



Booster Circulaire: A way to build skills in new sectors relevant to social economy (France)

What?

Launched in 2018, Booster Circulaire is a publicly supported programme that helps furniture makers across France reduce their environmental impact and operate within the circular economy. This initiative highlights the potential for policymakers at the national, regional and local level to utilise the social economy to achieve specific social and environmental objectives. Partly financed by the European Social Fund, Booster Circulaire also collaborates with a diverse set of partners ranging from public authorities and social economy actors, to construction firms and commercial furniture manufacturers to obtain waste materials, encourage responsible manufacturing processes, facilitate networking and raise the profile of the circular economy.

Established as a joint effort by Les Canaux, a French social economy support association that was launched by the city of Paris in 2017, and Valdelia, a non-profit producer responsibility organisation – éco-organisme – that recycles, refurbishes and reuses office furniture, the programme provides participants with training, commercialisation support, networking opportunities and other guidance over an 18-month period. For its first edition in 2019, Booster Circulaire worked with 15 entities across France, most of them being social and solidarity economy organisations, to develop activities in a circular fashion. The furniture was featured in the 2020 Paris Design Week as part of an exhibition on responsible manufacturing and the circular economy.

The second round was launched in 2020 has adopted a greater focus on the south-western region of Occitanie in France and is co-operating with Sicoval, a community of municipalities (communauté d'agglomération) which promotes the social economy in the region southeast of Toulouse. This round will work with an additional 20 entities over the course of 18 months. While a smaller share of the accepted applicants operate within the social economy due to the edition's focus on developing industrial networks, all participants are familiar with the principles, objectives and business models of the social economy and encouraged to cooperate with social economy organisations.

This initiative highlights how policy makers can support business development and create new market not only through funding capacity-building initiatives but also the development of strategic partnerships with actors from the social economy and traditional businesses.

Why?

Les Canaux recognised widespread interest in the circular economy among French furniture makers due to

increased demand from communities, public authorities and firms for furniture constructed from circular materials as well as the adoption of recent anti-waste legislation – Loi Anti-Gaspillage pour une Économie Circulaire – in France. Furniture makers operating in the circular economy faced challenges such as access to materials, regulatory barriers and market access that limited their ability to scale.

To help furniture makers successfully participate in the circular economy, Les Canaux initiated a collaboration with Valdelia in order to offer furniture makers technical training, business advice and networking opportunities as well as to enhance collaborations among diverse stakeholders in the sector. This initiative is a way to help expand, professionalise and mainstream the circular furniture sector in France.

Key Activities

Booster Circulaire supports entities throughout France for an 18-month period during which participants receive design and commercial support, both individually and collectively, from expert French furniture makers, retailers, designers and social economy practitioners. Applicants to the programme are selected based on their motivation, size, design competence, innovation and local impact. The programme helps businesses learn how to design circular furniture, adapt their business model to the circular economy, navigate public procurement opportunities and identify new business opportunities, and successfully advertise their products.

Now in its second iteration, the initiative has expanded to include a partnership with both Valdelia and Camif, an online furniture distributor that has adopted the Entreprise à Mission status (this status was introduced into French law by the 2019 adoption of the Action Plan for the Growth and Transformation of Companies: la Loi PACTE), which commits it to specific social and environmental goals. The second iteration of the initiative will also support more participants and industry partners and encourage participation from beyond the Paris region. Participants will gain experience making circular products as well as guidance on how to commercialise their products for consumers and public procurement processes. The initiative is targeting participants from the Occitanie region of France to encourage countrywide development of the circular economy.

Impact

Booster Circulaire has helped to raise awareness of the potential of the circular economy and equip policymakers and stakeholders to better support its development. In addition to the entities selected to participate in the programme, Booster Circulaire has informed over 60 furniture makers of the business opportunities related to the circular economy, including the EUR 4.3 million of public funds allocated to supporting the circular economy in 2020.

The initiative has also increased business opportunities for participants. For example, some participants have won contracts with public authorities to furnish libraries and a student residence in Paris. Ensuring that firms have the technical and business skills to operate in the social economy and navigate public procurement markets will be particularly important in the context of the upcoming 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. One Booster Circulaire participant won a contract to furnish the new headquarters of Paris 2024, the organisation committee for the upcoming Olympic Games. The platform [ESS2024¹](#) is an additional opportunity for social economy organisations to position themselves on public procurements in this framework.

¹ *ESS2024 is a platform operated by Les Canaux and the Yunus Centre that provides a gateway for social and solidarity economy organisations to participate in the organisation on the Paris Olympic Games being held in 2024. The initiative is supported by Paris 2024 and SOLIDEO. By integrating social and solidarity economy organisations into the games, this platform helps improve access to markets for them while boosting the overall social impact of the Olympic Games.*

References

- Les Canaux: <https://www.paris.fr/pages/les-canaux-une-maison-des-economies-solidaires-et-innovantes-4133> [1]
- First round: <http://lescanaux.com/les-canaux-initiatives/booster-circulaire-1-les-structures-accompagnees/> [2]
- Second round: <http://lescanaux.com/booster-circulaire/> [3]
- Design Week: <http://lescanaux.com/les-canaux-initiatives/le-mobilier-en-economie-circulaire-parisdesignweek/> [4]

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Links

[1] <https://www.paris.fr/pages/les-canaux-une-maison-des-economies-solidaires-et-innovantes-4133>

[2] <http://lescanaux.com/les-canaux-initiatives/booster-circulaire-1-les-structures-accompagnees/>

[3] <http://lescanaux.com/booster-circulaire/>

[4] <http://lescanaux.com/les-canaux-initiatives/le-mobilier-en-economie-circulaire-parisdesignweek/>