

## The circular economy is an alternative way to a traditional linear economy

The circular economy aims to keep products, components and materials at their highest utility and value through life extension and maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture and finally recycling. New design approaches, different business models are emerging to support the circular economy. This includes buying products as services, leasing, take-back, and sharing/asset utilization models.



The circular economy is an alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) keep resources in use for as long as possible and is more than simply recycling; it is looking at the entire life cycle of any process and considering how the best whole life outcome may be achieved. Resources are generally materials (technical and natural), but the most holistic circular economy approaches consider water, energy and ecology.

What is the Circular Economy in Construction?

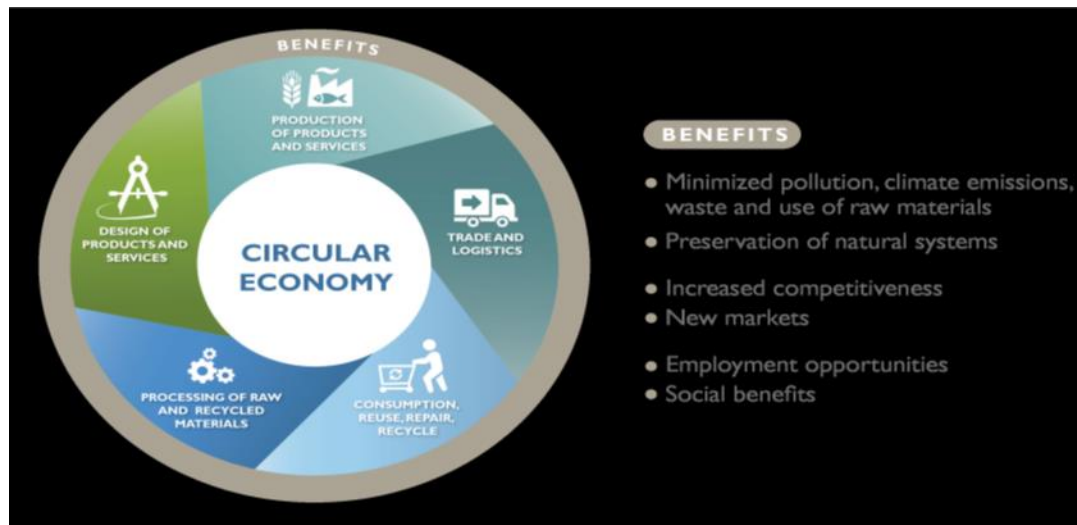
In construction, the Circular Economy is about reducing the demand for non-renewable virgin materials, reducing the production of waste, and maximising the value of recovered materials used throughout all stages of the programme; construction, maintenance and end of life.

From a wider, built environment, perspective it goes beyond this and looks at circularity across other systems including energy, water, operational waste management, ecology, food, etc. To have maximum impact the circular economy needs to be considered throughout design, specification, procurement, and construction of the programme.

The circular economy generates more jobs worldwide

With Agenda 2030, states are committed to using natural resources more efficiently, recycling resources and implementing sustainable production methods and ways of consumption. These goals are also clearly connected to reducing poverty.

For example, efficient recycling of materials generates new jobs and creates economic growth, which is needed especially in poor countries.



Taxes on things that help preserve the environment can be eased and, correspondingly, taxes on products and services that cause pollution can be raised. Steering public procurements in the right direction is also an efficient way to promote the circular economy.

Africa for example, in which timber obtained from cultivated forests is sawn into products for local builders. There are usually no pulp mills or wood panel factories nearby in Africa. However, the raw material left over from sawmilling can be used as energy, for example, to dry wood or in the production of electricity.

African Foundries, a Nigerian company that uses scrap iron to manufacture steel for construction, is a good example of how electricity needed to smelt the metal comes from a gas power plant that uses natural gas produced as a by-product of oil drilling.

In the UK, the construction industry accounts for approximately 60% of UK materials use and one third of all waste arising. However, they don't have many examples of circular buildings/assets in the UK, and they don't have a construction industry accustomed to circular economy approaches. The UK will only get them if industry is inspired by the challenge, and if clients create the right conditions for success.

Taking used but still functioning equipment and production lines from Western countries to developing countries is also a vital part of the circular economy. Western countries also export

used machines from wood processing plants, dairies and printing works, giving them a new life in developing countries, which are a good example for other countries.

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