

ONLINE

01 JAN 2025 - 31 DEC 2025

Circular Economy Approaches for Sustainability

Climate and Environment
Stakeholder engagement and partnerships
Sustainable development and the SDGs



LANGUAGE
English



DURATION
25-30 hours



ENROLL BY
31 Dec 2025



PRICE
550 USD



LOCATION
ONLINE



TARGET
Everyone

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This self-paced online course will focus on harnessing circular economy principles and systems-based approaches to explore ways in which we can redesign our systems, products and services to allow us to achieve sustainable living for all, within planetary limits.

Introduction

This course explores the application of Circular Economy (CE) practices in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

With less than a decade to 2030, it is evident that 'business as usual' will not help us to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Systems-based approaches along with a strong commitment to deep-rooted transformations and actions are vital to the reduction of humanity's footprint on our planet. Our resources are finite, and the principles and practices of the circular economy will be catalytic in creating goods, processes and ecosystems that are restorative and regenerative by design.

The course will focus on 'how' and 'why' circular economy principles will be critical to achieving the goal of the 2030 Agenda - sustainable development for all.

Theoretical, practical and case study-based approaches will be used to illustrate and support the concepts. The course will be strongly application-based, with numerous real-life examples from around the world, and will include tools useful to advance CE practices.

Objectives

Upon the successful completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- understand the interconnection between Circular Economy and its potential in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- explain the importance of systems-based approaches to identify effective circular transformations and apply different models of circularity to identify opportunities for circular transformations.
- understand the opportunities to drive circular value across the life cycles of products and processes and examine business models that could support circularity.
- explore the policy environments that support the successful application of circular strategies to cities and examine why citizens can play a crucial role in ensuring circularity.
- recognize the potential of individual actions and sustainable lifestyles in enabling circularity
- identify the barriers and enablers to mainstreaming circular strategies.

Course methodology

UNSSC online courses are designed to deliver maximum learning outcomes through optimal time investments into carefully chosen high-quality learning materials, and are specially tailored to the needs of the professional interested in developing skills to advance their career or deepening their knowledge through our self-paced study modules, which include applied learning components such as case studies.

UNSSC online courses give learners the opportunity to complete activities when it best fits their schedule. UNSSC online courses incorporate the same high academic rigour as any UNSSC face-to-face programme, while participants are free to determine their own study plan.

Course contents

Lesson 1 will introduce key features of the 2030 Agenda, explain the evolution of the concept and principles of the Circular Economy and explain the importance of the need to transition from a linear to a circular system in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Lesson 2 will establish the need for a systems-based approach to the circular economy. It will discuss the Butterfly diagram and the Circularity diagram as strategic tools for circular design and understand their operational principles through technical and biological cycles of products and resources with the help of real-life case studies. It will consider the need for systemic enabling environments supported by appropriate policies for circularity.

Lesson 3 will explore how to make businesses more circular, applying CE principles to business products and processes and examining innovative business models and relationships as well as policy environments that could support circularity in business.

Lesson 4 will focus on designing circular cities by illustrating the potential of CE principles to create sustainable and thriving urban living environments.

Lesson 5 will examine the impact of more sustainable lifestyle choices on the world around us, and how to find ways for everyone to live better and with a lighter footprint.

Lesson 6 will analyse the key barriers and enablers to increasing the adoption of CE principles and processes. It will reiterate the importance of a systemic approach to the circular economy to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Target audience

This course is offered exclusively to UN Staff members who would like to help accelerate the transition towards circular systems by applying circular economy principles in policymaking, production and consumption practices, businesses and cities.

Cost of participation

Staff from UN entities can access this course upon payment of the course fee.

Certificates from the United Nations System Staff College will be awarded to participants upon completion of the course.