



Circular Connect Competition

Guideline Brochure

Be the change in your community...

Join our challenge to tackle marine litter by designing circular economy solutions that combat plastic pollution. Develop innovative business ideas to reduce single-use plastics, promote sustainable practices, and revolutionise waste management, all while preserving our precious marine ecosystems.

Together, let's create a cleaner, circular future for our local seas!

Background

Driven by rapid urbanisation, economic development and changing consumption and production patterns, the amount of single-use packaging and plastic items is rapidly increasing in the Philippines and other ASEAN member states. At the same time, waste management systems lack effectiveness in terms of environmentally sound collection, sorting, recycling, energy recovery and disposal of plastic waste. These trends significantly contribute to marine littering – a growing local, national, regional and global threat to marine ecosystems and fisheries as well as the tourism sector. Governments, businesses, academia and civil society increasingly recognise that a switch towards a circular economy approach to reduce packaging and plastic waste is needed to tackle these challenges.

The project “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle to Protect the Marine Environment and Coral Reefs (3RproMar)” supports the transition towards a circular economy for plastics and sustainable plastic consumption and production in the Philippines and other ASEAN member states to contribute towards marine litter reduction, with a focus on land-based waste management. It implements advisory services and conducts pilot projects to provide role models in close cooperation with regional, national and local partners.

The lasting COVID-19 situation has contributed to increasing amounts of packaging from various sectors and accordingly also marine littering caused by single-use plastic and packaging waste. Although waste legislation (RA 9003), the National Plan of Action on Marine Litter, and a recently released EPR law (RA 11898) provide guidance and mandates, citizens face uncertainty about how to appropriately separate their household waste and to return recovered waste fractions to suited facilities. Besides that, municipalities lack know-how, local guidelines and infrastructure to act efficiently. There are volatile prices for recovered materials due to increasing energy costs, but also due to additional efforts to transport recovered materials from remote areas to treatment plants to reduce the competitiveness of recycled plastic materials. This especially impacts local recyclers and the informal waste collectors which are hardly capable of coping with these challenges and lower prices for recyclables.

In general, suitable frameworks and competent actors to recover materials in an economic manner drastically decrease from larger cities towards remote islands and smaller fisher communities. Although a global problem, the solution to plastic waste and marine litter varies from one locality to another. Having localised solutions to these problems can significantly reduce the barriers encountered in the implementation.

About the Circular Connect Competition

Through their [3RproMar project](#), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit ([GIZ](#)) GmbH, brings forth the Circular Connect Competition. The competition is geared towards providing a platform for the youth sector to develop circular economy-focused solutions that will help tackle the problem of plastic waste and marine litter in the Western Visayas region of the Philippines.

GIZ has engaged [Roleen Sebillena](#) of [Circular Cities Asia](#) as the implementer of the Circular Connect Competition. *For any inquiries, please contact Roleen by email: roleen@circularcities.asia*

Call for Innovation

How might we effectively tackle the problem of plastic waste and marine litter so that we can contribute to the preservation of marine ecosystems, fisheries, and the tourism sector in the Western Visayas?

Participants will be tasked with developing innovative solutions within the framework of a circular economy to:

- Reduce single-use plastic and packaging waste
- Promote sustainable plastic consumption and production
- Improve land-based waste management systems.

The solutions should consider local contexts, infrastructure limitations, and the involvement of various stakeholders such as governments, businesses, academia, and civil society.

The possibilities include:

- Reducing or preventing the waste via behaviour change, new materials, alternatives to plastic or reuse models
- Solutions to waste segregation or improving waste recovery logistics
- Recycling and upcycling to create higher value products.

Students will have the opportunity to apply a lean innovation approach to the challenge. They will be encouraged to research the full life cycle of plastic waste issues in their local, island context before using design thinking to innovate localised solutions that consider the dynamics of their community, infrastructure and stakeholders.

Competition Timeline

July 27 to August 22: Pre-registration period

August 22: Pre-registration closes

August 23 to September 19: Problem research and ideating solutions (a circular innovation toolkit and resource support is provided to help pre-registered participants with their circular innovation journey for the competition)

September 20: Submission deadline for competition

September 21 to 27: Shortlisting of submissions

September 28: Shortlisted teams announced

September 29 to October 27: Boot camp for shortlisted teams

Early November: Showcase event for select teams to present their solutions

Benefits of Participation

Higher education institutions:

- Universities can actively contribute to the achievement of sustainability goals in the Western Visayas region
- Opportunities for cross-sector collaboration to implement circular economy solutions that are fit for the local context
- Universities will get exposure during GIZ's national stakeholder forum

Students:

- Learn new skills and experience
- Take part in an experiential, hands-on learning experience to solve issues in your local community
- Differentiate yourself from other students by broadening your academic experiences
- Compete for a grant to support your research and solution development
- Select teams will be invited to showcase their circular idea to an influential audience during GIZ's national stakeholder forum
- Explore the opportunity of building a circular economy startup
- Innovate local solutions to local problems, for the local people and ecosystems

Participant Checklist

- Read this brochure
- Connect with the campus liaison of your university
- Visit the [competition webpage](#) for the finalised dates and details of the competition
- Familiarise yourself with Circular Cities Asia's Circular Innovation Toolkit (which will be provided for this competition)
- Put all important competition dates in your calendar and set reminders
- Build a team in adherence to the following criteria:
 - Teams should have a minimum of 2 members
 - A team of no more than 5 is recommended
 - Teams should be diverse and multidisciplinary
 - All team members must be aged 18 and above and currently enrolled as a Bachelor's, Master's or PhD student in an eligible higher education institution
- [Pre-register](#) for the Circular Connect Competition
- Attend the sessions that will be conducted as part of the competition
- Submit a circular solution as a team via the [competition submission form](#)

Before submitting an idea for the competition, please read the [terms and conditions](#) and our [photo and video release statement](#).

Pre-Registration

Complete the [pre-registration form](#) by **August 22, 2023** to gain access to a circular innovation toolkit and resource support to help you prepare your circular solution submission.

By pre-registering, you are agreeing to the [terms and conditions](#) of the Circular Connect Competition and the [photo and video release statement](#).

Competition Parameters

Teams

This competition is open to teams of 2-5 entrants. We encourage participants to form teams that are diverse and multidisciplinary. Having a diverse team with a wide range of experiences, backgrounds and skills, can help broaden perspectives and spark new and creative ideas.

Our definition of diversity includes, but is not limited to, ethnicity, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, ability, and age, as well as nationality, academic discipline, and professional experience. We welcome people from all backgrounds to join the competition.

All team members must be aged 18 years old and above and currently enrolled as a Bachelor's, Master's or PhD student in an eligible higher education institution* (all academic disciplines are welcome to join). Faculty and staff can also join a team as an advisor.

***Eligible higher education institutions are institutions in the Western Visayas region of the Philippines who have been invited by GIZ to participate in the Circular Connect Competition.**

Each university will need one or more faculty members to coordinate, promote and champion the competition. The campus liaison(s) will also provide coaching support to participating teams or will connect them to faculty or staff that are able to do so.

Incentives

- Gain access to a circular innovation toolkit and resource support to help you design solutions that combat plastic pollution and prevent marine litter in the Western Visayas region.
- Enter a team submission for a chance to win a small grant for your circular business idea and an invitation to present your solution during GIZ's national stakeholder forum in early November 2023.

Idea Submission Form

The [competition submission form](#) will open on September 6, 2023. You can preview the questions on the form [here](#). **The deadline for submission is September 20, 2023.**

Your idea submission form will summarise your research into the specific problem you're looking to solve and your team's idea for a solution that would suit your local context. Please clearly explain what your idea is (product, service, process improvement, etc.), how it is circular, and why it would/could be adopted in your local area. The submission must be completed in English.

Shortlisting of Solutions

Circular Cities Asia and GIZ will conduct a shortlist of teams who will have access to an online innovation boot camp. The shortlisted teams will have access to more content and live virtual feedback sessions that will help to further develop their circular solutions.

Shortlisting Criteria

Selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Problem identification
- Innovative solution
- Local relevance and feasibility
- Circular design

Before submitting an idea, please review the [shortlisting criteria](#).

Online Boot Camp

This interactive boot camp helps teams to refine their circular solutions and business models. Participants will have access to pre-recorded lectures, industry recognised resources and live feedback sessions with circular economy practitioners.

After the boot camp, teams submit a short pitch video for a chance to be invited to present during GIZ's national stakeholder forum. All teams will be required to follow the pitch presentation guidelines provided during the boot camp and to submit their pitch video recording in English.

Circular Cities Asia and GIZ will again conduct the shortlist. Decisions on the teams selected to present will be final.

Competition Showcase Event

Part of GIZ's national stakeholder forum in early November 2023 will be a showcase event for select teams to present their circular solution in front of an influential audience.

Acknowledgements



The Circular Connect Competition is brought to you by Circular Cities Asia and the 3RproMar project of GIZ.

For more information about the competition, please visit:

<https://www.circularcities.asia/circular-connect-competition-2023>

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