



Circular Business Association Position Paper

Introduction

The Circular Business Association (CBASS) is dedicated to fostering the development of a truly circular economy. As we prepare to engage with policymakers and regulators, it is imperative to address critical misconceptions and advocate for a broader, and accurate interpretation of the circular economy. Our position is that recycling, upcycling, and waste-to-energy, while beneficial, do not encompass the entirety of the circular economy. These practices merely represent an incremental improvement over the linear economy and they do not deliver the full benefits of sustainable, far-reaching climate actions necessary for a future-ready society.

1. The Misconception of Recycling Economy as Circular Economy

Recycling, upcycling, and waste-to-energy are often touted as pillars of the circular economy. However, focusing exclusively on these practices perpetuates a "Recycling Economy," which remains fundamentally linear. This approach deals with waste at the end of the product lifecycle, treating waste as an afterthought rather than realising its full potential.

The true essence of a circular economy lies in designing out waste and pollution from the outset. By asking industries to heavily invest in recycling and waste management infrastructures, which take decades to yield returns, we perpetuate the notion of waste and delay the adoption of genuine circular practices. This is misplaced attention. It diverts resources away from innovative circular solutions that businesses are ready to deploy and opportunities for greater value creation.

2. The Broader Scope of Circular Economy

The circular economy must be understood as more than just solid waste management and reducing waste flows to landfills. It encompasses how society accesses and benefits from goods and services in a way that is regenerative and sustainable. This paradigm shift moves beyond "doing less harm" to actively "doing more good."

Supporting a circular economy means supporting business models and societal structures that restore and regenerate. It involves rethinking how businesses generate profits sustainably and fosters a better livelihood for people. By aligning with natural systems, we can achieve better outcomes for current and future generations.

The circular economy is not a purely environmental issue. It is an economic strategy to ensure that the economy functions to serve society without compromising and even enhancing the betterment of the living system within which society exists.

3. The Need for Ecosystem Support and Regulatory Flexibility

Much like the technological revolutions driven by personal computers and smartphones, transitioning to the circular economy requires a collaborative ecosystem that spans multiple industries and sectors. Companies by themselves cannot achieve the transition. We call upon regulators and policymakers to recognize this need and facilitate a supportive framework.

To this end, we advocate for the removal of bureaucratic barriers that restrain circular economy from its full potential. This includes, but are not limited to, revisiting regulatory nomenclature and definitions, reforming grant and incentive criteria, and establishing shared outcomes and safeguards. The current market offerings are fragmented, making it challenging for companies to transition seamlessly to sustainability. Piecemeal support for circular projects fails to generate the scale required to supplant the linear economy effectively.

Constructive support and well-structured regulations are essential for fostering a conducive environment for circular business models. It is counterproductive to criticize businesses for "not doing enough" without clear guidance on how to progress towards greater circularity.

Our growing business community is ready to engage on multiple fronts to address and solve the challenges faced in implementing the circular economy. This collective commitment underscores our potential for significant impact and collaboration.

Our position

The Circular Business Association's mission is to realign solution providers, vendors, and suppliers into a cohesive, profitable circular economy ecosystem capable of rapidly transforming how goods and services are accessed and consumed. This transformation is crucial for addressing the climate crisis and ensuring a liveable world within the next 7-8 years. It is time to move away that the prevailing interpretation of circular economy that is overly narrow, inadequate and even anti-business.

We urge policymakers and regulators to adopt a comprehensive, forward-thinking approach to the circular economy. By addressing the root causes of waste and embracing regenerative practices, we can create a sustainable future that benefits all stakeholders.

We invite you to connect with us and join hands in this transformative journey.

Sincerely,
Chin Lijin
Chairperson
Circular Business Association
Persatuan Perniagaan Ekonomi Kitaran Malaysia (PPM-009-14-10052022)

Circular Business Association (CBASS) is an ecosystem builder that is committed to solving the climate crisis and create a liveable world by accelerating business transition into the circular economy. Our goal is to rapidly change how people access goods and services on a daily basis and make their livelihoods in the next 7-8 years by rapidly replacing the unsustainable linear economy with a profitable circular economy that is regenerative and restorative by design. We answer the 'Who' of sustainability implementation by aligning talents and solution providers into a profit driven ecosystem so that more organisations can get climate and sustainability action done faster. We are a global membership-based association registered with the Registrar of Societies in Malaysia.