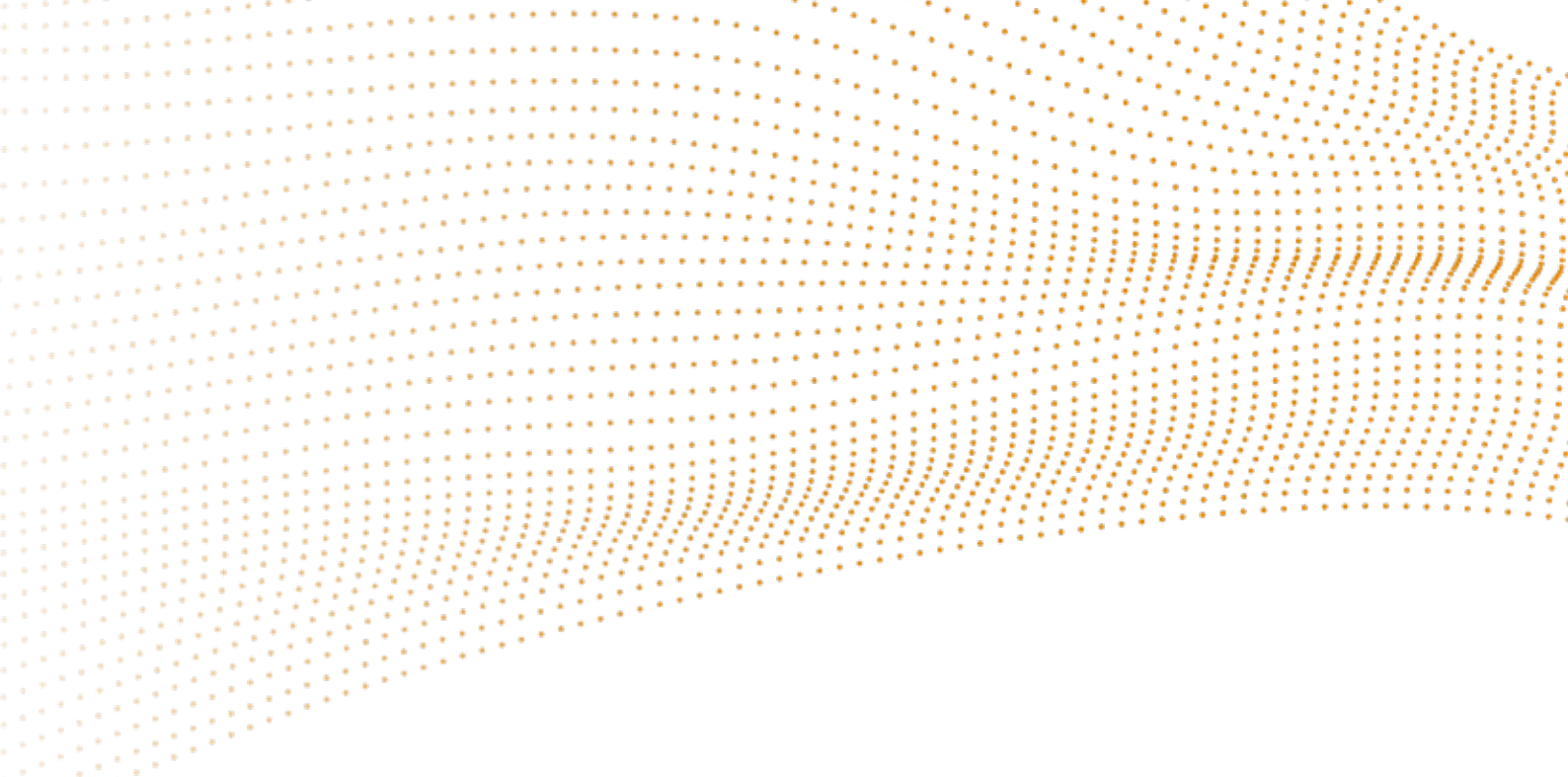


mandagmorgen

TÆNKETANKEN



NOVEMBER 23 - 26, 2021



“Circularity is key to Sustainability,
and the key to Circularity is
Collaboration - We must collaborate
more, better and faster to accelerate
the transition we all need, and this
is what we invite you all to join
in on. All and everyone, welcome
to the Nordic Circular Summit”

EINAR K. HOLTHE - NATURAL STATE -
NORWEGIAN MANAGING PARTNER AND PROJECT LEADER
NORDIC CIRCULAR HOTSPOT

The Nordic Circular Summit is co-hosted and produced by Nordic Circular Hotspot and Nordic Innovation, and is an official World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) Side Event. To achieve dialogue and cooperation across generations we are honored to have the youth organisations ReGeneration 2030 and project CATALY(C)ST from DTU Skylab as official Nordic Circular Summit Partners. In addition, the Summit is also supported by our Governmental partner, Nordic Working Group for Circular Economy, Nordic Council of Ministers.

The Summit 2021 has two main conference days on November 25 – 26, and an additional two pre-event days on November 23 – 24. The summit is free of charge and open to all.

The Nordic Circular Summit Magazine has been researched, written, and edited by the Copenhagen-based Think Tank Mandag Morgen.

Christian Ingemann,
Project Director, Think Tank Mandag Morgen



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CALL TO ACTION

Choosing Circular Together

The latest reports on global warming and the urgent need to mitigate CO2 emissions are undeniably alarming. We can no longer sugar-coat the research findings and calls to action from the scientific community. We are facing planetary emergencies that could lead to the collapse of civilisation as we know it unless we implement rapid and far-reaching changes throughout our entire economic system.

Over the next decade, we must confront the twin challenges of preventing breakdowns and devising breakthroughs. The sustainability pioneer John Elkington calls these solutions to global challenges "Green Swans". To confront these challenges and harness the power of business innovation and entrepreneurship, political mobilisation and inter-generational citizen engagement, we urgently need to make circularity the most attractive solution. It is the ONLY viable solution in the foreseeable future.

The Nordic countries have an opportunity to step up and do their part to address this momentous challenge, which also presents a great opportunity. The Nordic Circular Summit is an invitation to participate, contribute and be inspired. It is a call to seize the moment, make commitments and implement scalable actions.

The Summit is one of the cornerstones of Nordic Circular Hotspot and our collaboration with Nordic Innovation. Our mission is to accelerate the transition to an inclusive, resource-efficient, regenerative and circular market in the Nordic Region. We want to promote the huge potential of a far closer and more coordinated Nordic approach by our governments, business organisations and industrial sectors. The aim is to make a meaningful contribution, to reinvent how we design, produce and market products in the Nordic Region, to redefine growth and to showcase what can be achieved through reuse, reduction, repairing, regeneration AND systemic change towards circularity.

This year, the Summit channels the voice of young people across the globe who are taking matters into their own hands, questioning our outdated methods, inspiring new forms of leadership and fuelling a culture of change.

It is time to step up or step aside.

Kim Hjerrild - Lifestyle & Design Cluster
Danish Managing Partner and NCS host of 2021



November 23 – 26, 2021



FREE DIGITAL SUMMIT HOSTED FROM COPENHAGEN

Four Days Exploring the Circular Economy in the Nordic Region



Nordic Circular Summit is an annual event hosted by Nordic Circular Hotspot and Nordic Innovation with a mission to accelerate the circular transition in the Nordic region

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#CircularNordic

November 23 – 24, 2021

<p>PRE-SESSIONS NOV 23 • 10:00 – 16:00</p>	<p>STAGE 1</p> <p>Enabling the Digital Circular Economy</p> <p>Hosted by Think Tank Monday Morning</p>	<p>STAGE 2</p> <p>Leaving Linear Behind: A Vision for a Nordic Circular Economy</p> <p>Hosted by Circle Economy</p>	<p>STAGE 3</p> <p>Green Transition Within Textiles – Comparing National Roadmaps</p> <p>Hosted by Business Finland and Lifestyle & Design Cluster</p>
<p>STAGE 1</p> <p>How Nordic Public and Private Companies Save the Environment and Money</p> <p>Hosted by Loopfront</p>	<p>STAGE 2</p> <p>Fostering a Circular Consumption in the Lifestyle Industry</p> <p>Hosted by Lifestyle & Design Cluster</p>	<p>STAGE 3</p> <p>Turning the Linear Food & Beverage Supply Chain Circular</p> <p>Interactive Workshop Hosted by Inchainge B.V.</p>	<p>STAGE 1</p> <p>Circular Solutions for Rural Areas</p> <p>Hosted by Grude</p>
<p>STAGE 2</p> <p>TOOL Nordic Matchmaking: Circular Ocean Solutions</p> <p>Hosted by The Ocean Opportunity Lab – TOOL</p>	<p>STAGE 3</p> <p>Circular Fibers – Recycling technologies</p> <p>Hosted by Lifestyle & Design Cluster</p>		
<p>PRE-SESSIONS NOV 24 • 09:00 – 16:00</p>	<p>STAGE 1</p> <p>CATALY(C)ST Circular Readiness Masterclass</p> <p>Hosted by CATALY(C)ST</p>	<p>STAGE 2</p> <p>What are the Possibilities for a Nordic Design Blockchain?</p> <p>Online Roundtable Debate Hosted by Lifestyle & Design Cluster</p>	<p>STAGE 3</p> <p>Let's Build Circularity Around the Next Generation!</p> <p>Hosted by LOOP</p>
<p>STAGE 4</p> <p>TBA</p> <p>Hosted by Green Product Award</p>	<p>STAGE 1</p> <p>Circular Economy, Transparency and Strong Reseller Market</p> <p>Hosted by Lifestyle & Design Cluster</p>	<p>STAGE 2</p> <p>Designing Circular Thriving Cities with Doughnut Economics</p> <p>Workshop Hosted by Circle Economy & DEAL</p>	<p>STAGE 3</p> <p>Nordic Circular Summit Youth Reception by CATALY(C)ST and Regeneration 2030</p> <p>Hosted by CATALY(C)ST</p>
			

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Thursday, November 25, 2021

OPENING SESSION 10:00 – 12:00		MAIN STAGE <h1>New Economic Languages</h1> Hosted by Nordic Circular Hotspot and Nordic Innovation	
LUNCH 12:00 – 13:00			
SIDE SESSIONS 13:00 – 14:00	MAIN STAGE Nordic Lifestyle Brands – Beacons of Change? Hosted by Lifestyle & Design Cluster	STAGE 2 Financing Circular Business Hosted by Nordic Innovation	STAGE 3 The Bio Circular Economy 2.0 Hosted by Cradlenet and Business Finland
BREAK 14:00 – 14:30			
SIDE SESSIONS 14:30 – 15:30	MAIN STAGE Nordic Food and Gastronomy Hosted by Lifestyle & Design Cluster	STAGE 2 Circular Economy & Digitalization Hosted by Lifestyle & Design Cluster	STAGE 3 The Future of Resource Management Hosted by Cradlenet and Festa
DIGITAL DEBRIEF OF THE DAY 15:30 – 16:00	We wrap up the discussions and findings of the first days of our meeting and the pre-sessions and take a brief look at Friday’s programme.		

Friday, November 26, 2021

OPENING SESSION 10:00 – 11:30	MAIN STAGE Youth and Future Leadership Hosted by Nordic Circular Hotspot and Nordic Innovation		
LUNCH 11:30 – 12:30			
SIDE SESSIONS 12:30 – 13:30	MAIN STAGE Nordic Lifestyle Brands - Heritage and Design Hosted by Lifestyle & Design Cluster	STAGE 2 Circular Ocean Solutions Hosted by TOOL and Natural State	STAGE 3 Constructing Circular Cities Hosted by Nordic Working Group for Circular Economy, NCE
BREAK 13:30 – 14:00			
SIDE SESSIONS 14:00 – 15:00	MAIN STAGE Nordic Lifestyle Brands – Risks & Opportunities Hosted by Lifestyle & Design Cluster	STAGE 2 Renewable Energies and Zero Emission Resources Hosted by TOOL and Natural State	STAGE 3 Circular City Life Hosted by Natural State and Circularities
CLOSING SESSION 15:00 – 16:00	MAIN STAGE Battling Barriers for Sustainable Change Hosted by Nordic Circular Hotspot and Nordic Innovation		

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“Step up or step aside”

THE YOUNGER GENERATION AS A DRIVING FORCE IN THE TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

We spoke to Ella about why the circular economy is important and how the younger generation can be at the forefront of the transition. We also discussed how consumers need to be aware of the consequences of their habits and push companies to shift their business models in a sustainable and circular direction.

What are the key issues when talking about the circular economy?

For me, the key issue is making knowledge about the circular economy available and understandable to everyone. We need a paradigm shift. We need to broaden our understanding that the transition to a more circular economy is crucial if we are to reform consumption and production in a way that does not systematically exploit natural resources.

I think one of the biggest challenges when talking about the circular economy is that it is hard to reach people who are not already engaged. But raising awareness of the concept is crucial. We need public demand for companies to adopt more circular practices that will lead to changes in production and consumption.

One aspect that is often missing from this discussion is the engagement of young people. They must be familiar with the concept of the circular economy and grow up with a basic understanding of what it means. Instilling these values and ideas in the next generations will influence the jobs they train for and the future they want.

Are you seeing a generation gap emerging in relation to the circular economy?

The new generation is growing up in a society where it is indisputable that sustainability is an important issue, so we are seeing the rise of a generation that is very aware of sustainability and consider it a core value. This new generation will be the leaders, innovators and decision-makers of the future, which means that we are already fostering new types of leaders who will play an important role in the transition to a circular and sustainable society. My hope is that the new generation will have a different mindset compared to the business owners of today, who live in a bubble of “business as usual” and are driven primarily by profit. In the future, I hope that value-driven business will be the norm, rather than



ELLA TURTA,
SECRETARY GENERAL,
REGENERATION 2030

Ella Turta is Secretary General of ReGeneration 2030, a youth movement aiming to make sustainable consumption and production the new norm in the Nordic and Baltic Sea Regions. Ella has a strong belief in value-based leadership. She is passionate about creating opportunities for young people to voice their opinions and about their role in enacting change.

the exception – and this future depends on the norms and values that we instil in the leaders of tomorrow.

Who needs to step up to ensure a circular economy?

Everybody – individuals, organisations, businesses and politicians. The transition to a circular economy cannot happen without rethinking ownership and building new norms. This is why we at ReGeneration 2030 focus on educating young people, fostering new leadership and building norms around sustainable lifestyles. We aim to illustrate that we, the young, are taking individual and collective action to fast-track change while also emphasising that we need systemic change in order to lead genuinely sustainable lives.

So everyone has a responsibility, and change needs to happen at every level. But the critical decisions are made at a political level, which is why we need all stakeholders to push this topic higher up the political agenda. We talk a lot about green growth and green recovery, but the circular economy is seldom mentioned as a crucial tool in decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation. I think that just bringing the concept into play politically would help to raise awareness.

How has the recent state of emergency, lasting almost two years, affected opportunities for circular and nature-friendly systems?

Although the pandemic has been horrible in so many ways, it has also created a space for reflection and rethinking. We have seen how our governments have focused on handling the crisis. We can use this as an example of how many resources can be mobilised if we acknowledge that we face an urgent threat. I think that we should treat the ecological crisis as precisely that.

This is also an excellent opportunity to “build back better”. I’m glad to see that this type of thinking is occurring at the Eu-

ropean political level, but what exactly does it mean to “build back better”? At ReGeneration 2030, we believe that establishing new norms and drastically rethinking our consumption habits are key. In many ways, the Nordic countries are front-runners in sustainable development, but we are falling behind when it comes to implementing sustainable consumption and production. Moving away from a lifestyle of overconsumption will be a challenge for the Nordics, but there is an urgent need to step up and acknowledge that it is a question not only of making production sustainable but also of cutting it.

What is your message to the participants in the Nordic Circular Summit?

I think that it is really cool that the summit gives a lot of young people involved in civic society a louder voice and platform. What I hope to bring to the table is faith, to show that there is growing interest in these questions among young people who are willing to take the lead and engage as future leaders and entrepreneurs. I also want to stress how crucial it is that we need to act now – and that we need to act together. That is why I think the summit is a great platform, as it highlights the importance of partnership. Most importantly, I think that the main message from ReGeneration 2030 is that transitioning to a circular economy requires bold leadership and that young people are willing to show the way. We at ReGeneration have a vision of a more sustainable society and a plan for what we believe we need to do to get there. Our message to others is “step up or step aside”. We are ready to assume responsibility and take action. ●

“We need to adjust our economies to work in harmony with nature”

TOWARDS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Martijn has worked with the circular economy for many years and witnessed first-hand how the discussion has shifted from what it is and why it is crucial to how best to implement it in practice. We spoke to him about his initial interest in circular economy and how to make it a reality.

How did you first discover the circular economy concept, and what did you think of it?

I have been a serial entrepreneur for most of my life. I started in digital ventures and had some success on the US West Coast. I tried to repeat the recipe on returning to the Netherlands, but it did not work out. I then took a regular job, but that did not last. I felt stuck and started thinking about what I had to give and what kind of world I wanted to leave for my children. So I decided to take up the green mantle. I began coaching young entrepreneurs in cleantech and came across the circular economy. I found the concept inspiring. Later on, I set up Black Bear, a company that extracts material from used tyres. The work made me think about the circular economy more generally. Eventually, I found my way to Circle Economy.

Why is the concept of the circular economy important?

For the last two centuries, the focus has been on human needs, based on the principle of take-make-waste. Instead, we need to adjust our economies to work in harmony with nature. The circular economy is one way of doing that.

What are the key items on the circular economy agenda?

When I was first involved, much of the talk was about why the circular economy was necessary. It was about understanding the concept and educating people. That is no longer the case. Now, official strategies and mission statements frequently include circularity, so the question has shifted from why to how. How do we make it happen? What does it look like in practice? The how is very much what we need now, and that is the focus of our work at Circle Economy.

Will there be winners and losers in the transition to a circular economy?

Transforming the economy inevitably involves winners and



MARTIJN LOPES CARDOZO,
CEO,
CIRCLE ECONOMY

Martijn was appointed interim CEO of Circle Economy in February 2020 and took on the position permanently in May 2020. An entrepreneur and senior executive, he has managed start-ups and fast-growing businesses and transformed and accelerated growth in existing ones. He also has a proven track record in setting a strategic direction, leading teams and generating growth and profits – both organically and through acquisitions.

losers. But we need a fair and just transition for two reasons. Firstly, it will be difficult to generate the political will to make the change happen without popular support. Secondly, it is the right thing to do. Nobody should be left behind. So it is vital that we intervene, create jobs and enhance skills. Circle Economy has just launched the “Circular Jobs and Skills” programme, which maps new jobs and the need for training and upskilling.

What role will the different actors – politicians, government agencies and businesses – play in the transition to a circular economy?

For politicians, the circular economy is quite a compelling concept – voters like the idea of combining job creation and circularity. So they must pursue policies that support a circular economy and job growth, starting with a plan that involves all relevant stakeholders and puts benchmarks in place to track progress. For businesses, it is more of a race to reach net zero by 2050, so there is a lot of pressure to come up with targets. Progress in this area is increasingly being included in ESG reporting, and large mainstream investors want to see results. A lot of companies can start by switching to renewables and increasing efficiency – but it will take more than that. As we show in our latest Circularity Gap Report, anywhere between 25 and 60% of emissions, depending on the sector, must be addressed with circular strategies. In the public sector, the focus is on ensuring that circularity principles inform the procurement process. This can have a significant amplifying effect on the market, given that procurement accounts for a significant proportion of GDP.

Are you seeing a generation gap emerging in relation to the circular economy – and if so, how?

The younger generations are much more aware of the environment and climate issues. They are also highly pur-

pose-driven. More and more of them have degrees in various forms of sustainability and know about the circular economy. They expect their jobs to help make the world a better place.

What do you think of the Nordic Region – do we have a particular responsibility in this area?

The Nordics have been frontrunners on sustainability and circularity. The Region’s green industries and governments have been taking the agenda seriously and should continue to do so. However, when we look at the numbers, there is no denying how rich the countries are and how high their levels of consumption are. For example, when we launched our Circularity Gap Report for Norway, it kickstarted a lot of reflection on the fact that the country was only 2.4% circular compared to the global average of 9%. Despite being frontrunners, the Nordics have some way to go in reaching their circular goals. We recently announced that, together with Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE), we will be measuring the circularity in the country. It would be great to do the same elsewhere in the Region and develop a circular roadmap for the Nordic countries.

What is your message to the participants in the Nordic Circular Summit?

My message would be that the Nordics are in a great position to be the global leader in the circular economy, and we want to help make it happen. Summits like this are a great way of sharing best practices. We are all on our own journeys – when it comes to the circular economy, we are all, to some extent, developing countries. We are engaged in an iterative process based on a circular perspective and seeking to bring about a massive transformation. Some things will work out, and some will not, but if we help each other, we will get there sooner, which would be hugely beneficial. ●

“We’re all in this together”

USING NORDIC CO-OPERATION TO ACCELERATE THE TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

We spoke to Niina about the circular economy – why it is important, how to implement the transition and how to accelerate the process by working together at Nordic level. Niina believes that Nordic co-operation has a vital role to play in the transition by engaging relevant stakeholders in the different countries. But the clock is ticking – we need less talk, more action.

Why and in what way is the circular economy important?

The circular economy is a means to an end – it is a way of implementing the Nordic Council of Ministers’ Vision 2030. Circularity is a strategy for a green and competitive Nordic Region. From a green point of view, a circular economy is necessary to build a sustainable economy and cut emissions. From a competitive point of view, businesses need to adopt the logic of the circular economy to be competitive in a global market. Big investors are already prioritising sustainability criteria, and many companies and consumers expect suppliers to comply with them. As far as long-term survival on the market is concerned, the message is “Go green or go home”.

What are the key issues when talking about the circular economy?

From a Nordic perspective, two issues stand out when it comes to working towards a circular economy. The first is competencies – having the right ones in all sectors of government and business for the transition to succeed. For example, in the public sector, it is essential to have the right competencies to make the transition to green public procurement, despite the concept not yet being fully embraced by all local authorities in the Nordic Region. Another vital issue is the need to work together. Now, more than ever, this means multiple stakeholders working across national borders. Fortunately, the Nordic countries and sectors already complement each other, so the foundations have already been laid.

Will there be losers and winners in the transition to a circular economy?

Competencies are not only the key to the transition but also to it being fair and equitable, which requires upskilling and reskilling to create new opportunities for people and take jobs in the circular economy. However, I would like to stress that without the transition we might lose more jobs and see



NIINA AAGAARD,
COO,
NORDIC INNOVATION

Niina has been COO of Nordic Innovation since autumn 2017. Her background is in Finnish civil service, where she focussed on the green transition. A strategist who believes in the benefits to business of embracing diversity, she feels empowered by people.

more losers in our economies as the circular becomes the new market norm. In other words, businesses that fail to adapt might not survive.

What are the obstacles to the transition?

My main concern is timing. There is a sense of urgency, and I'm not sure we are moving fast enough to avoid the worst effects of climate change. On the other hand, economic transitions don't happen overnight. Competences are important but developing them takes time. Doing something is better than doing nothing. We just need to adapt as we go and keep finding new and sustainable approaches for our economies.

What role will the different actors – politicians, government agencies and businesses – play in the transition to a circular economy?

Politicians will need to come up with a regulatory framework. In this regard, we are lucky in the Nordic Region, as we already have solid foundations for effective policy making, regulation and implementation. Crucially, politicians also need to be proactive and bring everyone on board with the circular economy agenda by establishing that we are all in this together. Government agencies need to speed up the introduction of green public procurement. We need to set targets and measure progress. As things stand, most organisations have limited capacity. We need to accelerate this agenda, as the big Nordic public sectors can play a vital role in creating viable markets in which circular businesses can thrive. Businesses – especially the bigger companies – need to drive the change, while smaller companies and start-ups generate new ideas and approaches.

What value does Nordic co-operation add, and how will it help make the economy fully circular by 2050?

Nordic co-operation has massive potential in terms of

cross-border partnerships for the circular economy, showcasing and generating new ideas, creating meeting places, joining forces and testing approaches in a new way and on a scale that cannot be achieved at national level. In addition, the way Nordic co-operation is organised prioritises action over talk.

What is your message to the participants in the Nordic Circular Summit?

That we are all in this together and can derive a great deal of inspiration and support from each other. The transition to a circular economy is something everyone will have to relate to, and most of the participants in this summit are at the forefront of this process. So the summit is not just a meeting place but part of the solution, a forum to learn from each other, derive inspiration and perhaps even meet new strategic partners.

What do you hope to learn from the other participants?

I always find it humbling to hear how businesses and organisations work on new solutions and hope for more of that at the summit. I want to see solutions and new ideas, learn about Nordic success stories and identify a way forward for the transition to a circular economy. ●

“We need to create a sense of who we are that does not reduce us to mere consumers”

BUILDING A NEW NARRATIVE FOR ECONOMIES
WITH THE FOCUS ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Jonathan offered his perspective on how we all need to become activists to save our planet, how we need to change our economic thinking and realise that global equity is a key issue in the transition to a circular economy.

When did you first encounter the concept of the circular economy?

The funny thing is that when I was growing up in the 1970s, one of my first jobs was as a gardener working with compost. This was well before people used the term circular economy, but somehow the foundations and natural understanding of the concept were there. Not just for me, but in society in general. These foundations dissipated into competition and consumerism in the 1980s, when the consequences of our actions as a species seemed so far off – yet today, here we are. So when I first came across the concept some years ago, I already had a basic understanding and interest.

Is there anything you would emphasise when speaking about the circular economy?

What are the key issues?

It is easy to be reductionist when it comes to the circular economy agenda, to limit ourselves to the easy mantras such as recycling, reuse and so forth. But it is not just about emissions and resources. It is about enhancing the quality of life across the globe. In that same vein, we need to build a narrative that speaks to who we are as humans and what we stand for. We need to create substance, and a sense of who we are that does not reduce us to mere consumers but positions us as caretakers of our planet. Imagination is a vital skill in this regard – we must be able to imagine a better future.

Why is the circular economy important?

We are drowning nature in waste and destroying the planet. We are, quite simply, walking a path that might lead to the destruction of the resources we and other species depend on to thrive. This is dangerous for several reasons, as it will undermine the ability of businesses to create value and jobs and lead to political instability with global ramifications. At the same time, I personally value life and our living planet



**JONATHAN FOSTER-PEDLEY,
DEAN AND DIRECTOR OF
HENLEY BUSINESS SCHOOL**

Jonathan has been with Henley Business School in Africa since 2010. He is the founder and chair of MBAid, which uses the energies of MBA and executive education in business schools to help SMEs and NGOs. He is also the founder of #CorporateActivism, a movement that highlights the disastrous effects of corruption and state capture on economic development, human rights and on individual careers, reputation and credibility.

and want to leave it for my children to experience. There is a meaning to life beyond mere financial metrics.

How can we ensure that this transition is just and inclusive, and do you have any fears in that regard?

What we have seen in the past decades is development in places that do not have many resources to begin with, such as South Africa, where I'm based. They often lack these resources because richer countries have historically drained developing ones – and continue to extract their raw materials to this day. And then we go to them and say, "We want you to grow, but don't use carbon and grow in the same way we did." This limits the opportunities for developing countries that need coal and gas but are not offered alternatives. It will not be possible to achieve a fully circular economy at a global scale if we fail to consider issues of equality. We need a forum to address this issue. Richer countries need to return some of the resources that they have extracted to poorer countries. The richer countries might not welcome this, but we cannot constrain or ignore others. COVID-19 has shown this, as has climate change. The costs of inaction far outweigh the costs of action.

Who needs to "step up" to ensure a circular economy?

Rich countries, including the Nordics, need to realise that increasing global equity is integral to the solution. However, this is hard because if you do not feel the consequences of the pollution you are causing, it is easy not to see the problem.

Do the Nordic countries have a particular responsibility to ensure a circular economy? In what way?

If you want your societies to survive and thrive in the long term, you need to think in terms of a global circular economy. Fortunately for the Nordics, you are good at this. You

have the technology and education systems to transition to a circular economy and strong norms that could benefit the entire world if you were more proactive in spreading them beyond your borders. A global mindset and being attentive to the needs of the collective are vital norms that must be adopted more widely if we are to succeed.

Can partnerships across borders create added value in the transition to a circular economy?

Indeed, but we need a broader view of co-operation. We need to think not only in terms of technology and economics but also cultural collaboration – as this will nurture a global mindset and awareness of human lives beyond our own cultures. These norms are essential for ensuring the global transition to a circular economy.

What is your message to the participants in the Nordic Circular Summit?

I would urge them to start thinking of themselves as activists, as this is how we generate change and acknowledge that we are running out of time. Start to act – at your job, among your friends and family, and in your community. As individuals, we are not special but part of a larger organism that includes all humans and, indeed, the entire planet. The faster we can generate this understanding globally, the better. ●



LÁRA KRISITIN ÞORVALDSDÓTTIR,
CATALY(C)ST Youth Advisor

LENE ANDERSEN,
Co-founder & systems thinker at Nordic Bildung

HENRIK HOLM,
Founder of Wehlers, Sustainable furniture brand

JIA JOHANNES CHEN,
CATALY(C)ST Youth Advisor

MARTHE HAUGLAND,
Senior Innovation Advisor at Nordic Innovation

TRINE PONDAL,
Head of Sustainability & Social Responsibility at Flying Tiger Copenhagen

BÖRKUR KRISTINSSON,
Chief Technological Officer at Pure North

What
do they
think?

What is the single most important challenge that Nordic decision-makers currently face regarding the need to accelerate the circular economy?

LÁRA KRISTÍN ÞORVALDSDÓTTIR:

We need to ensure the feasibility of circular design, discourage the use of new materials and encourage the use of recycled materials instead. Nordic decision-makers need to create an environment that supports changes in product design and manufacture. Consumer behaviour is another important factor. We need to drive innovation by developing materials that inspire circular design and production.

LENE ANDERSEN:

The biggest challenge for all of us is a fundamental shift in the way people in the West think about and perceive the world. We were brought up to think in linear ways, based on Newtonian physics, in which the world consisted of separate elements and context was irrelevant. Nowadays, we have to think systemically and see the world as composed of interconnected systems. We need to understand the economy, as well as the rest of the world, as loops within loops. Once we do that, the rest will be much easier.

HENRIK HOLM:

The single most important challenge is ensuring that product design takes into account the return or reuse of items. Many brands are based on a linear business model and overlook this. At Wehlers, we design "with the end in mind", meaning that all materials must be suitable for reselling and recycling. All of our suppliers have agreed to this. The evidence suggests that this way of doing business is becoming more common as brands look to recycle their waste.

JIA JOHANNES CHEN:

It is to strengthen our stance on SDG #17. The Nordic countries have a few circular economy projects with great potential that are already generating results. Now is the time to reiterate the importance of partnerships at all levels – from students and industry to policy-makers. Not only is it relevant to develop projects and frameworks to support the circular economy, but it is also just as important to come up with a shared vision and language. We can seize the opportunity to make a greater impact and showcase Nordic partnerships as a source of inspiration for other countries.

TRINE PONDAL:

We are already established frontrunners on the green agenda. We are small in size but big in determination and in our ability and willingness to change quickly. We can lead the way.

JIA JOHANNES CHEN:

Our greatest strength is our long, shared history. We have frequently faced problems and challenges that need to be solved together. We have learned that Nordic co-operation on the circular economy generates invaluable results. There are multiple examples of the Nordics being at the forefront of this work. We need to make the most of what we have in common and exploit the momentum generated by co-operation to accelerate the circular transition.

MARTHE HAUGLAND:

I think our most significant strength is the Nordic model – in other words, the trust we have in our neighbours and governments, equality, the human-centric approach values other than money. The Nordic model is based on co-operation. The countries may be small, but the Nordic Region has the 12th-largest economy in the world. We can leverage these values, innovate and generate solutions that are good for people, the environment and business.

LENE ANDERSEN:

In the Nordics, levels of corruption are low, and our institutions work well. We have the infrastructure to promote recycling and upcycling loops. We also have the means to develop new institutions fit for the 21st century. The main question is whether we have the imagination to make the most of these opportunities.

What would you say are the most important Nordic positions of strength in relation to the circular transition?

BÖRKUR KRISTINSSON:

It is our culture and welfare states. We are used to utilising natural resources in a sustainable way, to some extent. But now, we need to raise our game and do everything sustainably from an economic, social and environmental perspective. That is where the welfare state kicks in, as it allows us to adapt quickly.

What are the main barriers that we need to remove to support markets and encourage innovative circular solutions?

HENRIK HOLM:

Recycled materials are often more expensive than new ones. Deposit and return systems are often considered an unnecessary expense. We need to address both of these issues.

LÁRA KRISTÍN ÞORVALDSDÓTTIR:

We need to remove barriers such as new materials being cheaper than recycled ones due to the costs of transporting and processing waste. We need to make it appealing to incorporate thinking about the circular when designing and manufacturing products.

MARTHE HAUGLAND:

Regulations and framework conditions are among the biggest barriers. At the moment, some companies are a step ahead of the regulators, who need to catch up in order to facilitate change in the majority of companies. Governments need to set the goals and the direction, help create markets through public procurement and adapt conditions to provide incentives for companies and consumers to act in a circular way. If we are to transform the economic model, we all need to act together – tweaking the linear economic model is not enough. We need to disrupt business models and consumer behaviour. We need to work together to address the climate crisis that we all face.

JIA JOHANNES CHEN:

One of the barriers we still face – at Nordic and national level – relates to competitiveness. A successful transition to the circular economy will be good for certain companies, so they will want to be at the forefront of change. The same goes for policy-makers, researchers, etc., who want to showcase state-of-the-art results. We need to combine skills from sectors and countries and come up with a shared vision that facilitates knowledge-sharing, builds a circular infrastructure and, most importantly, brings about systemic change.

LENE ANDERSEN:

Our own minds.

TRINE PONDAL:

The Netherlands.

LENE ANDERSEN:

Indigenous cultures around the globe know that the world is circular. We have the tech, and they have the understanding. We should learn from each other and combine various forms of thinking – circular, linear, science, tech and systems.

MARTHE HAUGLAND:

Outside the Nordics, the Netherlands inspires me. The Dutch government has decided that the circular economy is the way forward and is acting on it now. I find that very inspiring. They use sustainable logic in their city planning and try to provide incentives for circular solutions. They have set up government-funded, policy-driven organisations to promote the circular economy at home and abroad. The Nordic Circular Hotspot has derived some inspiration from the Netherlands. It may not be quite the same, but it connects the Nordics to a global network of actors that can learn from each other, inspire each other and work together to achieve more than they would be capable of on their own. This is the idea behind the Nordic Circular Hotspot. Together, the Nordics can achieve more than as individual countries.

BÖRKUR KRISTINSSON:

North America inspires us a lot. They are not perfect, of course – in fact, they represent the whole spectrum of linearity and circularity. But the way in which their technical innovation has evolved, especially in the waste management industry, is really inspiring. They focus on getting things done. They are entrepreneurs. They are good at finding sustainable solutions quickly without ignoring environmental and social factors.

HENRIK HOLM:

The Netherlands seems to be doing well – perhaps it is worth taking a closer look at the Dutch approach? The EU also seems to be introducing regulations for recyclable packaging in Central Europe. (Demanding companies to apply?)

Looking beyond the Nordics, which countries/regions inspire you? What do they do differently, and what can we learn from them?

mandagmorgen

TÆNKETANKEN



Extract and translation of an article by Peter Hessel-dahl.
Originally published in full in the political weekly
Monday Morning, March 2021.

The Regenerative Economy Rebuilds Ecosystems

BEYOND CIRCULARITY: A NEW ECONOMIC *MODUS OPERANDI*

For the conscious consumer or company, being “regenerative” is the next step following the circular economy and sustainability. The idea is not just to minimise our impact on the ecosystem but actively help strengthen and rebuild it.

Most of the world finally seems to have accepted the need to find new lifestyles and forms of production that do not wreck the climate, place further strain on natural resources or contribute to the extinction of plant and animal species.

But perhaps it is no longer sufficient merely to stop extracting finite resources and reduce the pressure on ecosystems. Instead, maybe we need to repair and regenerate them because, on some parameters, they have been so badly depleted that they are no longer able to regenerate and provide the necessary conditions for humans and other species to thrive.

The idea behind the “regenerative” concept is that human activity should have a positive and strengthening effect on the ecosystem. The concept can be applied broadly to a wide range of human activity – from regenerative agriculture to regenerative architecture, design, economy and management. Regenerative approaches reflect an acknowledgement that humanity has already exceeded the limits of our planet’s ecosystem. We have drawn down our *natural capital* – the reserves of natural resources – to the point where we must now “pay back” and restore the balance rather than extract even more from the ecosystem on which we depend.

Ecosystems on the brink

In February 2021, Sir Partha Dasgupta, Professor Emeritus of Economics at Cambridge University, presented a report on behalf of the British government. *The Economics of Biodiversity* examined the economic importance of a world that is less polluted and in which natural resources are not continually eroded. Unsurprisingly, Dasgupta concluded that nature provides a variety of services that we take for granted – clean air, water, topsoil, bees for pollination, a stable climate – the value of which we do not fully grasp until they become scarce.

Dasgupta warned that many of the natural world’s services are already on the brink of collapse. Human civilisation is severely overshooting several of the planet’s boundaries. In order to sustain our current levels of consumption, 1.6 Earths

would be required – and yet our consumption continues to rise due to population growth, longer lifespans and greater affluence.

A majority of scientists argue that the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere should preferably be below 350 ppm to avoid major ecological breakdown and runaway climate change. However, we passed 416 ppm in March 2021. One conclusion could be that it is not enough just to reduce CO₂ emissions, that we also need to remove substantial quantities of already emitted particles from the atmosphere. Working towards a circular or zero-emission economy is an admirable aim but ultimately inadequate. We need to regenerate our resources and restore balance in the ecosystem.

Regeneration: a way of looking at the world

The regenerative concept is not limited to the issue of CO₂ emissions and climate change. Regeneration is also needed in many other areas – for example, global biodiversity is in dramatic decline. We might even say that there is a pressing need for regenerative principles in our societies more broadly to rebuild trust, relations and inclusive economies.

Efforts to be sustainable, green and circular have so far focused on reducing humanity's impact on nature and causing less damage. However, being regenerative means that our actions should be less harmful and positively strengthen the ecosystem.

The regenerative principle is inspiring but also very ambitious, considering how difficult it has been so far to steer our lifestyles, business models and technology in a more sustainable direction.

A regenerative economy might sound like wishful thinking, and maybe that's exactly what it is – an ideal and a vision that may seem distant at the moment, but which point in a direction that seems inevitable, considering how badly out of balance our ecosystems have become.

Regeneration is a mindset, a way of looking at the world.

Principles of the regenerative economy

SOURCE: MONDAY MORNING



From extractive to regenerative



Solutions are defined by available local resources



Moderate size – not infinite exponential growth



Ask what can I contribute? Not what can I extract?



Understanding and building many types of capital – social, natural, intellectual.



Diversity – the same solution is not a match everywhere



Solutions are thought of systemically



Small systems are more easily adapted to the ecosystem



Partnership with the ecosystem – nature is not an opponent



Prioritising resilience: capacity to face challenges

Nordic Circular Hotspot Partnership



The Nordic Circular Hotspot Partnership Programme is a ten-year collaboration programme designed for a strategic, systematic and efficient circular market transition and sustainable development in the Nordics. We welcome you to join!

YOU GET:

- A community of leading thinkers and change makers within the circular economy
- A pool of potential business partners and people who face the same challenges as you
- Opportunities to promote your circular solutions and your search for supply and value chain partners that can strengthen your journey towards a profitable circular business model
- Access to influence the partnership's advocacy and lobbying for a coordinated political and regulatory approach to circular transition in the Nordic countries.
- Events, dialogue meetings and working groups exclusively for partners

Get your circular economy community closer and get an energy boost – because this is a community and network that understands you and you will get to see examples of how change is happening.

Check out our partner programme at NordicCircularHotspot.org



What you need to invest

EUR 5,000 excluding VAT
(or EUR 2,500 / EUR 1,250 depending on size and situation of the company)
We can also find other ways of contributing as a partner if this is relevant.

Read more about our partner programme here:

nordiccircularhotspot.org/partnership

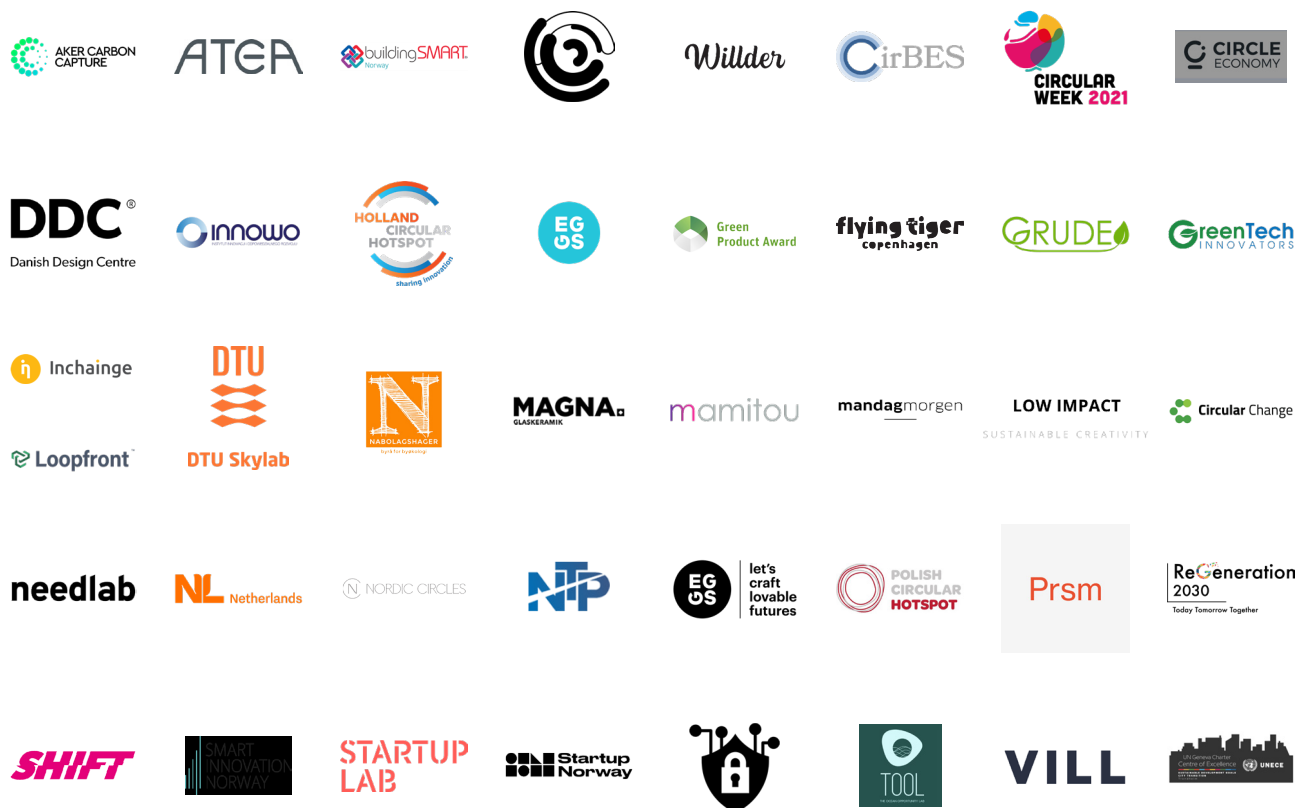
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