

## A gender-inclusive circular economy

### Exploring the role of women in the transition to a just circular economy

Department: Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development

Research group: Innovation Studies

Supervisor: Dr Laura Piscicelli

Email address: [l.piscicelli@uu.nl](mailto:l.piscicelli@uu.nl)

### Project description

“A circular economy describes an economic system that is based on business models which replace the ‘end-of-life’ concept with reducing, alternatively reusing, [and] recycling [...] materials in production/distribution and consumption processes, [...], with the aim to accomplish sustainable development, which implies creating environmental quality, economic prosperity and social equity, to the benefit of current and future generations” (Kirchherr et al. 2017, pp.224–225).

Until now, however, research on the circular economy has largely focused on the environmental and business aspects of circularity (e.g. how to design circular products and business models), while there has been little attention to its social implications (Kirchherr et al., 2017; Suarez-Visbal et al., 2022). In particular, there is a lack of knowledge on the role of women in leading the transition to the circular economy, the skill-set needed, and the impact of a circular economy on women’s job opportunities (OECD, 2021).

In this study we apply a gender lens to study the transition to a just circular economy. The project aims to map and analyse (women-led) circular economy initiatives that showcase women’s leadership, gender-equality, and women’s empowerment. With this research we will find out, e.g. how circular economy strategies can better integrate women and promote their economic opportunities; where (globally/locally) and how women are trying to change institutions and mainstream gender equality in the circular economy; which (circular) economic sectors are more gender-inclusive; how governments, businesses and civil society are supporting gender equality in the circular economy.

During the project, you will have regular meetings with the supervisor (either in person at the Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development or on MS Teams, depending on the Covid-19 regulations in place during the project). Meetings will be weekly or by-weekly depending on the timeline and activities.

### Job requirements

You are a student genuinely interested in exploring social and gender issues in the circular economy, are highly motivated, committed and well organized. Ideally, you have a background in sustainability, innovation, or business studies. You should also be willing to learn, open to working in a team and have excellent English writing/communication skills.