Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy

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Who we are

PACE is a neutral, public-private collaboration platform made up of global changemakers and their organizations working together to accelerate the transition to a circular economy.

PACE was launched by the World Economic Forum and is a delivery platform hosted by the World Resources Institute. PACE is facilitated by a full-time team in The Hague, Netherlands.

The state of play

Considering the wide variations in terminology, PACE uses the following definition as a foundation for our work:

> The circular economy is one in which the value of products, materials, and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste is minimized. This contrasts with a 'linear economy,' which is based on the 'extract, make, and dispose' model of production and consumption. [UNEP, IRP (International Resource Panel) Glossary of Terms]

Beyond this, we adopt a systemic view of the Circular Economy (CE). One that emphasizes a holistic and equitable approach to Earth's finite resources, planetary boundaries, and structural limitations and one that accommodates bioeconomic strategies. This prioritizes demand reduction in the first instance and restores a fundamental respect for materials.

Innovations in design, business models, and shifts in consumer behavior are critically important, however, these activities are embedded within a limited understanding of circularity as a material/product efficiency model. In principle, the CE goes far beyond this and must be widely embraced as a systems model.

The patient work of systems change demands long-term investment. The CE is facing a knowledge-to-action gap and funding continues to be directed at outputs focused on a foundational understanding of the CE, and high-level panels. These have been ineffective at advancing circular implementation at scale.

Work must be undertaken at all levels within systems to shape and influence change. Circular implementation strategies must therefore address root causes and mental models preventing widespread adoption.

Guiding philosophy: systems change happens through people

There is a common gap in the thinking about the CE; people.

PACE therefore subscribes to a systemic model that addresses the potential within specific individuals to close the knowledge-to-action gap and implement change within their organizations and companies. We believe that people are the content and that specific actors hold the required knowledge, power, and capacity to influence change. Recommendations must be specific and scalable/actionable in practice by specific individuals at their point within systems.

PACE process partners Reos have outlined five clear steps that we follow when practicing systems change through people:

1. Addressing root causes.
2. Interconnectedness.
3. Understanding leverage.
4. Diverse perspectives.
5. Seeing and understanding individual roles.

This approach is grounded in social and psychological science and supports our shared belief that the change we need will happen through specific individuals who have the capacity, impetus, influence, and power to initiate it.

Carefully-selected participants collaborate to identify the mental models and systemic barriers that are delaying mineral circularity in North America. PACE collective strategy workshop New York Climate Week 2023.

2.What we do

Scope

PACE's role is to identify intervention points in global production systems that show high potential for transitional shifts but that are currently under-served. At the top level, these interventions inform our programs.

Our current programs focus on the following under-served, high-priority areas of global importance, all of which present clear opportunities to improve environmental quality, economic development, and social equity at the local, regional, and country levels. All present clear benefits for people, nature, and the climate. They are:

Recapturing resources for circular food production

Scaling mineral circularity for global resilience

Integrating circularity with climate measures

Within our programs choosing sub-issues to work on is determined by the following selection criteria:

- Is the issue important (as determined by independent, high-quality data that present benefits for people, nature, and the climate)?
- Is the issue currently underserved (i.e., not being worked on by a large funder or coalition)?
- Is there an opportunity to deliver a public good (pre-competitive initiatives and open-source findings)?
- Can a public/private underwriter provide support for the workstream?

We work globally and operate as a change-making orchestrator to bring the best-in-class scientific, economic, and social expertise together to identify clear gaps where circularity can be introduced and where it can make the most impact. With our communities of practice, we drill down into the details and collaborate to identify points in the system where we can collectively leverage the most impact.

For reference, our programmatic work is currently aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals:

Primary:

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

9.4
9.b

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

12.3
12.5

Secondary:

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

7.2
7.a

13 CLIMATE ACTION

13.2

3.How we work

Process

Within our programs, we adopt the following process to identify a sub-issue, understand the stakeholders that need to be involved, and coordinate collaboration to deliver clear outcomes. Our process runs through the following stages:

1. **Background**
2. **Stakeholder Mapping**
3. **Workshops**
4. **Outcomes**

1. Background

- Identify an issue that is important and underserved and that presents an opportunity to deliver a public good.
- Identify an appropriate geography or angle of focus.

feedback

4. Outcomes

Generate integrated recommendations for action. These might include, but are not limited to:

- Projects/pilots
- Further research
- Communications activities
- Scenario planning
- Input to coalitions
- Pre-purchase agreements
- Policy recommendations
- Influence mapping
- Targeted PR

2. Stakeholder mapping

- Gather intelligent information on the state of policy, investment, technology, and innovation domains relevant to the issue.
- Identify the key stakeholders who have a role to play.

3. Workshops

- Coordinate/design an initial workshop with key stakeholders and strategic co-hosts. Participants are selected for their understanding of the issue and potential solutions.
- Establish further activities to pursue.

1. Background

Identify an issue that is important and underserved and that presents an opportunity to deliver a public good.

Within this stage, we identify an appropriate geography or angle of focus.

2. Stakeholder mapping

2a. Gather intelligent information on the state of policy, investment, technology, and innovation domains relevant to the issue.

2b. Identify the key stakeholders who have a role to play.

3. Workshops

3a. Coordinate/design an initial workshop with key stakeholders and strategic co-hosts. Participants are selected for their knowledge of the issue and potential solutions.

3b. Establish further activities to pursue. These might include additional workshops, collaborative workstreams to identify deeper issues/solutions, or joint communications activities (e.g.).

4. Outcomes

Outcomes include integrated recommendations for action and might be:

- Projects/pilots
- Further research
- Communications activities
- Scenario planning
- Input to coalitions
- Pre-purchase agreements
- Policy recommendations
- Influence mapping
- Targeted PR

Each stage must be completed in full before progressing to the next block of activity. At each stage, there will be outcomes and it may be necessary to delay progression until more findings have been uncovered/published/distributed.

This process is iterative, and all learnings are shared with stakeholders and are fed back into step one.

Target audience

PACE is not an advocacy organization nor is it a customer/client-facing body. We therefore have a specific target audience beyond the general public. Our audience must consist of individuals who can act and implement the recommendations we deliver. They will exhibit an appetite to engage with and influence the structural entities in which they operate, e.g., their government or company departments. They will demonstrate the following core attributes:

- Specialist expertise.
- Known commitment to the issue.
- Demonstratable initiatives.
- Latent potential to influence their point within a system.
- Time to engage and commit.
- Access to a wider network.
- Openness to persuasion.
- Ability to act.

Community building

PACE cultivates the appropriate conditions for community building as informed by sound social science. These include:

1. Clear objectives and values around a shared goal.
2. Diversity of perspectives represented across policy, investment, technology, and innovation domains.
3. Psychological safety for individual expression.
4. Balanced receptiveness with constructive feedback avoiding groupthink.
5. Feedback learning to preserve adaptability when repeating the process.

As a partnership platform, we orchestrate change through communities of committed changemakers. There is strength in numbers and communities with a shared social identity around a common purpose have more leverage and potential to instigate change.

4. Conclusion and contact

PACE is committed to leveraging the expertise of its stakeholder community to ensure the knowledge-to-action gap is closed. We are constantly learning and evolving as new opportunities are identified. We are committed to fostering the right conditions for change and encouraging healthy experimentation to uncover perspectives that go beyond our existing mental models. The CE demands imagination and radical collaboration to challenge the established norm.

Contact information

To explore opportunities to collaborate or join one of our program communities please contact us in one of the following ways:

Strategic partnerships and opportunities: Ramona Liberoff (Executive Director): Ramona.Liberoff@pacecircular.org
Program inquiries: pace@wri.org
PACE Board
PACE Partners
PACE Team information

Website: www.pacecircular.org
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/pacecircular