



How we co-create

# CIRCULAR CHANGE

in Slovenia and beyond

Niko Korpar, MSc, Project Manager, Circular Change  
Hainburg, 23.10.2018



How did a small organisation with (very) limited resources manage to impact the implementation of a national circular economy strategy?

How can we support similar initiatives within the EU?

## Slovenia as a CE hotspot

- Circular economy part of key strategic documents:
  - Development strategy 2030
  - Vision 2050
  - others
- National CE Roadmap
- Invitation to WEF PACE – global CE hub programme
- Ljubljana – Green Capital of Europe 2016
- Some of the best results in communal waste management within EU
- ...

## Once upon a time in Slovenia

### Pole position?

- Natural endowments
- „Closeness“ to natural environments
- Perfect size (for experimentation)
- Economic benefits: innovation tourism, wood industry,...

### Not quite..

- Non-culture of collaboration
- A „silos“ mindset
- Sustainability – what, who and for whom?
- Development gap to the EU average



## New kids on the block

- Established by Ladeja Godina Košir in 2015 as Circular Change platform, since 2018, private non-profit institute
- **Mission:** Accelerate the transition to CE, position Slovenia a “circular playground” by serving as competence and communication partner of the government, cities and companies, contribute on the EU level and in the South-Eastern European region
- Governance: **5 Council members** chaired by **dr. Janez Potočnik** (former Commissioner for the Environment, co-chair, UNEP International Resources Panel)
- **Core** team: 3 – 5 people + network of associates
- **Funding:** H2020 fund, projects, speaking fees



How we began:

1. Focus on **education and raising awareness** among business leaders, media, politicians
2. Work with companies/government on **positioning, stakeholder mapping, business cases** → bridge the „ world - us“ narrative
3. **Building a network:**
  - 2016: formation of Partnership for Green Economy in Slovenia, led from the office of the PM
  - Partnerships with international organisations
  - CC Conferences in 2016 and 2017



#CEStakeholderEU

## We're part of the ECESP Coordination Group



### Benefits:

- Adds weight to our arguments
- Stay in touch with latest developments
- New platform for showcasing cases
- Ability to influence EU agenda, add new topics

## Winning hearts

### The road towards the Roadmap towards the CE

#### How we got there:

Through 2 years of advocating and promoting the need for a roadmap document:

- As continuation of EU policy package
- Following examples of NL, FIN
- Giving economic arguments / focus on quality of life
- Finding allies (Ministry, Office of PM)
- Building a consortium: Jožef Stefan Institute, Janez Potočnik,...

#### The project begins:

- In 2017, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning commissions the project
- PM Miro Cerar publicly states his support at the public revealing of the project



### Immediately, new problems arise:

- Discontent among some organisations/individuals
- Limited time/resources
- A confusion of actors, documents, projects, interests,...

### SOLUTIONS:

1. Start a **process**, not write a document
2. Know our foundations: EU Policy Package, Strategic documents for SLO, examples of NL and FIN
3. Identify and showcase what is already there
4. Use a bottom-up approach to identifying potentials, public consultations, expert groups
5. Introduce easily understandable tool, the Circular Triangle



Yes we can (could)!



## Leadership and organisational competence:

- Personal competences: unique communication skills of Director Ladeja
- Business background and wealth of relationships in a small country
- Decision to serve as connecting point, not seen as NGO
- Independence!
- Focus on economic benefits and CE business models
- Powerful international network and membership in ECESP coordination group

## External conditions:

- Political – supportive government led by PM dr. Miro Cerar
- Economic - no one cared about sustainability in 2010
- Size - the right group of people have an influence
- Adopting EU legislation
- Changing conditions on global market
- Pressure from customers in international value chains



## For us as an organisation:

- Lack of resources: large part of our work is unpaid
- Too much success? People/organisations feel threatened:  
„why should a private organisation do our business?“

## External factors:

- Lack of political will to move beyond strategy phase towards actions plans and binding targets
- Too much of everything: strategies, projects, events,..
- Cross-sectoral cooperation still only wishful thinking
- We need: faster know-how transfer, pilot projects, financial programs



1. Bottom up initiatives CAN influence systemic change, BUT to a certain point
2. Managing stakeholders, connecting and engaging the right people can be more important than creating new structures/organisations/programs
3. Private-public cooperation needs to be funded, otherwise resources are directed away
4. EU can help by: giving recognition, access to information → we would welcome: expert support, funding opportunities
5. We want to share our knowledge and experience in the region, but this is costly
6. Governments change, people change jobs → having structural support helps

**There ARE organisations/individuals creating meaningful CHANGE  
right NOW**



**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR  
ATTENTION!**