



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Dissemination and transfer activities

The basic principle of the project is

- a) to develop and test the training measures in the project consortium and
- b) to transfer the results to 50 chambers and 17 universities from 13 countries in writing and in person and to carry out individual implementation consultations. These transfer recipients who promote the project target groups are members of the Hanse Parliament and the Baltic Sea Academy that was founded by the Hanse Parliament and currently connects 17 Colleges/Universities. Both organizations are in charge of their members also after end of the project.

In general, the transfer recipients are educational suppliers and SMEs' promoters whose mission and daily business is i. a. implementation of vocational education and training (VET) qualifications constantly. These actors receive successfully tested curricula with all materials and in addition implementing consultations free of charge. Therefore, there exists a high interest to offer the developed measures permanently. Particularly, as for it SMEs report a high need of innovative solutions in green economy that could also be confirmed during the pilot phase of the training measures. Moreover, in accordance with the duties and interests of the transfer recipients "colleges/universities" address their lecturers and students and the transfer recipients "chambers" – their members - SMEs and employees.

During the project life time the geographic target area for testing the measures was set in Germany, Finland, Poland and Hungary. The international orientation of the training pilot allows taking into account the different regional and national conditions. The geographic scope has been widened already during the project through written, electronic and personal transfer as well as implementing consultations to the chambers and universities. Using this dissemination approach about 50 regions are reached as each chamber represents one region in the 13 countries around the Baltic Sea. Approximately 475.000 SMEs belong to the involved chambers, so that in this way numerous SMEs can be addressed. In addition, the chambers are working in their regions closely with other educational institutions, public administrations and politics making further spreads at the regional level.

Consequently can be summed up that chambers as constant SMEs' promoters are best suited to receive the training measures and to carry these out for SMEs in their region permanently.

For this purpose, however, the chambers need qualified trainers and consultants on C2C. Therefore, a C2C train-the-trainer program was developed and transferred to 17 colleges/universities in the Baltic Sea Region countries, which continuously qualify own lecturers as well as trainers and consultants of chambers.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



To reach good and sustainable dissemination results it is important to inform and involve the transfer recipients in the progress and activities of the project as soon as possible, and particularly in the testing phase of the advanced training methods as well as during the multi-day conference. So it is not a dissemination and use of "foreign", but "own" results that the chambers and their SMEs and the universities strongly require. Thus, the added value has been already created before the application is submitted, comprises the entire project implementation with mutual effects and permanent use of the results and is continued after the project in the current activities.

To reach further actors, besides the 67 transfer recipients, the following activities have been carried out:

- a) All results, materials, etc. have been published on the project website and set in publicity accessible internet platforms of the lead partner and the websites of all project partners.
- b) The public was intensively informed about the project results and their use in three press conferences and four press releases. In addition, 67 Hanse Parliament and Baltic Sea Academy members put information in their own platforms and members' magazines.
- c) To address the target groups and informing the general public two television broadcasts were produced, which afterwards were spread via internet and by distribution of DVDs.
- d) Project and associated partners introduced the project results during their daily business in political decision-making processes.
- e) The project results are published in the form of this manual, and sold via trade.
- f) In more than 20 third party events in different countries project results, possibilities of use, etc. were presented in person.
- g) The lead partner as international organization is involved in numerous political committees and has informed about the project objectives and results to promote the contribution in political decision processes.

This promotion and dissemination approach has extraordinarily proven as the experiences have shown that electronic and written transfer is not fully sufficient as high-quality, long-term and sustainable effects are only possible if the dissemination activities are carried out in workshops, conferences, symposia, etc., personal transfers with intensive exchange of information and, above all, demand-oriented individual implementation discussions. Moreover, it is crucial that aid, subsidies, discussions, etc. are not finished with the completion of the project, but are permanently continued. For this, the capacities of the powerful secretariat of the lead partner will be fully used after the project end.

Results of the Hanseatic Conference 2016

Once every year the Hanse Parliament and the Baltic Sea Academy invite politicians, SME representatives, representatives from chambers of commerce, industry and crafts, vocational and



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



educational schools and business development organisations to the international Hanseatic Conference in Hamburg to a joint dialogue on currently important developments for Small and Medium sized companies in Europe and especially in the Baltic Sea Region.

The 11th Hanseatic Conference in Hamburg from 18-19th of May 2016 was dedicated the subject of circular economy with the particular focus on the Cradle to Cradle approach. The president of the Hanse Parliament and the Baltic Sea Academy Dr. Max Hogeforster emphasises the importance of the subject of circular economy and Cradle to Cradle as following: “The prominent bottleneck of the present time concerns energy, environment and climate protection. In all these fields SMEs have the chance to become pioneers and world market leaders. The emerging solutions lay mainly stress on eco-efficiency. “However the principle of eco-efficiency has a fatal disadvantage: it leaves the basic concept of industrial production unchanged. Reduction, recycling and regulations reduce the environmental burden and slow down the loss of natural resources; however these processes do not address the roots of the conceptual errors – they are deadlock solutions” (Prof. Dr. M. Braungart). Currently the eco-efficiency is so important that one should not overlook the fact that with its help only the limits of environmental burdens and of the consumption of resources are pushed outside. Within the framework of basic innovations according to the Cradle to Cradle principle the products must be designed in such a way that they don't become waste but after their use could be usable 100% if possible. The development of such a circular economy requires first of all intellectual innovations with a far-reaching new approach.”

At the conference the results of the project “Improvement of Skills in Green Economy through an Advanced Training Programme Cradle to Cradle Training Programme” (C2C in SMEs) were presented and discussed. In addition, experts from Germany, Finland, Russia, Belarus and Lithuania reported about the current developments and experiences on the circular economy in their countries. All the experts' presentations are prepared and published in the following part of the book.

The experts' presentations and those of the project results make a valuable basis for the discussion groups that are the heart of the Hanseatic Conference. In the joint work in small groups new ideas, solutions, strategies are born and experiences exchanged.

Circular Economy across the Mare Balticum – Working Groups' results from the 11th Hanseatic Conference by Dr. Jürgen Hogeforster

In the Hanseatic Conference, current project results, developments, tasks and strategies were presented in short lectures and in panel discussions. Working groups are the very heart of the Hanseatic Conference; they are staffed internationally and interdisciplinary. Presentations are discussed and accurate strategies and measures are designed. In 10 working sessions, roughly 90 scientists, entrepreneurs and representatives of chambers, politics and administrations of all Baltic Sea countries developed strategic approaches to the development and promotion of the cradle-to-cradle concept, as well as innovations for small and medium-sized enterprises.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Significance and value of cradle-to-cradle for SMEs

Bottlenecks in the economic and social development always occur when supply is less than demand, when innovative solutions are not available and are therefore paid particular attention. Thus, current bottlenecks determine the growth areas of tomorrow.

At the present time, an outstanding bottleneck relates to energy, environment and climate protection. Innovations on energy-saving, on the development of alternative, non-fossil fuels, as well as on water conservation, sewage treatment or waste reduction, are increasingly gaining in importance. In all these fields, Germany, and in particular the city of Hamburg has the chance of becoming a pioneer and a world leader. Emerging solutions place special emphasis on eco-efficiency. The principle of eco-efficiency, however, has a fatal drawback: it leaves the basic concept of industrial production unchanged. Reduction, reuse and regulations reduce the environmental impact, slowing the loss of natural resources; however, these processes do not target the conceptual errors of the problem – they are actually dead-end solutions.“ Eco-efficiency may be decisive, but we should not overlook that this clouds the fact of merely delaying the critical environmental limits and resource consumption. Basic innovations in combination with new technologies based on the cradle-to-cradle principle should render products in a way that they do not become waste, but become reusable again after use, preferably up to 100 percent. Designing such a circular economy, adapted from nature, primarily requires intellectual innovations and a far-reaching new thinking and reconceptualization.

Interested parties attach a great value to circular economy: Circular Economy is important for SMEs; it gives the opportunity to cut direct costs. Small and medium-sized enterprises are prepared and better suited to implement recycling. Ecological management methods are excellent promotion and marketing instruments for SMEs and the “cradle-to-cradle“ concept is referred to as particularly advantageous. The concept of cradle-to-cradle is suitable for SMEs! It opens up countless innovation opportunities for the SME sector. By contrast, other experts claim that the implementation of cradle-to-cradle is more appropriate for bigger companies.

A uniformly positively appreciated evaluation of the cradle-to-cradle concept for SMEs renders numerous assessments as to the possibilities and opportunities for its implementation. SMEs are the more flexible enterprises – they follow the endlessly changing demand patterns. Cradle-to-cradle is undoubtedly essential, however not all companies share this view. The concept was met with limited acceptance in the SME community, while other participants hold up the view that small businesses can easily implement this concept. It's the small size of SMEs that makes it easy to adopt this model.

For the majority of SMEs, it is neither possible nor advisable to implement cradle-to-cradle directly and in every respect. What matters is to start a manageable cradle-to-cradle project and thus stimulating a process of ongoing optimization. Cradle-to-cradle helps companies to understand what they actually do and it raises their awareness of the “importance of material health (design for reuse)“. Cradle-to-cradle allows SMEs to sell their knowledge. Therefore, cradle-to-cradle must also be customer-driven.

According to many participants, circular economy will only be beneficial to SMEs, if the implementation will be economically beneficial. Financially con-strained SMEs won't be ready to



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



implement cradle-to-cradle. Given the high implementation costs, financial and economic barriers for the implementation of the concept still exist.

Moreover, a high level of social awareness is essential for the implementation and success of cradle-to-cradle projects in the SME sector. A high level of social responsibility is required (a certain level SMEs must achieve).

Conditions for and support of cradle-to-cradle

In a market economy, the scarcity of goods determines their price. Workers are abundant and many are unemployed. However, due to high wage and income related taxes and rising non-wage labour costs, personal has become extremely expensive. This is against market rules. Nonetheless, environmental resources are scarce, but considering their actual scarcity they are far too cheap. This too contravenes market rules.

Consequently, calls for ethics and morals alone are not the answer. For instance, under the existing system, which favours capital investments, anyone who prefers highest return on invested capital rather than poor returns on investment in jobs or environmental protection, simply behaves rationally. Deeply rooted antagonism arises between the logic of each individual company or any individual private household and the logic of the society as a whole. Companies and private households that behave economically rationally, cause harm to society. Companies are not to blame for their rational behaviour nor are private households – no, it's basically the erroneous system to be blamed for that.

What is needed now is a renewal of the system. System innovations currently form the basis for providing solutions and for genuinely fruitful innovations in technology, organization, social forms, etc. In a process-oriented approach of a system-renewal, governments must send out signals and incentives that, based on an economically rational behaviour, companies' and households' investments in environmental protection in general and in particular in circular economy, are economically viable. The conference participants argued the following specific aspects concerning this idea.

Companies are largely unprepared for the implementation of cradle-to-cradle. There are no appropriate funding systems. Implementation of cradle-to-cradle demands high investments, which must be economically beneficial. SMEs are not prepared to function under circular economy! They lack money for investments and contacts (relationships). There is therefore an urgent need for political action, to finally establish effective financial support, e.g. incentives such as tax benefits. Financial support and new legal rules shall encourage SMEs to pursue and to make them capable of cradle-to-cradle. Comprehensive recycling schemes require an improved conditional framework. Waste control authorities shall apply cradle-to-cradle.

Conditions must be established so that implementation generates added value and secures higher income. Besides financial support, a comprehensive, integrated education programme must involve all relevant intervention areas, in particular training and advanced training, designing and presentation of practical examples, certificates, as well as SME-specific counselling. Well-qualified cradle-to-cradle experts will be needed.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



SMEs should be encouraged and awarded for the implementation of cradle-to-cradle instead to be penalised for their lack of ecological orientation. Certificates may encourage SMEs to act in accordance with the cradle-to-cradle concept. The factors considered as being particularly important include all motivation-oriented measures, amended laws, and regulations. For SMEs, workable solutions are crucial, whereas best practice examples of other companies render high motivation for own implementations. Therefore, intensified lookout should be kept for pioneering companies, to present them on a wide scale.

All concepts and funding measures must be designed in accordance with country-specific conditions: Distance is an obstacle – act more regionally!

Information and training on cradle-to-cradle

Another important, yet little discussed bottleneck issue are the organization of work and the designing of processes for the manufacture of products and for the rendering of services. In Western industrialized countries, labour costs and the related social costs are high and further increasing. The thus triggered pressure on rationalizing innovations significantly aggravates the shortage of specialists and managers. Qualification requirements of companies vary strongly and are constantly on the rise, and, as a result, adding to quantitative ever more qualitative shortages. As a growth area, education urgently requires innovations and investment. Far-reaching innovations in personnel and organizational development in companies will render inspiring and applicable social energy. The broad field of education and organization of work is a top priority growth area, which can be endorsed only as a result of fundamental innovations.

The Hanseatic Conference repeatedly stressed out that high information and qualification deficits are hindering an enhanced implementation. To eliminate these large deficits, the participants discussed the following considerations.

The participants call for an ecological education from the lowest stage of education at school. Qualification of company owners and employees of SMEs is of paramount importance to implement the cradle-to-cradle concept and to attain instruments for realizing the concept. Advanced training is a suitable instrument to introduce the concept to the interested SMEs, to achieve appropriate changes in the economic approach and to kick-off implementation. The participants call for ecological education to be taught starting from the first school grade.

No information or training services were available on Cradle to Cradle® for SMEs; the results presented below relate to large companies only. Hence, in the project “Improvement of skills in the green economy through an advanced cradle-to-cradle training programme”, specific training opportunities for SMEs and their employees have been developed and tested in practice in Germany, Poland and Hungary and then transferred across the Baltic Region. A completely redesigned advanced training programme for SMEs assumes innovative ways and it consists of three parts:

- a) face-to-face teaching to impart knowledge and relevant qualification
- b) self-study with individual training and application of the learnt knowledge in the company. Each participant has to render in his company a C2C project work.
- c) Face-to-face teaching for evaluating the project works and for deepening of knowledge according to the individual participants’ needs as well as sharing experiences.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



According to the conference participants, this training programme is very well suited to prepare SMEs, to train them and to execute implementation of the cradle-to-cradle design. Two paths are recommended in order to continuously and lastingly implement the training programme across the Baltic Sea Region:

- a) project-based funding mechanisms
- b) funding by government initiative.

The participants consider that the implementation of cradle-to-cradle requires intensive cooperation, which must be systematically trained. Only teamwork can render positive effects. By setting-up information campaigns and by continued training, SMEs will be demonstrated that ecological behaviour and sustainable economy can be profitable. Social campaigning may be necessary to promote pro-ecological behaviour. Any exhaustive information and any forms of awareness rising, e.g. on the materials used, the necessity of dissemination, are of paramount importance.

The already initiated continued training schemes were given a positive assessment and they should be necessarily continued on a broad scale and permanently across all countries and regions. The trainings are well applicable for SMEs, but in the course of further development, they should include more targeted and more comprehensive cradle-to-cradle examples as well as information for SMEs. It is furthermore advisable, that after completion of the training, regular experience exchange and process-related guidance is offered to the participants.

Cradle-to-cradle comprises a widespread system renewal, implying new thinking. Information and education shall enable a spiritual renewal in order to create and implement unremitting system innovations. This may not be accomplished by the present top political and business leaders, due to their sticking to old patterns of thinking, due to the fact that they would have to give up power, which all together might be hardly compatible with their self-understanding. The spiritual renewal, and thus the initiation of system innovations require new elite of responsibility, elite that might run vertically across the current social structures, that comes together and obtains more influence. These future shapers can be identified, inter alia, by the following characteristics and behavioural patterns.

They work interdisciplinary: philosophers, historians, artists, craftsmen, economists, engineers and masters pool their knowledge and creativity, they are in a vivid peer-exchange and they shape new qualities.

They are crossover-artists who know no limits to their thinking and who are ready to cross them, people who also use knowledge that is scientifically unprovable and who create entirely new solutions.

They cherish tradition; they trace their roots back in history, finding support and security there, being in constant search for new frontiers. They do not live in the past, but are rather driven by the past, thus safeguarding their orientation in order to keep a cool head in our hectic and volatile times.

They are people who can predict what the future holds and they are ready to shape it. Inspired by an idea, they pursue it unswervingly with the utmost vigour, solid persistence and tireless commitment, from conception to realisation.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



They are networkers who love to exchange and they intensively cooperate with a variety of people with generous openness, curiosity, tolerance and utmost communicational skills, sharing their knowledge, and enlarging it.

They are enthusiasts who can inspire others, they are turned to humans and their empathy is contagious. While perpetually burning for others without being self-consumed, they can, at the same time, spark others.

Being the new elite, these people are role models. They are to be found across all social groups, especially in the crafts and in SMEs. Partly still in the background, they occasionally assume responsibility. After all, this human kind will grow in numbers, spreading new thinking and causing system innovations, and thus paving the way for a more innovative future. For it's the people who shape the economy, who, in all times, eliminated barriers and overcame bottlenecks with their sheer innovative spirit.