

## Implementing the Territorial Agenda 2030: “Circular Rural Regions”

### Circular Economy in Rural Areas

### Invitation for European regions to join the pilot action

**The pilot action invites rural areas active in circular economy and committed to join the partnership running until 2027 to get in touch.** The concept of circular economy has taken a central role in the sustainable transformation of the economy and society both at the national and EU levels. The new pilot action [“Circular Rural Regions”](#), initiated by BMWSB (German Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building) and BBSR (German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development) aims to explore regional approaches to the circular economy using German and European model regions and supports the development and implementation of strategic circular economy concepts in rural areas.

The pilot action is being implemented as part of the **Territorial Agenda 2030** (TA2030), which aims to strengthen spatial cohesion in Europe. [TA2030 pilot actions](#) contribute to the implementation of this aim focusing on joint learning, sharing of best practices, building networks, and demonstrating how the TA2030 priorities can be put into practice through concrete actions.

This pilot action aims to implement concrete actions within four German model regions, while simultaneously fostering exchange and joint learning on the European level. The **four German model regions**, that are at the beginning of their circular journey and will be selected in an open competition procedure until summer 2024, will be funded and supported in developing their strategies and implementing measures towards rural circularity as well as researched comprehensively during the duration of the pilot action (2024 – 2027).

For the exchange on the European level, the pilot action aims to additionally include **up to four European model regions**, that are experienced in their implementation of circular concepts and have already put circular measures into practice in their regions. The pilot action is interested in actors in regional development, including public authorities, regional associations or regional economic development agencies. These sizes of the regions should be below federal state/provincial level, roughly equivalent to NUTS-3 and the responsible stakeholders should have a certain steering function in the region. In addition to the regional level, also the national and European level will be invited to join the partnership.

**Participating European regions will benefit from various exchange formats** (both physical and digital), that will foster the transfer of knowledge and best practices amongst the model regions and enable a multi-level exchange between regions and relevant political institutions on the European level as well as on the national levels of the participating regions. Physical meetings between the German and European model regions are planned for 2025 and 2026, as well as two public conferences to kick off and conclude the project in 2024 and 2027. The kick-off conference will take place in Berlin from September 25 to 26, 2024. Travel expenses for one representative per region for these formats can be reimbursed. The pilot action is looking for actors committed to join the partnership for the full period of implementation and interested in sharing their knowledge.

**Further incentives for the participating regions** include the designation as a regional expert, an increased visibility of the regions on the national and European level and the provision of public relations products that regions can use for their own communication work. A toolbox will be created as a result of the process.

As no funding can be provided, it is encouraged that regions get involved that have ongoing initiatives or projects in the field and therewith can draw on national or international funds - for example, through (ongoing) funded projects (from ERDF, Leader, Interreg, national/regional programs, etc.). Such regions that implement circular measures during the duration of the pilot action, will be provided with comprehensive support through the pilot action.

**European regions are invited to declare their interest to join the partnership.** If we sparked your interest and your country is interested to participate in the pilot action, please contact us via [info@circularruralregions.de](mailto:info@circularruralregions.de) – ideally until NTCCP-Meeting (April 26).

**Further procedure:** Naming of the participating region by summer 2024, participation in kick-off conference 25-26 September in Berlin.

Further information on the pilot action can be found [here](#).