

Systemic Innovation: Drivers for a more Circular Economy in Belgium and Europe

Systemic innovation refers to a type of innovation that aims to transform an entire system, rather than simply improving or introducing isolated changes within its components. This holistic approach seeks to rethink the structure, relationships, and dynamics of an entire system to bring about meaningful and lasting change.

Funding & legislative levers: The Brussels Regional Government aims for carbon neutrality by 2050, limiting access to financial support for enterprises that are socially or environmentally exemplary. Vlaio introduced the public funding tool : living labs for systemic innovation. Infitex was financed: it's a project in which 14 partners work together on prolonging the lifetime of our clothes, while capturing and sharing their lessons to the broader sector. Fedustria highlights points of attention in Ecodesign for sustainable products regulation (ESPR) and sets goals for limiting global warming and reducing CO2 emissions. To illustrate with a circular company, Unilin Panels promotes recycling and reuse business model.

Questions from the audience addressed distinctions between linear and circular activities under the exemplarity law, learning networks within living labs, and the need for incentives alongside recycling legislation.

Policies making/governance lever: explanation mission-oriented policies and their systemic nature, with examples like Sweden's challenge-driven innovation initiative and the Smart Specialization Strategy (S3): Wallonia's strategic priorities on circularity and how 75% of its research and innovation budget is allocated.

To conclude, there was a short presentation of EU Circular Economy & innovation policy framework, including initiatives like Circular Cities and Region initiatives and Regional innovation valleys.