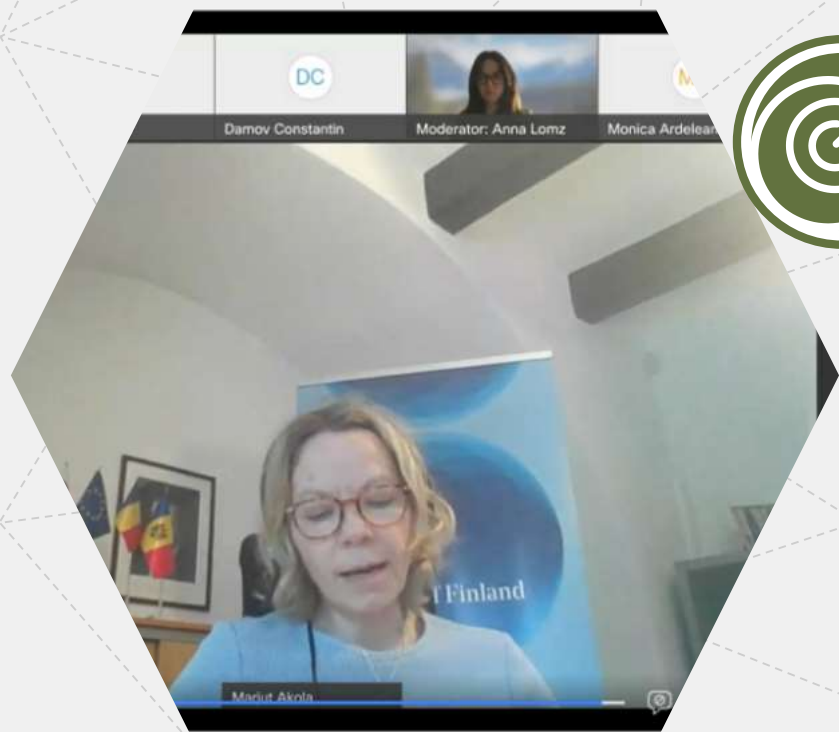
In June 2021, the non-profit organisation [Romania Green Building Council](#) organised the webinar “Sustainable Interior Design in the Context of the Circular Economy”



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In June 2021, The Romanian Department for Sustainable Development and the Embassy of Finland in Bucharest, together with [Business Finland](#), organised the webinar “Towards Circular Economy: Finnish and Romanian experiences”



Speakers included representatives of Romanian and Finnish companies and organisations such as:

- [Romanian Circular Economy Coalition \(CERC\)](#)
- [Fortum](#)
- IRCEM – The Institute for Circular Economy and Environment
- [Betolar](#)
- RoGBC
- [SITRA](#) - the Finnish Innovation Fund



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*with your specific demand for local support*



## Cleantech Romania

represents the cooperation solution  
between business environment,  
institutional environment and the  
scientific and civil society for sustainable  
development through innovation and  
technology

According to the Executive Director of [Cleantech Romania](#), the main change that will appear on the Romanian market starting with July 2021 is the implementation of the Single Use plastic Directive of EU, that was announced already for a couple of years. This is one of the first important changes in Europe, made under the Circular Economy Strategy of EU. This Directive represents an important change in the mindset of companies and also should become an important step in changing the mind set of the end-user of plastic pack ( bags, delivery box, etc). Based on their opinion, this can be considered as a pilot project for the rest of the 8 directives that are discussed and will be implemented on EU level in the short-medium term in order to create in 2050 a continent climate-neutral. Based on a analysis made by Cleantech Romania in 2019, the first results for Romania of this directive will be a reorganization of the market of plastic bags and containers producers. The small companies will not be able to keep up with the big ones on technological changes.

According to the representative of the consulting firm [Environmental Strategies](#), in 2021 we will see an increased interest in the Circular Economy topic in Romania, and this will be seen in conferences and events. One of these is the forthcoming conference “Circular Waste” , organized by Green Revolution Association this coming September, with a particular focus on

WEEE



## Environmental Strategies

is a consulting firm which over the last 15 years, has served over 300 major corporations primarily in the EMEA Region, providing them with strategic sustainability consulting services in a wide range of sectors and industries

The event organizers are starting to realize the concept of circular economy encompasses much more than strictly waste recycling, so they are trying to focus on the most pressing issues, such as resource management, product re-design, circular economy models, and supply chain sustainability, things that are addressed more in circular economy events in the Western world.





According to the representative of [Waste Digital Revolution](#), there are several regulatory packages adopted by EU that will be transposed and become effective in Romania in 2021, such as single use plastic or the tax on non-recycled plastic. The implementation of these EU Directives is very important, as we are used to asking to the Commission derogation periods for such transposition processes.

Romania is also facing 5 infringement procedures from the European Commission due to poor waste management regulation and weak results on separate waste collection, and the financial amounts are not to be neglected. It would be a burden for the citizen to be imposed to pay for the lack of vision of the competent authorities but it might be a moment when they realize that without individual involvement sustainable results cannot be achieved.

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### Waste Digital Revolution

with over 10 years of know-how of the waste management system in Romania, the Company provides intelligent solutions for streamlining and digitizing waste management operations



## IRCEM

independent non-governmental organization, formed as a research think tank, accelerates the transition to circularity, starting from the bottom with concentrated actions consisting in the development of practical and scalable solutions, national campaigns, communicating and involving to spread the circular message and sustainable development.



**IRCEM**

Institutul pentru Cercetări  
în Economie Circulară  
și Mediu "Ernest Lupan"

According to the representative of [IRCEM – The Romanian Institute for Circular Economy and Environment](#), starting with 2021, due to the collaboration between IRCEM and the Government's Sustainable Development Department, Romania will have its first Strategy for Circular Economy - ROCES 2030. The draft strategy is currently being publicly debated and after this stage the implementation of the strategic objectives will follow. The existence of such a document, which comprehensively addresses the essential elements of the circular economy (waste recovery, circular business models, public green acquisitions, etc.) is crucial for obtaining financial funding for circular economy projects and also for monitoring the progress of the transition to a circular economy through specific and measurable objectives.

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# RECYCLING IN ROMANIA 2021

pressing issues

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IN ROMANIA



financing and implementing an infrastructure for municipal separate waste collection according to the legislation in force



implementing principles such as “Polluter pays” and “Pay as you throw” are a must. Until a clear connection between waste collection performance and each citizen pocket is made, progress can be achieved

more enforcement is needed for selective waste collection and re-organizing these services at regional levels so that it would allow fees being averaged at a convenient level for the citizen.



there are very few waste recycling operators. Most are focusing on those waste streams where subsidies exist or where the generator pays for their collection because is a business/financial driver to do so

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The level of recycling, considering all the recycling loops, remains extremely low in Romania, and the negative evolution raises numerous challenges.

Recycling is 5 times lower than the European average according to Eurostat. In a context where raw materials are becoming increasingly scarce and expensive, recycling only 13% of waste generated in Romania means wasting valuable resources available.



The main challenge is to address the gap between the results of waste management (waste containing convertible materials in accordance with the development stage of solutions and technologies) and their effective reintroduction into new products.

The establishment of a market for convertible waste, and a transparent and dynamic market for secondary materials are paramount tasks that should be carried out by the government in collaboration with the private sector. Another pressing issue is the revision of regulations on the reuse and recycling of textiles in order to be able to create a market for sustainable and circular textiles.



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**Are you interested to learn more about the opportunities in the Romanian Circular Market?**

**Who are the main players and decision makers?**

**How to reach the relevant local partners and how to present your products / services to them?**

**FRD Center is monitoring the waste management and recycling activities in Romania. Upon demand can generate information and introductions based on the Client's requirements.**

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***with your specific request for local support***

### Auchan Romania

launched a responsibility project focused on the circular usage of

clothing.  
**AUCHAN**

"A new life by Auchan" programme, in addition to the clothing collections already available in the Auchan units, the clients are able to buy pre-owned clothes, in very good sale condition, through partnerships with specialised fashion stores

Decathlon organises the Trocathlon fair of second hand sports products and equipment in good condition.

**DECATHLON**

The fair accepts sports articles from various manufacturers, not only those purchased from the Decathlon stores. The client receives a voucher with the value of the sale price.

H&M runs in Romania the "Rabla la haine" programme. The H&M stores receive bags with used clothes, regardless of brand. The client receives a voucher to be used for future purchasing.

**H&M**



**CARREFOUR**

Carrefour Romania runs "Punem Pret pe Plastic", a circular economy programme aimed at reducing the amount of plastic packaging and introducing the plastic into a responsible circuit, through reduction, reuse and recycling.

The Romanian alumina producer ALUM, part of [Alro Group](#), is a beneficiary of the ReActiv project, coordinated by LafargeHolcim through its R&D center. Part of the Horizon 2020 programme for creating low carbon circular industries, the ReActiv project received grants of 8.8 million EUR from the European Commission. The project is an initiative targeting to reduce waste and CO2 emissions by transforming bauxite residue into an active material.

Over 400 companies from FMCG and the Retail sector in Romania collaborate with [CHEP](#) in the distribution of essential products, which brought in 2020 total savings on the national supply chain of 6.98 million wood (6,750 mature trees), 8.11 million kg CO2 (equivalent to the emissions generated by 7.41 million km traveled by truck in a linear system) and avoided the generation of about 670,583 kg of waste in the supply chain.



The pipes manufacturer [TenarisSilcotub](#) managed to achieve a 100% recovery of the iron waste resulting from its production processes. The company's production in Calarasi is 96% based on scrap metal, which is collected and processed in a quantity of around 500,000 tonnes per year.





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# RELEVANT ORGANISATIONS

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The [cluster CLEMS](#) targets the sustainable development through eco-innovation. One of its areas of interest is the integrated management of the resources of recyclable materials and waste from the perspective of circular economy. The cluster has 18 members with around 2,000 employees.



The [Romania Green Building Council - RoGBC](#) - is a non-profit organisation focused on promoting environmental responsibility and energy efficiency in the construction sector. One of its main projects is CircularBIM, an educational platform focused on advanced strategies for reinstatement of building materials in the industrial value chain to promote the transition to the circular economy through the use of BIM learning technologies.

The [Circular Economy Coalition - CERC](#) was established in 2017 as an independent non-profit organisation. Based in Bucharest, it targets to promote at national level the objectives of the EC Circular Economy Package. It aims to develop studies and reports on circularity issues, to stimulate the development of new markets and business models and to support the implementation of programmes promoting circular economy concepts.

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# How can the FRD Center be of assistance to you in Romania and Emerging Europe?

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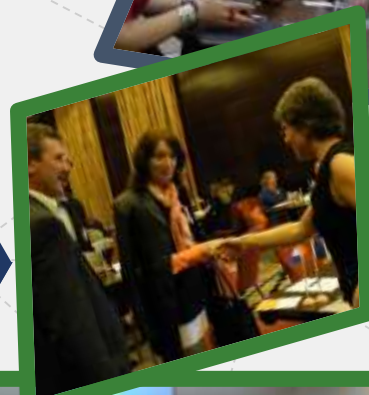
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Upon demand from the foreign Clients, FRD Center organises B2B business meetings, [Trade Missions](#), individual introductions to local Decision Makers.

Also, [FRD Center](#) organises for the foreign Clients showcasing of their products, roundtables with KOLs and sector experts, store guided visits

etc.  
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**The Institute for Research in  
Circular Economy and  
Environment “Ernest Lupan”**

**- IRCEM** is an independent non-governmental organisation set up in 2012 as a result of an initiative of the Technical University in Cluj Napoca. IRCEM targets to promote the circular economy and the eco-efficient technological development. In 2019, it launched the ASIST project targeting the social responsibility for the circular economy in the Transylvania region of Romania.



**ViitorPlus** is a non-profit organisation for sustainable development. One of its main programmes is the Recycling Map - an interactive platform allowing the identification and location of the selective collection points for recyclable waste. The Recycling Map was developed with the support of Coca Cola HBC Romania.

The **Department of Sustainable Development** operates as part of the Romanian Prime Minister's Office and is coordinated by a State Counsellor. It was established through a Government Decision in 2017 with the purpose to implement the 2030 United Nations agenda for sustainable development and its 17 sustainable development goals. The Romanian national strategy promotes the sustainable development of the country by focusing on the economic, social and environmental areas.

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**The National Center for Sustainable Production and Consumption** promotes

sustainable production and consumption by adopting and implementing eco-innovative methods, in particular streamlining the consumption of resources and clean production, in all economic sectors.



**The Embassy of Sustainability** is a program of the Romania Sustainable Coalition Association, initiated after an idea of The CSR Agency team. The program is financed by the Founding Partner - Kaufland Romania and by the Platinum Partners HeidelbergCement Romania and Lidl Romania.

The Dutch Embassy, the German Embassy and the Romanian Government through the Department for Sustainable Development support their efforts.

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# RECENT INITIATIVES

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The ZF Videoconference Green Economy - Recycling: We need to stop talking about waste as garbage, in fact there are resources. However, recycling requires innovation, education and investment. The circular economy involves the introduction of municipal and household waste into the economic circuit, but the "alphabet" of the circular economy is selective collection



Waste, especially packaging, should not be seen as rubbish, but as a resource for new production processes, but for this to be possible selective collection is paramount.



Citizens' education, involvement of the authorities, dedicated investments are some of the factors on which an efficient circular economy depends.



The circular economy involves the introduction of municipal and household waste into the economic circuit, but the "alphabet" of the circular economy is selective collection

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## ZF Videoconference Green Economy - Recycling

Elena Gaspar, president, SNRB (National Battery Recycling System): "We really want an investment to be made in Romania for the recycling of batteries, but we are struck by the lack of predictability. We do not know when there will be a large enough volume for the investment to become profitable. We estimate that it will take more than four years for this, and this does not rush investors to make a decision in this regard "



Beverage manufacturers are among those with a great responsibility for the volume of PET packaging, so that by 2025, the industry is committed to using 100% recyclable packaging. The soft drinks producers aim by 2030, to achieve full circularity in the collection, recycling and reuse of the packaging.

Alexandru Stănean, general manager TeraPlast: "In Romania, the recycling of construction waste does not exist. We have legislation in this regard, but it is not implemented, so companies are based on imports. In our case, we import 70% of the raw material we need, because here the demolition waste is not recycled "



Romania's Strategy for the Transition to a Circular Economy (ROCES) 2020-2030 has been developed by IRCEM since 2018 with the objective of making Romania a circular economy leader in Central and South-Eastern Europe by 2030.



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The project “ROMANIA’ S STRATEGY FOR THE TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY (ROCES) 2020-2030” aims to define the pillars which will support Romania’ s transition to a circular economy by involving all relevant stakeholders (i.e. civil society, public administration, industry, academics, social infrastructure), and by attracting the necessary financial support. The study aims to collect all the opinions from relevant actors on the level of penetration of the circular economy in terms of regional collaboration, such that we achieve our vision of Romania being a leader in Central and South-East Europe in the circular economy.



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# CIRCULAR ECONOMY 2021

status

CIRCULAR ECONOMY  
IN ROMANIA

## How is Romania doing in comparison with other EU countries in regards to implementing a Circular Economy?

Circular economy is, sadly, a topic still “reserved” for academia and the political stage, with little to no bearing on the economy.

Happily, given the inter-connections in the business flows between the East and West, the private sector is starting to put pressure on political actors and decision-makers



Romania is trying to keep up with the new strategies and the EU vision

should start moving from policy point of view towards practical implementation, in order not to lose the opportunity of creating a stable and sustainable system

The global business flows are forcing more and more Romanian producers to consider supply chain sustainability

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Romania's performance in implementing the principles and regulations of circular economy is pretty poor compared with the other EU countries that have a tradition in this sense and have put lot of efforts into improving the performance. The efforts consist of setting forth a regulatory framework that encourages companies to build circular business models (both in terms of incentives and penalties), doubled by awareness raising campaigns meant to change people mindset about healthy circular consumption habits.



Even if from the point of view of some critical indicators Romania is below the European average, lately there have been initiatives and projects of both local authorities and the private sector to implement the circular economy, which is highly encouraging (strategies for circular cities, campaigns to raise awareness of the impact of the circular economy, the first circular school etc.).

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**Are you looking to obtain up-to-date info about the Romanian Circular Market?**

**About the activities, the main players and decision makers?**

**How to reach the relevant local partners and how to present your products / services to them?**

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***with your specific request for local support***



It is believed that soon there will be a government decision to implement the bottle return guarantee system in Romania, which will create the necessary framework for the implementation of the recycling solution. We want this legislative framework to be a concrete, predictable, correctly set one, so that this system can be implemented later. It takes time to be able to exist nationally and be accessible to the consumer.



The guarantee-return system only applies to disposable packaging and comes as a tool to ensure a better collection of disposable beverage packaging on the market. We are in a final stage of adoption, and after that other legislative changes will be needed regarding the primary environmental legislation in order to move to the implementation of the system.

From an implementation perspective, we will need 18 months from the time the system operator will be licensed to build this infrastructure that will integrate the system operator, the recovery center and the packaging count, which will have to cover the entire country.

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# OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOREIGN ORGANISATIONS

CIRCULAR ECONOMY  
IN ROMANIA



**Georgiana Dragomir, Cleantech:** *"Circular Economy is about partnership. Romania needs now organizations from abroad that can bring knowledge, investment, technology. As a result, I consider that the idea of partnership for foreign companies will be more than attractive for Romanians."*

**Vasile Lazar, Environmental Strategies LLC:** *"While political actors, media, and NGOs are thinking the current landscape in Romania is disheartening, as a consultant I see all these apparently negative things as business opportunities. There are many areas of opportunity to consider in the circular economy development in Romania, and many of them are available in relation to industrial or major agricultural companies, mostly private."*

**Alin Tiplic, Waste Digital Revolution:** *"There are niche waste management activities that are not addressed and are of huge potential, however general waste management services provided at an increased level of quality, with social accountability and transparency will definitely be of success and reliable partners can be identified to develop sustainable business models."*

**Simina Lakatos, IRCM:** *"The waste market is a young one, so foreign companies that want to invest could start with a first mover advantage. There are many possibilities of partnerships with local authorities, with other companies / associations in the field or associations of producers."*



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Through component 3 - Waste Management, the **Romanian Resilience and Recovery Plan**, approved by the EU, addresses challenges through a reform and 3 main investment lines.

The proposed total budget: **1.2 billion**

**euros** to be invested also in improving governance in the field of waste management in order to accelerate **transition to the circular economy**



Romania's main challenge is to reach the preparation targets for waste reuse and recycling. For example, on 11% of the municipal waste was recycled in 2019, according to the latest available data, compared to the target of 55% provided for 2025 in the circular economy package - PEC).

Another challenge is reducing to 10% of the amount of municipal waste disposed of by storage by 2035.

Investments from the Romanian RRP:

- I.1 Development, modernization and completion of integrated waste management systems municipal at county level or at city / commune level.
- I.2 Development of infrastructure for manure and other waste management compostable agricultural.
- I.3 Development of technical capacity and skills in the field of circular economy and climate at the level of central and local public institutions.

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## Europe?

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**Chambers of Commerce,**  
**Commercial Sections of Foreign**  
**Embassies.**



**Upon specific request from the Foreign Clients, the FRD Center team identifies relevant opportunities in the Romanian market, generates sector studies and organises live presentation webinars to present the respective studies and reports.**



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**Are you interested to take advantage of the up-coming opportunities in the Circular Economy in Romania?**  
**Are you interested to get in contact with decision makers?**  
**To analyse the local players and initiate strategic connections?**

*For tailored Market Research, New leads generation, B2B Matchmaking with local players in the sector, Target Origination and M&A assistance feel free to contact*



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