



YUNUS
ENVIRONMENT
HUB

IMPACT REPORT 2024

Foreword

“Public-private partnerships, capacity-building initiatives, and policy advocacy are key to creating an enabling ecosystem in which social businesses can amplify their impact and achieve long-term sustainability.”

The urgency of addressing the triple planetary crisis—climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution—has never been more pressing. As we confront these interlinked environmental challenges, it is clear that our current models of growth and development are unsustainable. The effects of these crises are felt globally, from devastating natural disasters and loss of ecosystems to air and water pollution that disproportionately affects vulnerable communities.

In 2024 we saw major events come and go without key decisions and actions taken, impeding urgent progress needed to address climate change. From COP29, where the world left Baku with a mountain of work to do, to INC-5, where we are still waiting for a global plastics treaty in the hope that it will integrate just transition principles in the legally binding agreement. This has been a year of economic uncertainty, marked by rising inflation, supply chain disruptions, and geopolitical tensions. These challenges have underscored the need for resilient economic models that prioritize sustainability and social well-being.

The need for collective action has reached a critical juncture. While global agreements are important, we cannot afford to wait. Action must begin now. We must move forward and work together to transform the systems that cause environmental degradation. Social businesses play a crucial role in this transformation. By prioritizing social and environmental impact alongside financial success, social businesses are pioneering innovative solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems. But scaling these solutions requires a concerted effort. Public-private partnerships, capacity-building initiatives, and policy advocacy are key to creating an enabling ecosystem in which social businesses can amplify their impact and achieve long-term sustainability.

At Yunus Environment Hub, we remain steadfast in our mission to support social businesses that create positive environmental and social impact. Through our collective efforts, we can create lasting change and ensure that no one is left behind in the transition to a sustainable future.

We are deeply grateful to all our partners, supporters, program alumni, and team members who have worked together to build an ecosystem in which social business entrepreneurs can thrive. Your dedication and commitment inspire us to continue to push the boundaries of what is possible and pave the way for a better world: A World of Three Zeros.



Christina Jäger
Co-founder & Managing Director
Yunus Environment Hub

Our highlights

Yunus Environment Hub has been working passionately since 2020 to support social business entrepreneurs working on scalable solutions to the environmental crisis. **We are happy to share in this report selected outcomes of our impact-driven work and some of the milestones achieved in 2024.**

40
programs and projects
implemented across 43
countries

2,315
social business
entrepreneurs trained, of
which 66% are women

295
social businesses incubated
and accelerated, of which
47% are women-lead

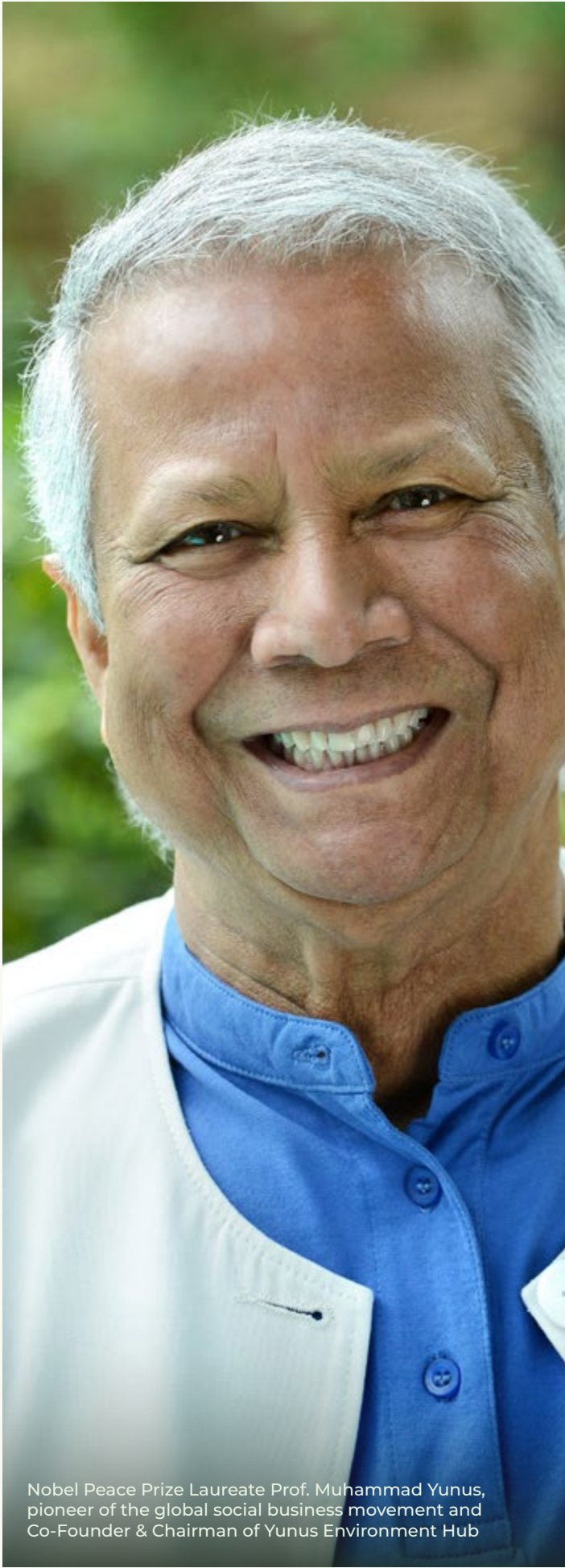
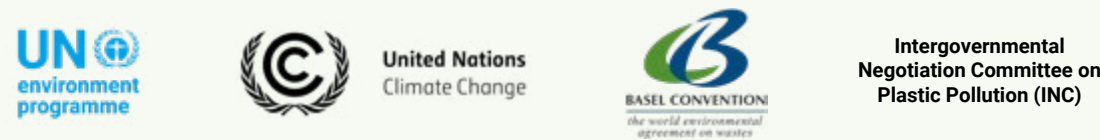
1,739
stakeholders trained

60
strategic partners engaged

4
accreditations to bodies of
the United Nations

18
research and policy
papers published

32
speaking engagements in 2024,
reaching 2000+ people



Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus, pioneer of the global social business movement and Co-Founder & Chairman of Yunus Environment Hub

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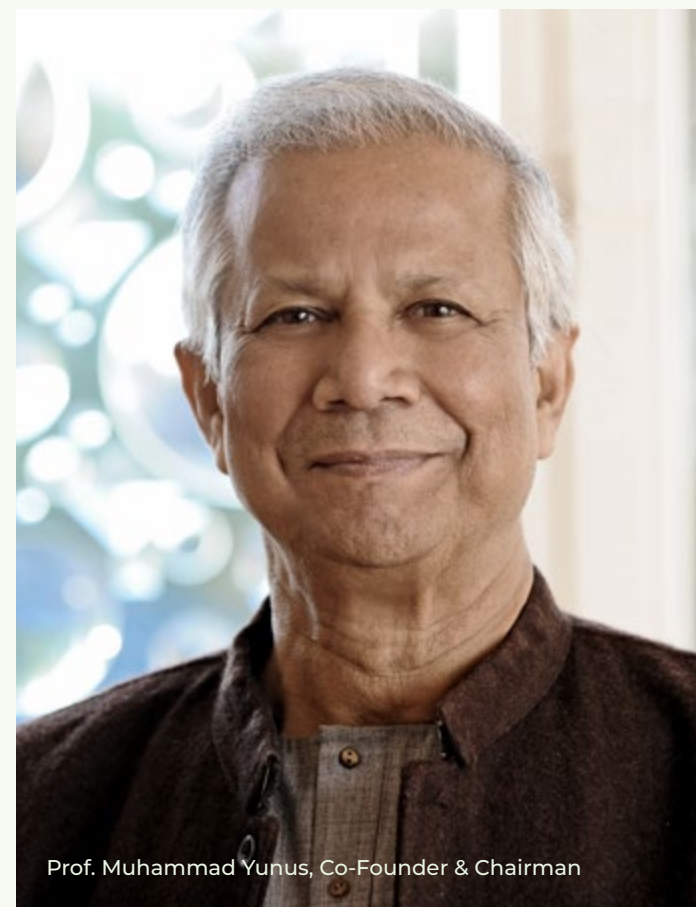
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About us

Yunus Environment Hub is the global social business network that creates solutions to the environmental crisis.

Co-founded by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus, we support and develop social business solutions that solve environmental problems in a financially self-sustainable way and with high socio-economic impact.



Prof. Muhammad Yunus, Co-Founder & Chairman



Hans Reitz, Co-founder & Creative Advisor and Christina Jäger, Co-Founder & Managing Director

Our vision

To create a “World of Three Zeros”: zero poverty, zero unemployment, and zero net carbon emissions.

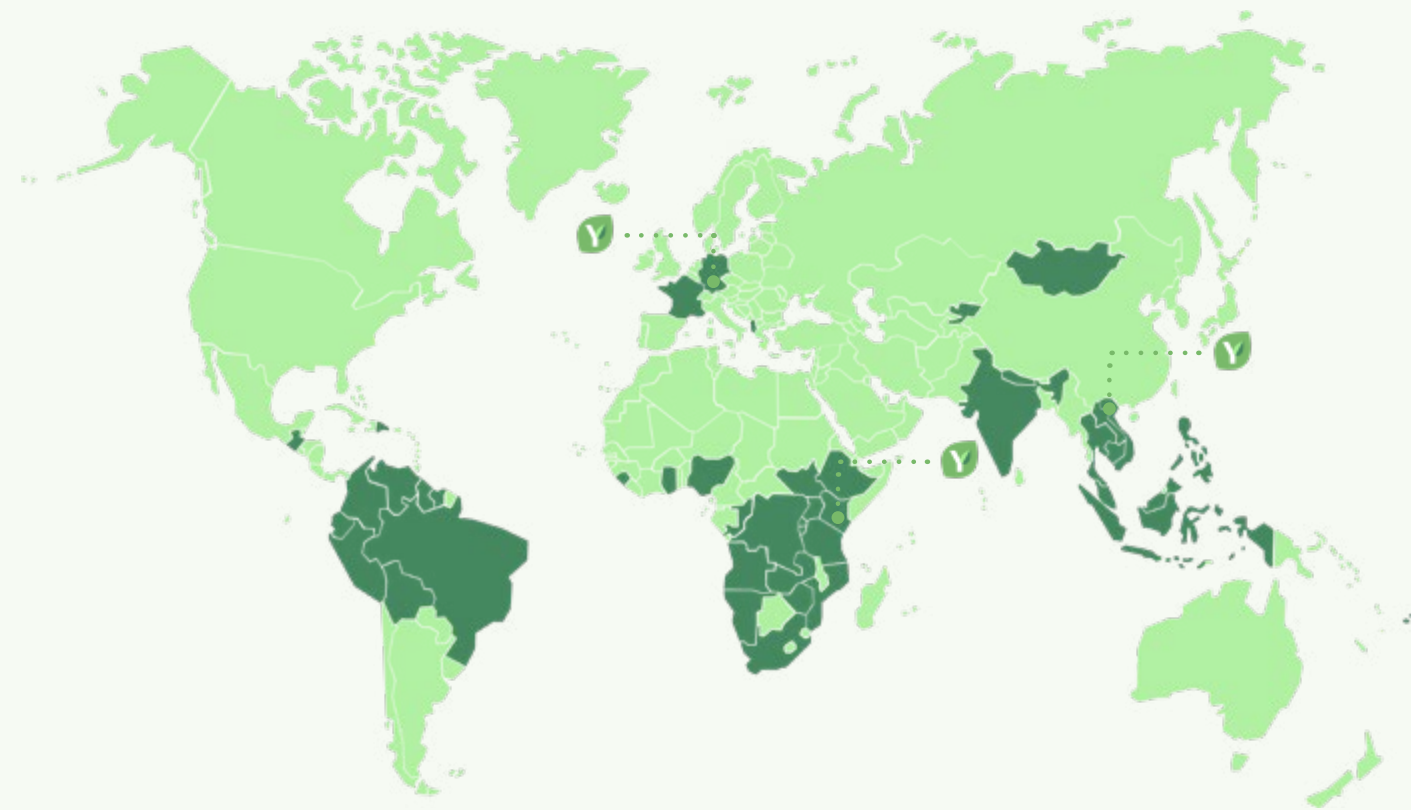
Our mission

To design and implement social business-based solutions to environmental and social challenges that create opportunities along the value chain.

1

Our coverage

Our work has a global reach. We have **implemented programs and projects in 43 countries, benefiting more than 2,300 social business entrepreneurs** working on local solutions to global environmental challenges.



Our team

We are a diverse team working from different locations across Europe, Asia and Africa. **We are driven by a shared purpose to empower social business entrepreneurs to become catalysts for change** in their communities.

We observe, listen, learn, and embrace diversity. We change the status quo and find new ways towards our vision. We are committed to the planet and people. We are passionate about driving impact and excellence. And we do it with JOY!



Why social business?

Social businesses provide a scalable and transformative approach to solving the environmental crisis, as they focus their business activities on creating positive social and environmental impact alongside profit.

A social business is a purpose-driven business. In a social business, the investors and owners can gradually recoup the money invested but cannot take any dividend beyond that point. The purpose of the investment is purely to achieve one or more social objectives through the operation of the company, no personal gain is desired by the investors. The business must cover all costs and make a profit and achieve the environmental or social objective. The impact of the business on people or the environment, rather than the amount of profit made in a given period, measures the success of a social business.

Our memberships



Intergovernmental
Negotiation Committee on
Plastic Pollution (INC)



Our impact strategy

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We support social business entrepreneurs working on scalable solutions for climate action by building their business capacities, enabling circular strategies and strengthening their ecosystem so they can grow and scale their impact.

At Yunus Environment Hub, we believe that social business entrepreneurs are the change agents we need to create a future in which environmental stewardship, social justice, and economic prosperity go hand in hand. **Social business entrepreneurs are at the centre of everything that we do.** We support them with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to create holistic impact, and we collaborate with strategic partners from the public and private sectors to build a supporting ecosystem where social business solutions can be developed and scaled. We measure our success based on how well we support entrepreneurs and the impact of their solutions.

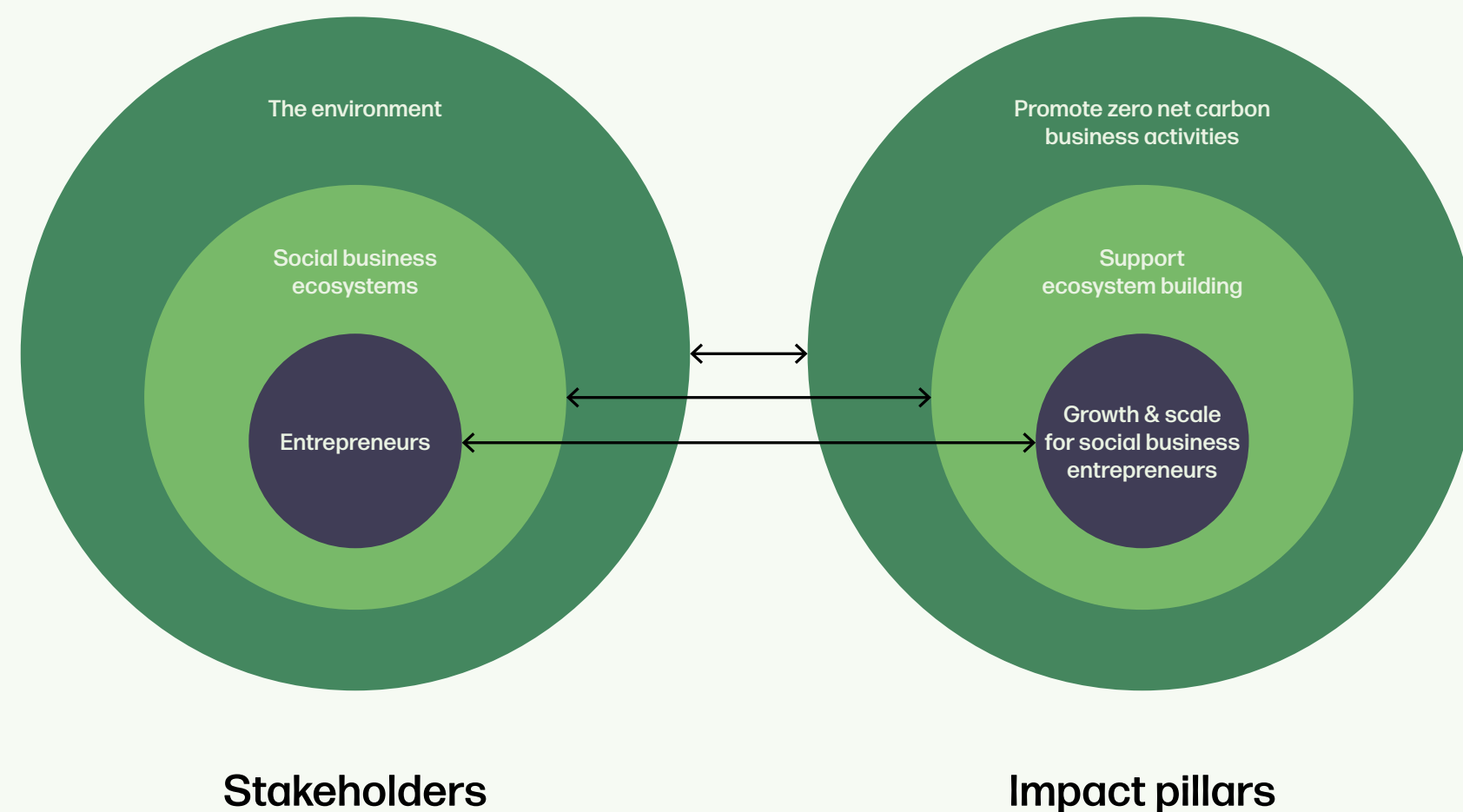
Our work is based on three impact pillars:

Growth and scale for social businesses entrepreneurs

Support ecosystem building

Promote zero net carbon business activities

Our work aims to create impact at multiple levels.



Entrepreneurs

We support social business entrepreneurs by building their capacities in business planning and management to maximise their growth potential and scale their solutions.

Social Business Ecosystems

We strengthen social business ecosystems by working with the private and public sectors to implement programs and develop frameworks, guidelines, policies and industry standards that enable the development and growth of social business solutions.

The Environment

We facilitate building social business models that create positive environmental impact by supporting the design and implementation of sustainable and circular strategies to reduce CO2 emissions and mitigate climate change.

Our advocacy work

Advocacy is a fundamental component of our efforts to achieve systemic change. As part of our efforts, we engage in local, regional and global events where we share learnings from our programs, give visibility to the social business entrepreneurs we support and the impact they are creating, disseminate our research findings, and connect with different stakeholders to amplify our collective voice.

With our advocacy efforts we aim to encourage individuals, organisations and society to take action to solve the environmental crisis. The following are just a few examples of our advocacy work in 2024:

United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

We spoke at a side event at UNEA-6 on biodiversity conservation, organised by the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation, highlighting the central role of people's engagement for biodiversity conservation and addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change and pollution.

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) for a legally binding Global Plastics Treaty

We advocated the integration of a just transition approach in the development of the global plastics treaty, ensuring that the transition away from plastic balances environmental protection, social equity and economic viability throughout the entire plastics value chain.

World Circular Economic Forum (WCEF)

We hosted an Accelerator Session at the WCEF where we shared insights from the report on just

transition in the waste management sector conducted on behalf of GIZ and where social businesses from our entrepreneurship programs shared their experience implementing circular and inclusive business models.

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

We spoke at the high-level side event "Social Business, Youth and Technology" at UNGA 79, where we highlighted the role of social businesses in addressing the multiple interrelated environmental, social, economic and health challenges of the triple planetary crisis.

ASEAN Circular Economy Forum

We took part in an insightful panel discussion on strengthening the regional ecosystem for circular startups, where we shared our experience in supporting companies in their circular transition in Vietnam, emphasising the impact of regulations such as Extended Producer Responsibility for these companies, and key strategies to strengthen supply chain engagement.

UN Climate Change Conference (COP)

We hosted 2 high-level side events and participated in several panels at COP29 where we discussed the role of social business in driving the transition to an inclusive circular economy, the need for sustainable and inclusive finance, and pathways to achieve planetary well-being and climate resilience.



Our solutions

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To achieve holistic impact, we have a portfolio of solutions designed to influence different levels of the system. In this way we not only empower individual social businesses, but also shape the ecosystem in which they operate, ensuring long-term, scalable and systemic change.



Incubation and Acceleration

We design and implement entrepreneurship programs that support social businesses to develop and scale inclusive circular solutions, enabling them to amplify their impact.



Education and Training

We offer tailor-made capacity building programs for businesses, government agencies, civil society organisations and the informal waste sector to drive the transition to an inclusive circular economy.



Consulting and Advisory

We leverage our expertise to guide public and private sector organisations in identifying approaches and implementing holistic strategies to address the triple planetary crisis.



Venture Building

We work with public and private sector partners to build new ventures to achieve zero waste and zero net carbon emissions, enhancing existing solutions and adapting them to local contexts.

In the following pages we present a selection of our solutions – the programs and projects we have implemented – and their contribution to our impact strategy.

CirculaRise Accelerator

The problem

We are facing a complex environmental crisis driven by unsustainable consumption patterns, resource depletion and increasing waste production. The need for fundamental change in business practices has never been more urgent. The transition to a circular economy is key to mitigating this crisis. But for this transition to be truly effective and equitable, it must also be inclusive. Social businesses play a particularly pioneering role, as they focus their business activities on creating positive social and environmental impact alongside making a profit and should be at the forefront of this transition.

Our solution

The CirculaRise Accelerator supports established social businesses to bridge the gap between economic viability, environmental responsibility and social impact.

Through our CirculaRise Accelerator Framework, we guide entrepreneurs in designing and developing inclusive circular solutions, measuring and communicating their social and environmental impact, and securing the strategic partnerships needed to implement and scale their circular solutions.

Program outcomes

Through the CirculaRise Accelerator, Yunus Environment Hub empowered entrepreneurs across Kenya and Germany to “circularise” their business models, strengthen their circularity strategies and scale up their social businesses. Through tailored training and one-on-one coaching, we guided them in analysing their value chains and business ecosystems to identify opportunities to improve resource efficiency, reduce waste and mitigate CO2 emissions; developing an IMM methodology; testing their circular solution and pitching to potential funders.

Program highlights

- **32 social businesses accelerated**, of which 53% are women-led or women-owned
- **78% improved their sustainable business practices** and strengthened their circularity strategies
- **84% pitched their circular solution** to potential funders, of which **25% received funding**
- **295 jobs created** by program participants, of which 38% are for women and 39% are for youth

Spotlight on program participants

We are happy to present selected social businesses from our portfolio and their contribution to achieving net zero emissions and a circular economy.



Sector: Software Development

Location: Munich, Germany

ContainerGrid: B2B enterprise software for OEM and consumer brands. ContainerGrid automates circular supply chains with orchestrated reverse logistics, recycling quality standardization and virtual material aggregation for green material procurement at industrial scale.

<https://www.containergrid.de/>

Circular solution

ContainerGrid enables Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) to scale customer service for end-of-life product take-back and recycling, giving them control over material sourcing while reducing price premiums on sustainable products. Their platform orchestrates OEMs, recyclers, and raw material suppliers, ensuring automated reverse logistics, recycling standardization, and cost-efficient reintegration of recycled materials into supply chains.

Program outcomes

ContainerGrid joined the CirculaRise Accelerator program to refine its business and operational models through long-term collaborations with German corporations in the iron and aluminium sectors and by strengthening the sourcing of secondary raw materials. Through the program, ContainerGrid aimed to map its ecosystem and understand the needs of potential stakeholders in the iron and aluminium sectors. Additionally, they aimed to improve their ability to communicate their impact to key stakeholders, including potential funders and clients, as well as the general public.

Through the program, ContainerGrid was able to develop a more circular, resilient, and economically sustainable business model by mapping its ecosystem and identifying opportunities for collaborating with corporate clients in Germany. They also gained a strong understanding of impact measurement to effectively communicate the positive social and environmental impact they create while aligning it with their business strategy and the needs of potential funders.



Aron Handreke, CEO & Co-founder of ContainerGrid

The CirculaRise Accelerator has been instrumental in connecting us with public sector initiatives from the German government, helping us expand and refine our vision by incorporating both environmental and social impact considerations in emerging economies. The program encouraged us to think bottom-up about the distinct challenges of circular economy adoption in different regions. Furthermore, the introductions to large organisations have been extremely valuable in scaling our impact.

-Aron Handreke, CEO & Co-founder of ContainerGrid

ContainerGrid's impact

- 70+ recycling and waste management clients
- 750,000+ orders fulfilled on their SaaS since 2021
- 3,000+ recyclers known to their customers
- 150+ corporates engaged on Circular Reverse Logistics

LOTTA LUDWIGSON

Sector: Textiles and Fashion & Design

Location: Berlin, Germany

LOTTA LUDWIGSON is a slow luxury brand creating timeless business attire for conscious minds with the ambition to make circularity the new norm.

<https://www.lottaludwigson.com/>

Circular solution

LOTTA LUDWIGSON specializes in creating ethical, circular, and timeless women's attire that adheres to the cradle-to-cradle design philosophy. Their approach ensures that clothing does not end up as textile waste, as all garments are designed to biodegrade and return as a resource to nature. Every piece is produced fairly within the EU. In addition to their bio-circular clothing, they are committed to implementing a take-back and resale program to extend the lifespan of their products. This way, clothes can have multiple users before their eventual biodegradation.

Program outcomes

LOTTA LUDWIGSON joined the CirculaRise Accelerator program to gain technical support in developing a resilient business model that could overcome the challenges caused by supply chain disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic that caused delays in production and the launch of their web shop. They aimed at receiving expert guidance to stabilise operations, reach new customers and achieve sustainable growth.

Through the program, LOTTA LUDWIGSON developed new business model ideas and a strategy to localize their value chain. Through the one-on-one coaching sessions, they learned how to reach new customers and create a circular impact theory. The CirculaRise Accelerator also helped them get exposure at international events and connect with like-minded entrepreneurs, industry leaders, support organisations and potential partners.

LOTTA LUDWIGSON's impact

- Timeless design and durability: They create high-quality pieces meant to be worn for years, reducing waste and shifting consumption from disposable to mindful.



Nhu-Ha Dao and Charlotte Piller, Co-founders of LOTTA LUDWIGSON

- Fair and ethical production: Collections are crafted in a women-owned atelier in the EU, ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and supporting women entrepreneurship in fashion.
- Radical transparency and conscious choices: They disclose pricing, materials, and suppliers to educate and empower consumers – promoting a shift towards more conscious, responsible consumption.
- Impact beyond clothing: With every purchase, they support the Sparsa Project, an initiative in Nepal dedicated to menstrual health, circular production, and women empowerment.

“Joining the CirculaRise Accelerator was an important step for LOTTA LUDWIGSON. It offered valuable insights into circular design and connected us with other like-minded businesses. This experience helped refine our approach to creating durable, timeless pieces that support the circular economy.”

-Charlotte Piller, Co-founder of LOTTA LUDWIGSON

SafiOrganics

Sector: Agribusiness

Location: Kirinyaga County, Kenya

Safi Organics is building regenerative, localized fertilizer supply chains that increase yields and climate resilience of smallholder farmers. They produce decentralized, biochar-based organic fertilizers from agricultural waste, improving soil health and farmer productivity while sequestering carbon.

<https://safiorganics.co.ke/>

Circular solution

Safi Organics converts crop waste, like rice husks and bagasse, into biochar and nutrient-rich organic fertilizers, reducing post-harvest waste, emissions, and chemical fertilizer dependency.

Program outcomes

Safi Organics joined the CirculaRise Accelerator program to strengthen their circular business model, learn from peers and access a global network of like-minded impact-driven entrepreneurs. Furthermore, they were looking for expertise to effectively communicate the environmental and social impact of Safi Organics.

Through the program, the team at Safi Organics refined their value proposition, improved their impact measurement strategy and gained visibility and credibility through opportunities to showcase their work on different platforms, being spotlighted as a case study of successful organic fertilizer trailblazers, and engaging with Yunus Environment Hub's global network.

Safi Organics' impact

- 15,000+ farmers reached
- 25–30% increase in yields
- 50% increase in income for farmers
- 35,000+ tonnes of CO₂eq sequestered so far
- 100+ direct and indirect jobs created, especially for youth and women
- \$330,000 in additional jobs/economic activities in rural communities. Widespread adoption of their systems would lead to the creation of around \$10 million/year of additional income opportunities for 1 million underemployed youths in rural communities.



Samuel Rigu, Co-Founder & CEO of Safi Organics

“The CirculaRise Accelerator helped us strengthen and validate our circular business model while staying grounded in farmer needs and climate solutions. It gave us a clearer lens to articulate our impact and opened doors to strategic partnerships and investors through increased visibility.

-Samuel Rigu, Co-Founder & CEO of Safi Organics



Sector: Agribusiness

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

Shamba Connect transforms urban spaces into sustainable food gardens using recycled materials and regenerative practices. They install and maintain gardens, train vulnerable women, and upcycle rabbit urine into organic foliar fertilizer. Their mission is to promote food security, green jobs, and circular agriculture in cities across Kenya and beyond.

Facebook: @shambaconnectke

Circular solution

Shamba Connect transforms waste into value by upcycling rabbit urine into organic foliar fertilizer and pesticide for urban farmers. They also repurpose recycled materials to build garden structures. This closed-loop approach minimises waste, lowers input costs, and promotes sustainable food production in urban areas.

Program outcomes

Shamba Connect joined the CirculaRise Accelerator to refine and scale their impact. As a social enterprise working at the intersection of sustainable agriculture and community development, they were looking for a program that not only offered practical tools and mentorship, but also aligned with their values of resilience, circularity, and systems change.

Through the CirculaRise Accelerator, Shamba Connect achieved clarity, confidence, and tangible growth. The program helped them sharpen their business model, articulate their impact more clearly, and develop a roadmap for scaling sustainably. They also benefited from the mentorship and peer learning, which challenged their thinking and expanded their approach to circularity and community engagement. One of their biggest achievements was refining their value proposition and piloting a more resilient model of delivering services to smallholder farmers. The program also opened valuable collaboration opportunities that continue to shape their journey.

Shamba Connect's impact

Shamba Connect empowers women in urban slums through hands-on training, enabling them to grow their own food and even start small income-generating ventures. Their work has created



Mercy Munene, Founder & CEO of Shamba Connect

jobs, improved food security, and inspired communities to embrace organic, environmentally-friendly farming practices right in the heart of the city.

- 2000+ vulnerable women and youth have been trained on urban farming using recycled materials

“The CirculaRise Accelerator was a game-changer for us. It helped us refine our business model with a clear focus on circularity and sustainability. The mentorship and coaching sessions challenged us to think bigger and smarter, especially around value addition and impact measurement. We gained practical tools to track our environmental and social outcomes, and the exposure through the program opened up new networks and collaboration opportunities. Most importantly, it gave us the confidence to pursue bold ideas like upcycling rabbit urine into organic foliar and scaling our training to reach more underserved communities.

-Mercy Munene, Founder & CEO of Shamba Connect

Behind the program

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The CirculaRise Accelerator is a program that aims at enabling and scaling circular social businesses. It therefore does not only focus on developing working business models but combines it with environmental and circular economy strategies and focuses on creating impact for society simultaneously.

Especially due to the strong coaching nature of the program and a focus on learning from peer-to-peer expertise and experience sharing, we can see that participants get out of the program with a clear and practical implementation plan on driving business growth and at the same time creating systemic impact.



Julia Gschwendner

Strategy Lead at Yunus Environment Hub and Program Lead of the CirculaRise Accelerator

How to get involved

The next cohort in Germany will start in summer 2025. We are looking for partners and collaborators to help us amplify the impact of our program.

Explore partnership opportunities

Implementing partners and funders in Kenya:



Implemented by
giz
Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (giz) GmbH



Implementing partners and funders in Germany:



Innovate2PREVENT

Our solution

The prevention of plastic and electrical and electronic equipment waste is crucial to achieve a circular economy. This challenge calls for innovative and inclusive solutions. The Innovate2PREVENT program seeks to **inspire and mobilize creative minds globally to develop innovative, inclusive, and data-driven solutions to plastic and e-waste**. Combining an innovation contest with business acceleration, it offers a unique platform for innovators, environmentalists, and forward-thinkers to showcase and advance their innovative circular solutions.

The program targets innovations in three main areas (tracks):

- Track 1: Solutions that contribute to extending product lifetime, closing resource loops or

optimising resource efficiency through reuse, refurbishment or repair of electrical and electronic equipment.

- Track 2: Upstream solutions in the plastics value chain that contribute to phasing down single-use plastics, fostering alternatives to plastics and reuse models, contributing to closing material loops, improving recyclability, increasing secondary raw material use, and/or reducing environmental pollution.
- Track 3: Solutions that contribute to a circular economy by integrating digital solutions and interoperable data models across product life cycle stages and value chains.

Program status

Through the Innovate2PREVENT program, implemented on behalf of the PREVENT Waste Alliance, Yunus Environment Hub is supporting organisations from Angola, Vietnam, Kenya, India, Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda, Philippines, Albania, Ethiopia and Zambia to refine their circular innovations through innovation bootcamps, masterclasses, one-on-one coaching and peer-to-peer support. Participants will refine their circular business models, validate product-market fit by conducting market and customer research, develop go-to-market strategies, and learn how to measure and effectively communicate their impact. Selected organisations will receive funding to further develop and scale their circular innovations. The program continues until March 2025, ending with the Innovate2PREVENT Demo Day, where participants will present their circular innovations and the progress they have made through the program.

Program highlights

- **15 innovations supported** across 11 countries
- **27% of the innovations are led by women**
- 10 selected organisations will receive a total of **90,000 EUR in funding** to implement and scale their circular innovations

Spotlight on circular innovations

We are happy to present selected circular innovations from the Innovate2PREVENT program and their contribution to preventing plastics and e-waste.



Lion Box by Revnics Energy

Track 1: Reuse, refurbishment or repair of electrical and electronic equipment

Location: Kaduna, Nigeria

Revnics Energy is a recycling company dedicated to transforming electronic waste into valuable resources, with a focus on creating sustainable energy solutions. At the core of their operations is the upcycling and repair of discarded electronic devices. They meticulously refurbish and repurpose these electronics, transforming them into functional products. This process not only extends the lifecycle of electronic items but also reduces the volume of e-waste that would otherwise end up in landfills.

<https://revnics.com.ng/>

Circular innovation

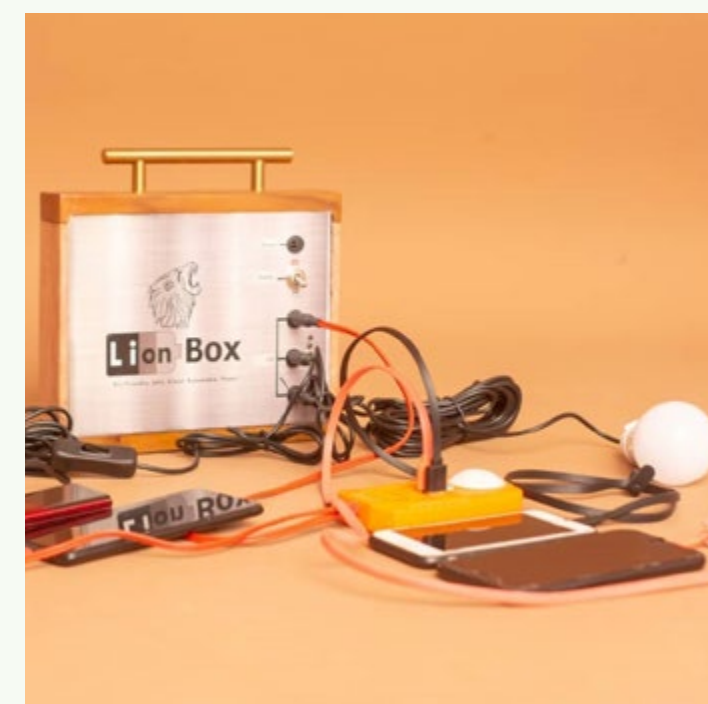
Revnics Energy addresses e-waste and energy poverty through Lion Box, an initiative to refurbish electronic waste to create affordable and reliable solar lamps, solar power generators and other solar energy products for households and small businesses in rural and urban areas. These innovative solutions are designed to provide sustainable electricity to underserved communities.

Program's goal

Revnics Energy aims to test an affordable solar power energy bank produced from e-waste. With the funding received through the Innovate2PREVENT program, Revnics Energy will produce 10 devices and test them with 10 households in Kaduna North to collect data on consumption patterns and energy cost savings for rural families using their solution.

“What I found particularly insightful was learning how to effectively position my business and craft a compelling pitch to attract impact investors. This knowledge has been invaluable in helping me to clearly articulate my business’s value proposition and social impact, and to confidently present my vision to potential investors.”

-Abdul Basit Bashir, Co-Founder & CEO of Revnics Energy



PROCESS



3R Solutions by Social Lab

Track 2: Upstream solutions in the plastics value chain

Location: Pune, India

Social Lab is a research and implementation organisation offering data-driven people-centric waste management solutions to help urban local bodies and private businesses comply with evolving regulatory frameworks and transition to a sustainable circular economy.

<https://www.3rsolutions.in/>



Circular innovation

3R Solutions is a packaging reuse ecosystem to reduce plastic waste by recovering, reconditioning, and reusing containers. 3R Solutions works with paint and motor lubricant companies to map product distribution and establish take-back mechanisms for used containers. These containers are thoroughly cleaned and quality tested using their patented technology. Containers are provided with a unique digital ID that captures their lifecycle and then supplied to companies for reuse.

Program's goal

3R Solutions is piloting a reuse model with paint companies to map product distribution and establish take-back mechanisms for used containers. With the funding received through the Innovate2PREVENT program, they aim to set up an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) to clean and recycle water used in the cleaning process of paint containers to keep it in circulation, reusing over 120,000 liters of water/year. The ETP will allow them to meet regulatory requirements and move from piloting to implementing their reuse model with two paint companies, potentially avoiding 88,560 kgs of virgin plastic production.

The Innovate2PREVENT program allowed us to revisit business concepts to improve how we operate and also gave financial bandwidth to experiment with our processes and improve the existing system. For instance, with the establishment of the Effluent Treatment Plant we are able to reuse 90% of water used in the cleaning process of paint containers.

-Rahul Juware, Director of Social Lab





Qarkonomia by Center for Competitive Skills

Track 3: Contribute to a circular economy by integrating digital solutions

Location: Tirana, Albania

The Center for Competitive Skills (CCS) is a nonprofit organisation that contributes to the sustainable development of education and qualifications of young people and adults for their successful integration into life and work according to the needs of the individual, society and the labour market.

<https://qarkonomi.al>

Circular innovation

Qarkonomia is a platform dedicated to promoting the principles of the circular economy in Albania by raising awareness, providing education, and fostering collaboration between businesses, policymakers, and society. It aims to reduce environmental degradation, optimise resource use, and create inclusive economic opportunities by supporting businesses in adopting sustainable practices and connecting disadvantaged groups to green job opportunities. Through online courses, training programs, awareness campaigns, and policy advocacy, Qarkonomia equips individuals and businesses with the knowledge and skills needed to implement circular economy practices. By empowering stakeholders with practical solutions, Qarkonomia aims to drive meaningful change toward a more resilient and circular economy.

Program's goal

CCS aims to further develop the Qarkonomia platform, increase their expertise on circular economy and its applications, and expand the reach and impact of their platform.

With the funding received through the Innovate2PREVENT program, CCS will improve the user interface and overall functionality of the platform and include new interactive features for tracking resources and waste management practices. Furthermore, CCS will develop 2 self-paced training courses, one to support local business in adopting circular economy strategies that reduce operational costs and create green employment opportunities, and another one on green skills for vulnerable groups with a focus on women and youth.

“The program has been truly insightful. The coaching sessions have helped us to develop a clear plan of the impact we want to achieve with Qarkonomia. Through the program, we launched two free online courses to make the circular economy more accessible to job-seekers and businesses in Albania. Already 50 people have been trained on circular economy through our platform.

-Mariza Andoni, Project Team Lead of Qarkonomi.al



Behind the program

Leading the Innovate2PREVENT program and coaching these 15 brilliant innovators has been an inspiring journey. Witnessing their passion and the evolution of their circular solutions to plastic and e-waste challenges has reaffirmed my belief in innovation as an agent for social and environmental impact. Supporting participants design, test and implement circular business models, financial management strategies and impact measurement and communication frameworks will ensure that every one of them meet their goals.

I hope to see these innovators scale their solutions and form impactful partnerships among themselves, members of the PREVENT Waste Alliance and Yunus Environment Hub's network. I am also looking forward to sharing their stories with the world as they grow their impact!



Bramwel Omondi

Regional Program Manager at Yunus Environment Hub and Program Manager of Innovate2PREVENT

How to get involved

Discover all the circular innovations supported through the program and the impact they are creating.

Discover the circular innovations

Implementing partners and funders:



Decio Silva, CEO of Narisec, an organisation supported through the program, showing their circular innovation "Binewaste" to Leonard Mwasi, Program Manager of Innovate2PREVENT during a field visit to Narisec's facilities in Luanda, Angola

BIA

Business Incubator and Accelerator for Mountains and Islands

Our solution

Mountains and islands make up 30 percent of the earth's surface area and are home to approximately 1.3 billion people. Mountain and island communities are among the worst hit by climate change, suffering from high rates of poverty and hunger and struggling to cope with natural disasters. The Business Incubator and Accelerator (BIA) for Mountains and Islands aims to **increase the resilience of mountain and island communities affected by climate change through the enhancement of entrepreneurship in agricultural and textile value chains** by providing funding, technical assistance, and capacity development to producer organisations.

Program outcomes

Yunus Environment Hub provided business advisory and technical assistance to producer organisations in Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Fiji, Kyrgyzstan, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Nepal, Peru, The Philippines and Uganda as part of the incubation phase and supported them in preparing funding proposals for projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing their communities' well-being and livelihoods. During the acceleration phase, we provided tailored assistance to selected organisations from Ethiopia, Uganda, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, and the Philippines and guided them in moving from strategic planning to the effective implementation of their projects, ensuring their long-term success and sustainable impact.

Program highlights

- **107 producer organisations received guidance and technical assistance to prepare funding proposals** and strengthen their business capacities during the incubation phase
- **31 selected organisations supported** in refining production strategies, enhancing market access and strengthening the sustainability of their business models **during the acceleration phase**

Highlights from the acceleration phase:

- **39,400+ people improved their livelihoods and well-being**, 25% are women and 14% are youth
- **42,480 hectares of landscapes under sustainable land management** in production systems
- **45% of producer organisations increased offer** of sustainably produced biodiversity and agrobiodiversity products
- **48% increased production commercialized directly to final consumers**
- **32% increased profit**

Spotlight on program participants

Discover the organisations driving change and the impact they are creating!

Mongolian Wool and Cashmere Association

Sector: Textiles

Location: Mongolia

The Mongolian Wool and Cashmere Association (MWCA) fosters sustainable practices within Mongolia's wool and cashmere industry, emphasizing community engagement and capacity building, directly benefiting over 178,000 herder families and employing around 10,000 women through more than 120 manufacturers and distributors. The organisation is committed to high-quality, sustainably produced cashmere, which is certified through state-approved processes that ensure environmental and social responsibility. By providing training, mentorship, and resources to herders and young designers, MWCA enhances skills and promotes innovation in sustainable fashion, thereby creating a cohesive value chain that supports local communities while appealing to global fashion brands and conscious consumers seeking ethically sourced products.

Program outcomes

Under the BIA program, MWCA aimed to establish the first designers' hub for small and medium-sized enterprises in Mongolia's textile sector. This initiative seeks to embed sustainable production practices throughout the industry, from herders to manufacturers. The overarching goal was to strengthen climate-resilient strategies, including promoting sustainable grazing methods, improving herder livelihoods, and enhancing animal welfare.

MWCA improved the cashmere value chain by adopting sustainable production practices and securing certifications, positively impacting 178,000 herder families while reducing costs by 20%. MWCA also supported young designers through innovation hubs to increase the global competitiveness of Mongolian cashmere.

“We refined our business model to align with sustainable practices and climate resilience goals. BIA's support also assisted the organisation in scaling its operations, improving commercialization strategies, and navigating market access challenges, ensuring that the organisation's impact is both sustainable and scalable. With the support of the BIA program, MWCA is positioned to continue leading the way in eco-friendly textile production, offering a model for other organisations seeking to address the dual challenges of economic development and climate adaptation in mountain regions.

-Nomin Bulgan, Foreign Relations Officer at MWCA



Green Initiative Ethiopia Development Organisation

Sector: Agriculture

Location: Ethiopia

The Green Initiative Ethiopia Development Organisation (GIEDO) is actively promoting the cultivation of spices and herbs in the North Shewa region, particularly in the Menze area, and is working with around 2,400 farming households in this region. This initiative seeks to enhance local agriculture while contributing to economic development and sustainable practice.

Program outcomes

Under the BIA program, GIEDO aimed to improve the availability and accessibility of quality seeds, seedlings and other agricultural inputs, and to support the adoption of best production practices. GIEDO also aimed to enhance the efficiency and quality of the supply chain by investing in collection and storage infrastructure and supporting the acquisition of advanced processing equipment. In addition, GIEDO aimed to promote product diversification and facilitate market linkages and export opportunities, including the promotion of quality certifications, branding and direct engagement with domestic and international buyers. By addressing these critical points, the spice and herbs sector in Ethiopia can enhance its competitiveness, improve smallholder and producer livelihoods, and contribute to the sustainable growth of the national agricultural economy.

Through the BIA program, GIEDO supported farmers to implement sustainable farming methods and improve post-harvest handling, unlocking new market opportunities. Value chain integration helped to connect farmers to domestic and export markets by linking them with buyers, processors, and retailers specialising in herbs and spices.

Farmers, who are mostly women (80%), were trained on organic farming, soil health management, crop diversification and climate-resilient agricultural practices, increasing their knowledge on water conservation, agroforestry, biodiversity preservation and sustainable harvesting techniques. The project engaged the community, local leaders and institutions, contributing to creating an enabling environment for women to fully participate in farming and natural resource management initiatives and facilitated knowledge-sharing and mentoring networks.



“Empowering women with training and leadership roles boosts their confidence and community standing. Women have unique knowledge of local ecosystems, making them essential participants in sustainable farming and conservation efforts. Providing women with access to markets, resources and finance significantly enhances household and community resilience.”

-Dessalegn Tebratu, Executive Director of GIEDO

Behind the program

“

The BIA program has been instrumental in advancing sustainable agri-business practices among participating organisations through targeted support in business development, market access, and operational efficiency. This initiative has empowered local organisations to enhance their competitiveness, sustainability, and market readiness while addressing critical challenges in their operations.

This program underscores the transformative potential of tailored interventions in promoting sustainable business models and enhancing the resilience and market readiness of local organisations in challenging environments.

The mentoring sessions have proven invaluable, offering tailored support in refining business models, understanding market trends, branding, social marketing, and applying circular economy principles. These sessions have empowered participants to address key gaps, improve their business and impact models, and enhance their financial sustainability, up to a large extent.



Gabish Joshi

Social Business Consultant at Yunus Environment Hub and Consultant for the BIA program in Nepal

Implementing partners and funders:



How to get involved

Read more about the program's contribution to sustainable land management, market advancement and socio-economic achievements.

Discover the stories



CIRCO Hub Vietnam

The problem

Economic growth has been accompanied by extensive natural resource exploitation in the recent decades. The current production systems are very energy-, resource-, and pollution-intensive. The transition to a circular economy is key to sustain and regenerate natural capital upon which people, communities, and the economy depend. As key contributors to Vietnam's economy, companies have a crucial role to play in adopting new business models and practices. However, they often lack the knowledge and resources needed to lead the transformation towards more sustainable and circular economies.

Our solution

CIRCO Hub Vietnam is a training program for companies and design professionals in key sectors of Vietnam's economy that aims to **enable the circular transition of companies by guiding them in identifying circular business opportunities and ideating circular products, services and business models** using the internationally tested CIRCO methodology based on an academic framework of the Technical University of Delft.

Program outcomes

Yunus Environment Hub delivered 8 CIRCO tracks for diverse sectors, including agriculture and foods systems, interior, electronics, tourism and related industries, textile, garment and footwear, and plastics and packaging. Through a series of workshops, self-paced modules and support from trainers, participants identified new circular business opportunities, redesigned their circular business model and developed a roadmap to start the circular transition in their companies.

The CIRCO Hub Vietnam Network was established, which offers valuable connections, knowledge and resources to support participants in their circular journey and keeps alumni engaged after completing the training program. CIRCO Hub Vietnam has already inspired impactful transformations, such as modular furniture designs, sustainable tourism practices, and recycled fabric innovations.

Program highlights

- **75 companies supported**, of which 50% are women-led or women-owned
- **163 professionals trained**
- **21 local experts** in circular economy, ESG, waste management and sustainability engaged
- **2 multi-sector tracks and 6 sector-focused tracks completed**
- **123 active members** of CIRCO Hub Vietnam Network
- **1 CIRCO Hub Alumni Event hosted** in Ho Chi Minh City

CIRCO
Hub Vietnam

Spotlight on program participants

Refillables Đông Đây

CIRCO Track: Tourism & Related Industries

Refillables Đông Đây delivers high-quality, safe, and eco-friendly products to communities in Vietnam, focusing on low- to middle-income groups. Their distribution model emphasises reusing existing packaging to minimise single-use waste, promoting sustainable consumption.

“There are a lot of ideas in my head, and this CIRCO training track helps flex them out in the way I don’t think I was doing before. The CIRCO program takes me step by step to the result I want to get.

-Ms. Alison Batchelor, Product Development at Refillables Đông Đây

IBT Corp.

CIRCO Track: Electronics

IBT Corp., Ltd operates at the forefront of computer vision technology, specialising in the development and deployment of computer vision and machine vision solutions.

“Through the CIRCO training, we have identified gaps in our current business model by applying strategies to extend product lifespan. We aim to double the average product lifespan, minimise the energy consumption of the product and make the product compatible with a wider range of third-party hardware and software.

-Mr. HOÀNG TRUNG HẢI, Deputy Director of IBT Investment, Business & Technology Corp., Ltd

The Gen G

CIRCO Track: Textile, Garment & Footwear

The Gen G leads the way in producing recycled fabric products from plastic bottles, such as t-shirts, polo shirts, raincoats, and tote bags. Their innovative “Túi lưới cộng sinh” (Symbiotic Net Bags) reuse fishing nets from fishermen to create multifunctional, reusable bags, embodying the spirit of circularity. A portion of profits supports vulnerable communities in Phú Yên province, highlighting the intersection of sustainability and social impact.

“The Gen G identified three circular business opportunities during the CIRCO training, including a sustainable product line using CIRCO’s Rethink and Reuse strategies. The initiative promotes environmental benefits and supports livelihoods, creating economic and social value for businesses, fishermen, and workers.

-Mr. NGUYỄN PHẠM NGỌC TUẤN, Director of The Gen G



Behind the program

“What makes this training invaluable is its tangible impact. Participants acquire up-to-date knowledge on circular design and business models, while receiving hands-on support from international and local experts. We have seen businesses take their first steps towards circularity, proving that sustainability is not just a goal but a strategic advantage. Through CIRCO Hub Vietnam, companies unlock cost-saving opportunities, create long-term value, and future-proof their operations in an evolving economic landscape.

In Vietnam, the circular economy is not just a concept, it has deep cultural roots. Circularity is not a fleeting trend, but a choice embedded in our way of life. Historically, our communities have practiced sustainability through resourcefulness, reuse and repair. The transition to a circular economy should not be seen as an obligation but as an opportunity to revive and reconnect with long-standing values that are inherently sustainable. Change takes time, and to make a lasting impact, we need more real-world examples and stronger multi-stakeholder collaboration.



Tam Phan

Country Director of Yunus Environment Hub Vietnam and CIRCO Hub Vietnam Coordinator

Implementing partners and funders:



CIRCO

How to get involved

We invite businesses, organisations, and partners to collaborate with us in expanding CIRCO Hub Vietnam's reach and impact in 2025 and beyond. Join us in expanding the circular economy movement in Vietnam!

CIRCO Hub Vietnam



CIRCO Hub Workshop



SINA

Soziale Innovationen für Nachhaltigkeit

Our solution

SINA is a research and policy advisory project that aimed to **better understand the actors, markets, incentive systems and framework conditions that influence social innovation in the environmental sector**. The project engaged key stakeholders from the public and private sectors to analyse the transformative potential of social innovations in order to **develop forward-looking policy recommendations to effectively support and finance social innovations for sustainability**.

Project outcomes

SINA was implemented on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV). Over the course of three years, an interdisciplinary team led by Yunus Environment Hub, analysed the ecological, social and economic potential of social innovations to achieve Germany's climate, environmental and sustainability goals and provided recommendations for policy-makers to promote and scale up social innovation as a transformative force to tackle environmental challenges in the best possible way.

Project highlights

- Developed a **roadmap with concrete short-, medium- and long-term policy recommendations** to enhance the ecosystem of social innovations in the environmental field
- Deep-dives on 6 thematic areas, including the organisation of **multi-stakeholder workshops to generate bottom-up insights and develop policy recommendations**, mobilising experts from all sectors
- Developed **5 topical articles with research findings, best practices and project learnings and one final report** with insights from the past three years and recommendations for policymakers

Insights from project partners

We know that some environmental problems have not improved in recent decades but have worsened. And the problem is not just nature and the environment, the problem is that it is also affecting us humans. It affects our livelihoods, our prosperity. It affects our security, mental and physical health and many socially important functions. If we want to tackle these environmental problems, then we must use all possibilities. Technological innovations are one starting point, social innovations are another very important starting point. Looking at how practices, processes, organisational models and business models can be changed, improved and geared towards sustainability.

The most important takeaway from the SINA project is that social innovations can have great potential for sustainability but for social innovations to make their contribution, structural changes are needed. Boosting the circular economy is an essential lever to initiate the socio-ecological transformation. That is why we are already formulating goals for the National Circular Economy Strategy, including measures to ensure that social innovations can strengthen various areas of the circular economy. For example, social innovations can help us move from throwing things away to valuing them, and they also play an important role in the repair sector.



Dr. Franziska Wolff

Head of Department "Sustainability, Social Affairs of Environmental Policy" at BMUV

“With this project, Yunus Environment Hub has helped the BMUV to better understand social innovations and its sustainability potential. We have become acquainted with many great good practice examples, we have received assessments of its potential sustainability effects, and I believe we have a better basis for future policy.

-Dr. Franziska Wolff, Head of Department "Sustainability, Social Affairs of Environmental Policy" at BMUV



Launch event of SINA at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection in June 2022



Fishbowl discussion during the closing event of SINA in July 2024

Behind the project

“The main finding of the SINA project is that social innovations have the potential to make a significant contribution to achieving environmental and climate goals. This can be seen particularly in the field of circular economy. To avoid waste and use resources more efficiently, new models such as local sharing ecosystems are needed, which often involve a change in consumer behaviour. As social innovations have often been developed within communities, they can strengthen the social acceptability of new behaviours or initiatives.

To strengthen the visibility and promotion of social innovations in the environmental sector, stronger political representation is needed. This can be linked to the National Strategy for Social Innovations and Social Enterprises in which specific recommendations to promote social innovation in the circular economy have been developed. Financing social innovation remains an important issue. Funding programs for social innovations in the circular economy should be developed to address their specific needs.

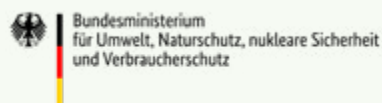
I hope that social innovations will become mainstream and that their important contribution to the transition to a circular economy will be recognised.



Christina Jäger

Co-Founder & Managing Director of Yunus Environment Hub and Project Lead of SINA

Commissioned by:



How to get involved

Read the final report of the SINA project (in German):

[Download Final SINA Report](#)



Yunus Environment Hub team during the closing event of SINA in July 2024

Just Transition in Waste Management & Circular Economy

The problem

With rapid economic growth and urbanisation, ASEAN countries are facing significant challenges related to increased waste generation, job displacement and associated environmental and social impacts. Focusing on plastic waste is particularly critical due to its detrimental effects on marine ecosystems and human health and its potential for innovation in sustainable waste management and circular practices. While the circular economy brings huge opportunities, it is crucial to ensure that just transition principles are integrated into new circular business models to create a holistic impact for society and the environment and mitigate the negative impacts that a circular transition could bring.

Our solution

Yunus Environment Hub conducted a research report on behalf of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to **examine the inclusivity of waste management practices and circular economy principles along the plastics value chain in the ASEAN region and provide key recommendations to stakeholders to implement sustainable and inclusive waste management practices.**

Project outcomes

Yunus Environment Hub published the report “Towards a Sustainable Future: Recommendations for a Just Transition in Waste Management and Circular Economy in the ASEAN Region” and presented key findings at several high-level events. Findings from the report served as a basis for advising project partners, including ASEAN Member States engaged in the negotiations towards an International Legally Binding Instrument (ILBI). This project was part of the GIZ regional project “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle to Protect the Marine Environment and Coral Reefs” (3RproMar), which operates across ASEAN countries with a focus on curbing plastic pollution.

We developed a brief on Just Transition and Social Inclusion for INC-5 together with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL) and GIZ to elevate just transition from a secondary consideration to a core guiding framework for the circular transition by integrating holistic, ethical solutions benefiting people and planet.

Project highlights

- **1 report with recommendations** for a just transition in waste management published
- **1 brief for INC-5** on just transition and social inclusion developed

Behind the project

“As a result of our findings in this research report, we have developed the Just Transition Framework, which is intended for stakeholders to use as a guide when implementing just transition activities in waste management and the circular economy. I personally am excited to test these principles and other key learnings throughout the coming year in pilots and collaborations.

Looking forward, the transition from visionary ideals to practical action is essential. Establishing clear terms and measurable impact indicators is crucial for tracking progress and ensuring accountability. Additionally, there is a pressing need to develop and implement standards for measuring the impact and financial return of just transition strategies.

Finally, we must recognise that just transition is still a nascent topic and is often seen as an obligation instead of an opportunity. This is an unfortunate misconception. If implemented properly, just transition strategies have the potential to advance climate action while ensuring that no one is left behind. It is my hope that the report will help mainstream the topic, leading to greater awareness and action in the coming year.



Julie Chrysler

Circular Economy & Social Impact Director at Yunus Environment Hub and Author of the Just Transition Report

How to get involved

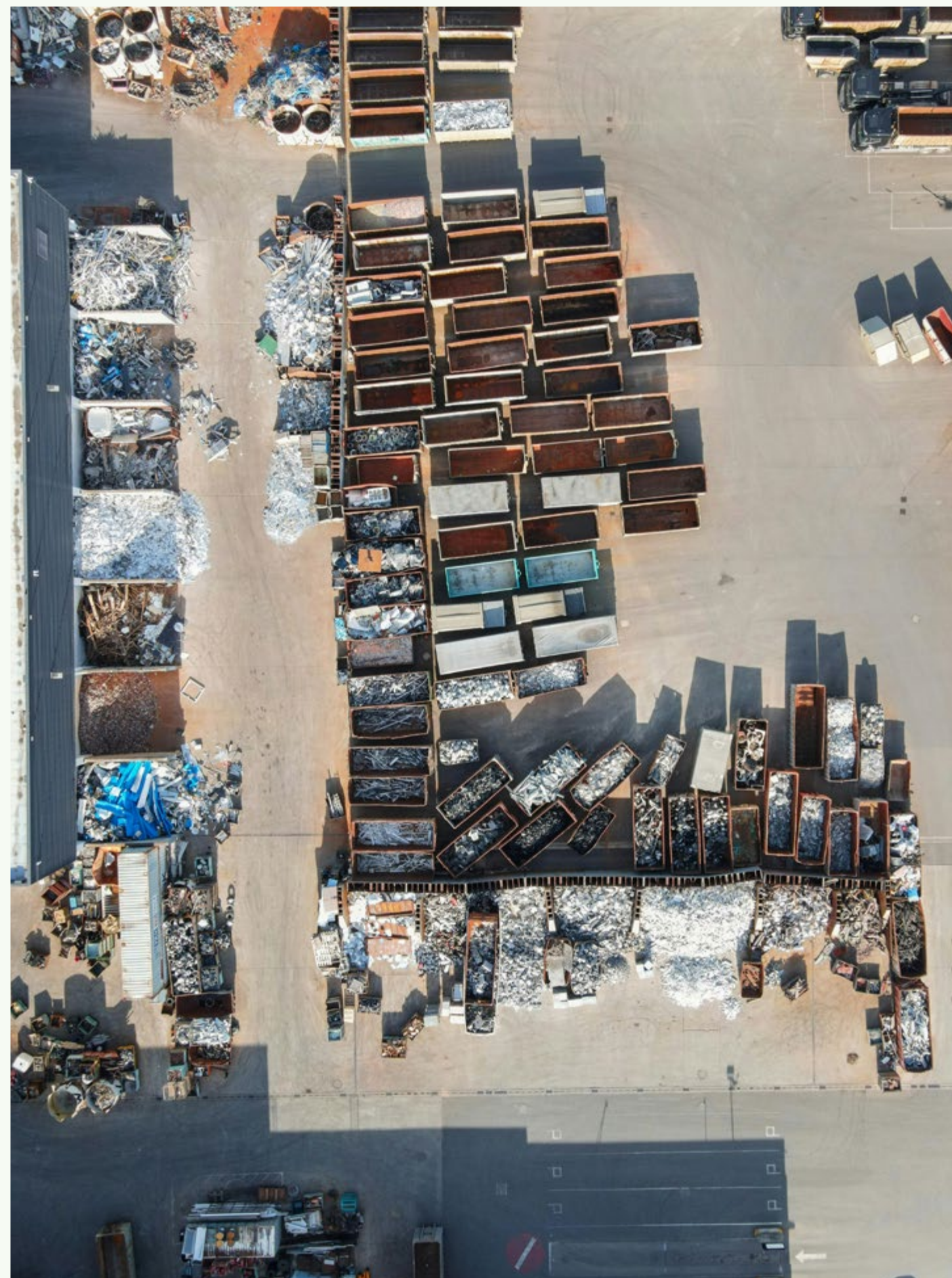
Read the report “Towards a Sustainable Future: Recommendations for a Just Transition in Waste Management and Circular Economy in the ASEAN Region”.

[Download report](#)

“The report aims to provide actionable guidance for implementing agencies and projects like 3RproMar to adapt interventions for a more just approach and offer guidance to project partners. It aligns with international development priorities, including those of Germany and BMZ [German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development].

-Phong Giang, Advisor ASEAN Regional Project 3RProMar at GIZ

Commissioned by:



Circular Economy ClimAccelerator Nairobi

Our solution

ClimAccelerator is a global program for entrepreneurs to innovate, catalyse and scale the potential of their climate solutions. The Circular Economy ClimAccelerator in Nairobi is an acceleration program targeted at local solutions that are working towards shifting the local ecosystem towards more circularity.

Yunus Environment Hub provided **expert support on social inclusion and social business models for the circular economy through a workshop and personalised coaching**, equipping entrepreneurs with the tools and insights needed to develop and integrate tailored social inclusion strategies and scale the social impact of their businesses.

Project outcomes

The workshop covered anticipating challenges and how to address them, and ideation of different approaches to integrate social inclusion practices in their businesses. Participants engaged in presentations, individual and group exercises, and case study discussions.

Following the workshop, the one-on-one coaching sessions aimed to support participants in developing and refining their social inclusion strategies. Yunus Environment Hub helped participants to turn their preliminary strategy drafts into practical and achievable plans and to discuss progress in developing their strategies, their experience in implementing them and the main challenges faced when trying to adopt social inclusion practices.

Project highlights

- **10 entrepreneurs supported in the development of social inclusion strategies**, focused on support for underprivileged groups, supportive work environments, diversity in recruitment, collaboration and networks to achieve social inclusion and capacity building for current and new employees
- **80% are willing to implement** the social inclusion strategies developed
- **60% have already started implementing** the social inclusion strategies developed

Behind the project

“The ClimAccelerator was a perfect opportunity to share the concepts of Social Business and Social Inclusion with traditional businesses. The entrepreneurs not only showed great interest in learning but were also willing to incorporate what they had learned into their businesses.

It was very encouraging to note that more than half of the participants were already familiar with social inclusion strategies and had even started the process of developing some for their businesses. It was also a highlight of the program that some of the entrepreneurs realised that their businesses were actually social businesses. Overall, it was a great opportunity to introduce entrepreneurs to business concepts that are geared towards a just transition.



Leonard Mwasi

Social Business Consultant at Yunus Environment Hub and Consulting Expert for the Circular Economy ClimAccelerator in Nairobi

Commissioned by:



Social inclusion workshop in Nairobi, Kenya as part of the ClimAccelerator

Latest programs

Circular Impact Procurement Initiative

The problem

Social businesses working in the circular economy offer innovative and sustainable circular solutions that create significant social and environmental value. However, despite their potential, they often struggle to find suitable customers, especially in the B2B sector. On the other hand, traditional companies and public institutions that could act as potential customers for these companies often lack the corresponding value awareness and knowledge on how to integrate these suppliers into existing supply chains.

CIP comes at a pivotal moment when businesses and institutions must embrace sustainable procurement to drive the transition to a circular economy. By bridging the gap between social businesses and corporate or public sector buyers, CIP enables procurement to be a force for social and environmental impact. I look forward to seeing how this initiative empowers social businesses to scale while helping organisations meet their sustainability goals. Together, we can transform procurement into a powerful tool for change.



Kiara Sweeney
Program Director at Yunus Environment Hub
and Project Lead of CIP

Our solution

The Circular Impact Procurement Initiative (CIP) is a **capacity building program for procurers and social businesses focused on promoting circular economy practices through sustainable procurement partnerships between social businesses and the public and private sectors in Germany**. It aims to enable social businesses to build profitable and stable relationships with customers to achieve sustainable growth and lasting impact.

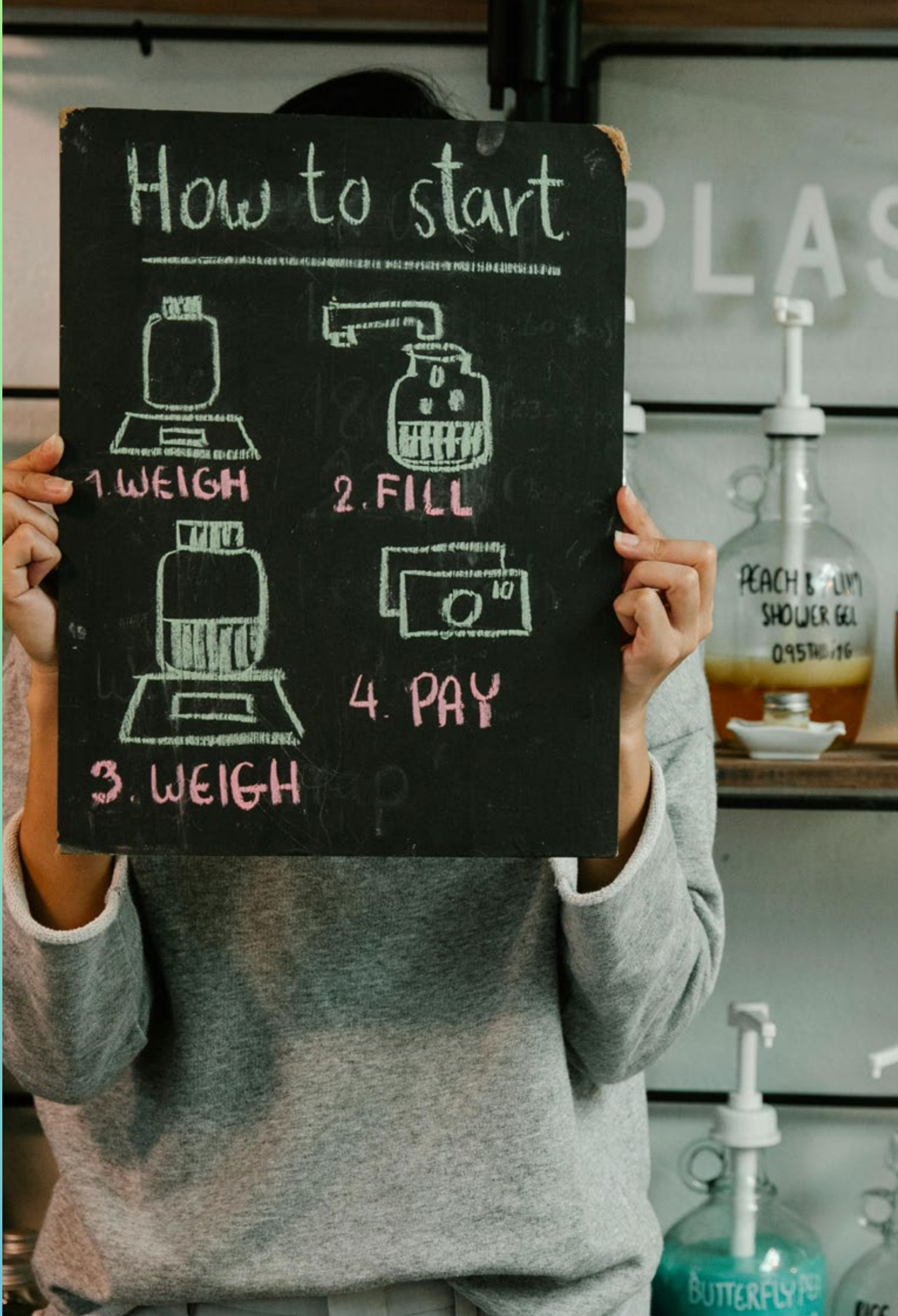
How to get involved

Whether you are a social business, public or private institution, join us in making circular procurement the new standard.

[Subscribe to the CIP newsletter](#)

Implementing partners and funders:





Open Reuse

Our solution

In the face of the growing plastic waste crisis, Yunus Environment Hub is teaming up with Algramo, a pioneering digital platform that is revolutionising refill models, to develop **the first open source global resource platform for reuse models**. Through the platform, we will enable entrepreneurs and organisations to implement return and refill models by providing them with essential digital tools and knowledge to get started. Through the platform, users will be able to identify the most suitable reuse model based on their local context and access information on financial and business models to ensure long-term sustainability. By scaling reuse models, we aim to reduce single-use packaging and divert plastic waste from landfills.

“There are many challenges in implementing reuse models. From issues like policy regulations or lack thereof, infrastructure barriers, lack of packaging standardization, and gaps in know-how to run a sustainable business, a variety of solutions and collaborations are critical to make reuse models scalable. While we are excited to begin the platform creation, we are aware that it will not solve all problems. Our focus will be specifically on supporting implementers who are eager to launch return and refill systems with the tools and knowledge to get started by leveraging Algramo’s expertise in refill systems and Yunus Environment Hub’s expertise in scaling social business solutions.



Julie Chrysler
Circular Economy & Social Impact Director at Yunus Environment Hub and Project Lead of Open Reuse

How to get involved

We are looking for partners to scale platform adoption and implementation of reuse models.

[Learn more](#)

Implementing partners and funders:



Other programs



CirculaRise Academy

Training program for women entrepreneurs focused on strengthening their business skills to increase business competitiveness, income opportunities, job creation and positive environmental impact through tailored mentoring by experienced women in business and interactive business training with expert facilitators.

- 1,380+ women entrepreneurs trained** over four cohorts to build more resilient, sustainable and competitive businesses
- 38 women entrepreneurs empowered** to become program mentors



GrowUp Incubator

Incubation program that supports entrepreneurs with a proven social business concept and potential to scale to become financially self-sustainable by developing circular strategies, strengthening their business model, and assessing their product-market fit.

- 75 social businesses** working in the waste management, food systems, and tourism & e-mobility sectors across East Africa trained
- 30 finalists selected for the incubation phase** and further supported through interactive capacity building workshops, peer-to-peer support, tailored mentorship, and networking



Amazonas Verde

Incubation program that supports social businesses in the Amazon region working to preserve natural resources, conserve biodiversity and prevent forest loss. Social businesses receive capacity building training, market linkages, mentoring and the additional resources needed to achieve long-term financial sustainability.

- 10 social businesses supported**, which are led by youth and women groups
- 1 feasibility study conducted** to examine the solutions which have the most potential in the area



StartNow

Pre-incubation program that guides aspiring entrepreneurs with a social business idea to ideate, refine, and test their social business idea by learning key concepts and practices for social business entrepreneurs and developing a social business plan through the StartNow digital platform.

- 1,988 platform users**, including 1,658 entrepreneurs and 330 mentors
- 72% completion rate**

Would you like to know more about our programs and projects?

Visit our website

Key events and milestones in 2024



Yunus Environment Hub team at Davos

Hosted a session together with EIT Climate-KIC and GreenUp at Davos to co-create pathways to develop the skills, mindsets, and business models needed to promote climate action and enable a circular economy.



Cooperative "Issyk-Kol Organica", one of the organisations supported in Kyrgyzstan

Kicked off the acceleration phase of the BIA program to support selected producer organisations from Ethiopia, Uganda, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal and The Philippines to successfully implement the projects developed during the incubation phase.

January

February

March

April

Joined the Gender and Inclusivity Task Force of the Vietnam National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP) to reduce plastic waste and pollution by promoting initiatives and best practices against plastic pollution with a gender and social inclusion perspective.

Launched CIRCO Hub Vietnam in collaboration with GIZ "Go Circular" and CIRCO to empower manufacturing companies from diverse sectors to integrate circular design principles and circular business models.



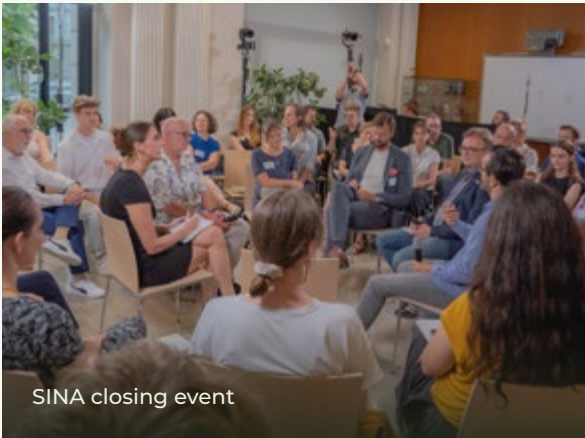
CIRCO Hub workshop



Project Vikalp, an innovation supported through the Innovate2PREVENT program

Launched the **Innovate2PREVENT program** together with the PREVENT Waste Alliance to support innovative organisations tackling plastic and e-waste.

Hosted an interactive session on building inclusive circular business models at Catalysing Change Week where alumni from our entrepreneurship programs shared their inspiring stories.



SINA closing event

Hosted the **SINA closing event** where we engaged in an insightful discussion on how social innovations can drive the transformation needed to achieve ecological sustainability and a circular economy.

Partnered with the Vietnam Interiors Association (VNIA) to support Vietnamese enterprises in developing and implementing circular business models.

Joined the **Circular Transition Indicators Advisory Group of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)** to provide our expert feedback on the development of social impact indicators to better link circular economy solutions and impacts on people.

Hosted the **first CIRCO Hub Alumni Event** in Ho Chi Minh City, where alumni from the first CIRCO tracks presented their circular products and initiatives and exchanged ideas to drive circularity in their companies.



Ethiopian Association of Organic Agriculture, one of the organisations supported in Ethiopia

Finalised the **acceleration phase of the BIA program**, where we provided technical assistance to 31 producer organisations to move from strategic planning to effective implementation of their projects, ensuring their long-term success and sustainable impact.

May June July August September October November December

Attended the **Social Business Day**, where we hosted an interactive panel on driving a green and inclusive economy through social business, bringing together speakers from around the globe to share examples of social business support ecosystems and entrepreneurs that are driving climate action.



Social Business Day 2024

Published the report **“Towards a Sustainable Future: Recommendations for a Just Transition in Waste Management and Circular Economy in the ASEAN Region”** conducted on behalf of GIZ with key recommendations to stakeholders to implement sustainable and inclusive waste management practices.

Secured funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action and the European Union as part of the “Nachhaltig wirken” funding program **to scale our CirculaRise Accelerator Program and develop the Circular Impact Procurement Initiative.**



SONRIZA, a social business supported in the CirculaRise Accelerator

Kicked off the **Open Reuse project** in partnership with Algramo and with support from Röchling Foundation to equip entrepreneurs and organisations who are eager to launch a refill or return model with the necessary tools and resources to get started.



Reflection and ways forward

Driving systemic change requires collective action.

In 2024, we took significant steps to expand our presence and scale our impact. A key milestone was securing a 2 million Euro funding for a three-year period from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action under the funding program “Nachhaltig wirken – Förderung Gemeinwohlorientierter Unternehmen” to expand our CirculaRise Accelerator program in Germany and launch the Circular Impact Procurement Initiative. Internationally, we advanced the transition to a circular economy in Vietnam, supporting companies in adopting circular economy practices through the CIRCO Hub program. We also contributed to strengthening agri-food systems, promoting inclusive economic growth, and reducing inequalities in mountain and island areas through the BIA program. Another highlight was witnessing the progress of the social businesses we have supported through our earlier programs, as they continue to drive long-term holistic impact in their industries and communities.

Despite these achievements, 2024 also brought challenges. Political uncertainty and instability in the social sector along with funding cuts for organisations driving social impact, stressed the importance of economically sustainable social business models. At the same time, evolving regulatory frameworks are reshaping the ecosystems where social businesses operate. At the European level, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) aims to increase transparency and accountability in global value chains. In Germany, the introduction of the National Circular Economy Strategy and the National Strategy for Social Innovations and Social

Enterprises reflects a growing recognition of the role that social businesses play in building a more sustainable future.

Looking ahead, we will focus on scaling our impact by strengthening our entrepreneurship support programs, fostering public-private collaboration to unlock opportunities for social businesses through sustainable procurement, and enhancing our research activities to generate data-driven insights that inform the design of our programs. Two major programs will shape our growth: the Circular Impact Procurement Initiative, designed to create synergies between social businesses and corporates, SMEs, and public institutions, and the expansion of our CirculaRise Accelerator program in Germany, with plans to expand them to other regions in 2025. Both programs will be essential in our efforts to boost social business models, drive circular economy solutions and achieve systemic change.

However, real progress cannot be achieved alone. We call on governments, businesses, investors, and communities to work together to tackle the environmental crisis. As we move forward, we remain committed to learning, adapting, and refining our work based on insights from our experiences and will continue to build solutions that drive lasting social and environmental impact.

Let's join efforts!

Are you interested in our work and share a common vision? Get in touch with us to explore how we can build and implement solutions together.

[Partner with us](#)

[Support our work](#)

5

Thank you to our partners and funders for being part of this journey!



www.yunusenvironmenthub.com

This report is the result of our impact measurement work at Yunus Environment Hub. The insights, data, and success stories featured in this report were contributed by various team members, program managers, and social business entrepreneurs who participated in our programs.

Title: Yunus Environment Hub Impact Report 2024.

Report Lead: Andrea Naranjo, Innovation and Impact Manager at Yunus Environment Hub

Photography: Yunus Environment Hub, Unsplash, Pexels. Cover image by Olena Bohovyk.

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