

## Circular and Dynamic Manufacturing Supply Chain Orchestration and Optimization

### D6.5 Open Calls Report

<b>Report Identifier:</b>	D6.5		
<b>Work-package:</b>	WP6	<b>Task:</b>	T6.1
<b>Responsible Partner:</b>	F6S	<b>Version Number:</b>	0.1
<b>Due Date</b>	28/02/2025	<b>Document Date:</b>	28/02/2025
<b>Distribution Security:</b>	PUBLIC	<b>Deliverable Type:</b>	R
<b>Keywords:</b>	Open Call, Expression of Interest, Matchmaking, RAMP		
Project website: <a href="https://circuloos.eu/">https://circuloos.eu/</a>			

### Document History

Version	Issue Date	Content & Changes	Author
0.1	29/01/2025	Document created	F6S
0.2	10/02/2025	Document sent for review	F6S
0.3	13/02/2025	Peer review 1	MWCB
0.4	20/02/2025	Peer review 2	ALASTRIA
0.5	21/02/2025	Reviews are combined	F6S
0.6	21/02/2025	Sent for Quality Assurance	F6S
1.0	28/02/2025	Quality Assurance and Submission	ED

### Quality Control

	Organisation	Date
<b>Editor 1</b>	F6S	01/01/2025
<b>Editor 2</b>	F6S	01/02/2025
<b>Peer review 1</b>	MWCB	13/02/2025
<b>Peer review 2</b>	ALASTRIA	20/02/2025
<b>Authorised by (Technical Coordinator)</b>	ED	28/02/2025
<b>Authorised by (Quality Manager)</b>	ED	28/02/2025
<b>Submitted by (Project Coordinator)</b>	ED	28/02/2025

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## Abbreviations

Acronym	Description
EOI	Expression of Interest
OC2	Open Call 2
OC3.1	Open Call 3.1
DIH	Digital Innovation Hub
MWCB	Mobile World Capital Barcelona
ED	European Dynamics
F6S	F6S Network
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprise
EU	European Union

## Executive Summary

This deliverable is funded by the European Commission (EC) and provides an overview of the **Expression of Interest (EOI)** phase of the CIRCULOOS Open Call process. It details the activities carried out to attract potential applicants, the use of the RAMP matchmaking platform, the organization of a dedicated matchmaking event, and the lessons learned to improve future open calls. The document is structured into sections covering the following key aspects:

- **Expression of Interest Results**

The Expression of Interest phase allowed organizations to indicate their interest in forming consortia for future funding opportunities. A total of **20 matchmaking requests** were submitted on the RAMP platform, with the majority of applicants being **service and technology providers**. Participants represented a diverse range of industrial sectors and originated from **12 different countries**.

- **Matchmaking Process and Event**

To facilitate partnerships, applicants had access to the RAMP matchmaking tool and were invited to a **dedicated matchmaking event** held online. This session enabled participants to present their organizations, exchange contacts, and explore collaboration opportunities.

- **Promotion and Outreach**

The Expression of Interest was promoted through various communication channels, including **social media, newsletters, and direct outreach via RAMP**. Engagement levels increased significantly over time, with the number of matchmaking requests growing from **4 in August to a total of 20 in January**.

- **Key Takeaways and Lessons Learned**

The open call attracted a broad range of applicants, however a **limited number of manufacturers** participated, creating an imbalance in the offer from participants to create consortia. The RAMP platform provided a useful matchmaking function, to compensate for this imbalance. Based on these insights, future calls will focus on targeted outreach to manufacturers, enhanced matchmaking facilitation, and improved tracking mechanisms. This will be further explained in Section 7, "Next Steps & Future Open Calls."

- **Follow-Up Actions for Open Call 2**

The report outlines several improvements for Open Call 1, 2 & 3, including a **more structured matchmaking approach**, a **clearer communication strategy**, and **closer monitoring of participant engagement**. The next open call will officially launch on **26 of March 2025**, with lessons from the EOI phase incorporated to ensure a more efficient and impactful application process.

## 1. Introduction

The **Expression of Interest (EOI) phase** of the CIRCULOOS Open Call process was launched as the first step in identifying and engaging stakeholders interested in circular manufacturing innovation. The EOI was **open from 31 of MAY 2024 and will be open until the launch of OC2, on 26 of March**, allowing organizations to express their interest in forming consortia and preparing for Open Call 2. Rather than being a competitive selection process, the EOI **served as a networking and matchmaking tool**, ensuring that interested applicants could find suitable partners before the formal call opened.

To facilitate this process, the **RAMP platform** was used as the central hub for matchmaking. Through RAMP, participants could **submit matchmaking requests**, search for potential partners, and explore collaboration opportunities. This was especially important because Open Call 2 requires consortia with at least **one manufacturing SME and one enabler (e.g., service provider, recycler, technology provider, etc.)**. However, an initial analysis of matchmaking requests revealed an **imbalance in participation**, with significantly more service providers than manufacturers, creating a challenge in consortium formation.

To address this, a **dedicated matchmaking event was organized on January 15, 2025**, bringing together potential applicants in a structured networking environment. The event helped participants present their capabilities, connect with relevant stakeholders, and move closer to forming strong, competitive consortia for Open Call 2.

This report summarizes the **EOI results, matchmaking process, participant engagement, lessons learned, and next steps**, including the **second matchmaking event planned for March 12, 2025**, which will incorporate improvements based on the first event's feedback.

### 1.1. Development of EOI Guidelines

A crucial step in the EOI phase was the **development of comprehensive guidelines** to provide potential applicants with a clear understanding of the **CIRCULOOS project, its objectives, and the application process**. The guidelines were designed to be **clear, structured, and accessible** to a diverse audience.

The development process involved:

- **Collaboration and Input:** F6S worked closely with partners from the **CIRCULOOS consortium**, including **European Dynamics, Inchlussin and Mobile World Capital Barcelona**, as well as **technical partners linked to the pilots** (HERSO, Fiction Factory, Contenedores Lolo, Canonical Robots, Thermolympic, KHOANI, Plennid, and B&A). Through **co-creation meetings**, partners helped fine-tune the offer for Open Call 2 and Open Call 3.
- **Content Organization:** The guidelines were structured with **clear headings, concise explanations, and visually engaging formatting** to ensure readability, as it can be seen in the next figure.

### CIRCULOOS Expression of Interest summary

<b>When?</b> <i>Timeframe</i>	From 31 May 2024 until March 2025
<b>Who?</b> <i>Target entities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing SMEs (MSMEs) and micro-SMEs</li> <li>• DIHs or eDIHs</li> <li>• Academic institutes (Universities), research institutes and other not-for-profit research entities.</li> </ul>
<b>How?</b> <i>Application pages</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matchmaking: <a href="https://ramp.eu/#/service-request/list-public">https://ramp.eu/#/service-request/list-public</a> (RAMP)</li> </ul>
<b>What?</b> <i>Supporting activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webinar 1 – 19 June 2024 <i>Topic: CIRCULOOS Open Call 2 objectives, open call guidelines, information about RAMP &amp; Ask me Anything (AMA).</i></li> <li>• Webinar 2 – Fall 2024 <i>Topic: CIRCULOOS Open Call 2 objectives; role of DIHs.</i></li> <li>• Matchmaking event – January 2025 <i>Topic: Interested parties pitch their offering and look for matches for Open Call 2</i></li> <li>• Continuous Matchmaking Activities – June 2024 to March 2025             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continuous request for service tool of RAMP: the objective is to help applicants to find partners to team up in a consortium, and apply for CIRCULOOS open call #2</li> <li>○ Search for a matching partner from the available entities in RAMP, among those who have already applied and published their interest.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



- **Information Accuracy:** All eligibility criteria, funding details, application procedures, and key dates were **carefully reviewed** to minimize confusion and ensure a smooth application process.

The **final guidelines document** served as a **key resource** for potential applicants, helping them navigate the EOI process and connect with relevant partners.

## 1.2. Accessibility and Dissemination

To ensure broad access, the **CIRCULOOS Open Call guidelines** were made publicly available on the **project website**: <https://circuloos.eu/open-calls/>, with a **dedicated webpage section** containing all relevant documentation.

Beyond making the guidelines accessible, the **CIRCULOOS team actively supported applicants**. The official **CIRCULOOS email (circuloos.eu@gmail.com)** remained open throughout the **EOI and matchmaking phases**, allowing interested participants to seek clarifications on **eligibility, consortium formation, and the RAMP matchmaking process**. Many potential applicants **reached out with questions**, and for those requiring further assistance, **F6S held online meetings to provide direct guidance**.

These efforts ensured that potential applicants **had the necessary support to navigate the process smoothly and maximize their chances of forming strong consortia**. Further details on dissemination efforts can be found in **Section 5: "Promotion & Outreach"**

## 2. Expression of Interest (EOI) process and Results

### 2.1. EOI Application Process

The CIRCULOOS project initiated its first Open Call with an Expression of Interest (EOI) phase, aiming to identify and connect stakeholders interested in forming consortia for future funding opportunities. This phase was designed to foster collaboration among manufacturers, recyclers, and other actors within the circular supply chain.

### 2.2. Application Submission via RAMP Platform

To streamline the matchmaking process, CIRCULOOS leveraged the RAMP (Robotics and Automation Marketplace) platform. Interested parties were invited to submit their EOIs through this platform, which served as a centralized hub for collaboration and networking.

The application process involved the following steps:

- **Registration:** Applicants created an account on the RAMP platform, providing essential information about their organization, areas of expertise, and specific interests related to circular manufacturing.
- **Profile Creation:** Once registered, organizations developed detailed profiles highlighting their capabilities, previous projects, and potential contributions to a consortium.
- **EOI Submission:** Through the platform's interface, applicants submitted their Expression of Interest, outlining their objectives, desired partnerships, and the role they envision within a collaborative project.
- **Matchmaking:** The RAMP platform facilitated connections by allowing users to search for and engage with potential partners. Advanced filtering options enabled participants to identify organizations with complementary skills and goals.

### 2.3. Outcome of the EOI Phase

The EOI phase successfully garnered **20 applications** through the RAMP matchmaking tool. It's important to note that these submissions functioned primarily as requests for matchmaking rather than formal proposals. The primary aim was to facilitate connections among stakeholders, enabling them to form consortia in preparation for subsequent funding opportunities.

By utilizing the RAMP platform and providing supportive resources like webinars, CIRCULOOS effectively streamlined the EOI application process, fostering a collaborative environment for stakeholders in the circular manufacturing sector.

## 2.4. Breakdown by Entity Type

The majority of applicants were **Service/Technology providers (16 entities)**, including those offering specialized solutions for circular economy applications. Only **2 applications** came from manufacturing industries, while **2 entities identified as both a Service Provider and a Manufacturer**.

This distribution reflects a **strong interest from enablers and service providers**, reinforcing the trend seen in previous outreach efforts. However, it also highlights a **continued gap in manufacturer engagement**, which is critical for forming balanced consortia.

Distribution of Applicants by Type

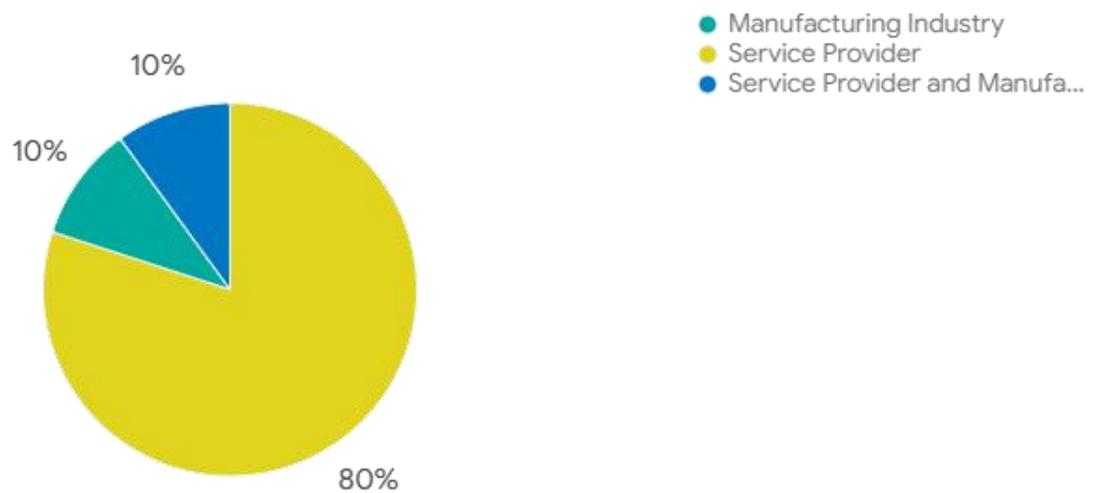


Figure 1, Distribution of Applicants by Type. Source: RAMP platform

## 2.5. Type of entity Requested

The most requested entity types, in the RAMP Platform, by those seeking partners, reveal a significant demand for manufacturers, with 15 requests. This is closely followed by service or technology providers at 12 requests, and Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) at 9.

Most requested entities

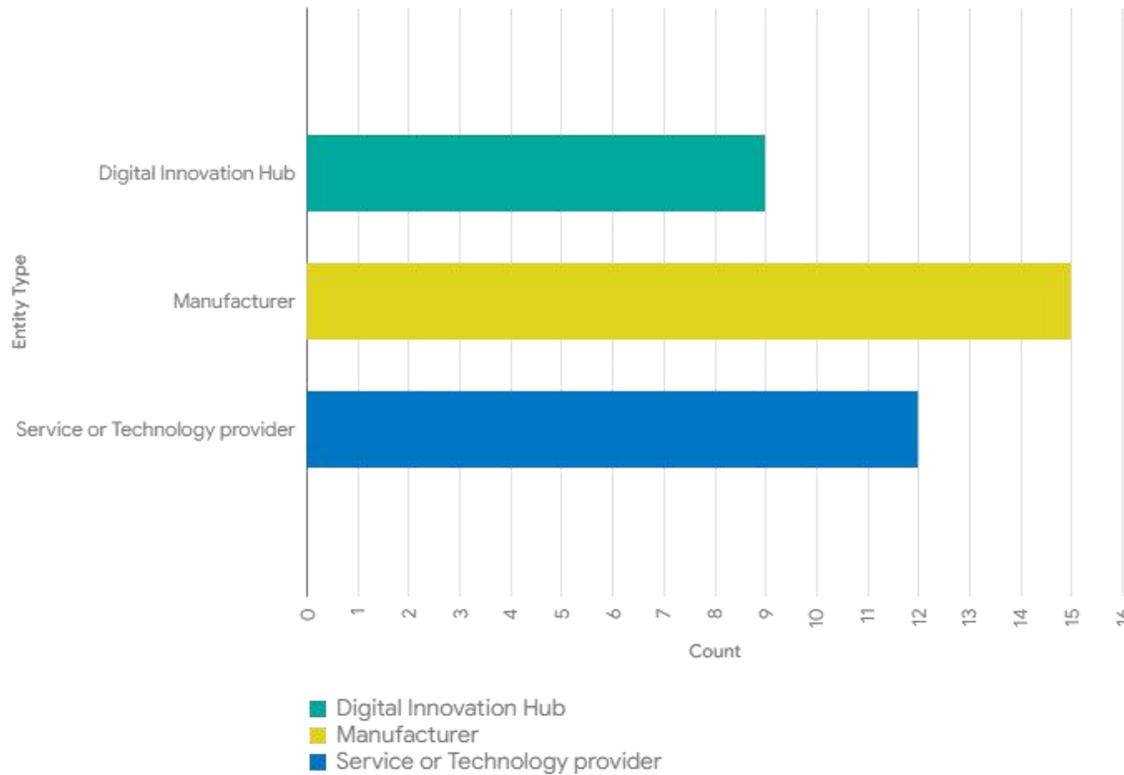


Figure 2, Most requested entities; Source: RAMP platform

This data is crucial when viewed alongside the earlier "Breakdown by Entity Type" section, where the majority of applicants were service or technology providers, and manufacturers were underrepresented. The high demand for manufacturers indicates a clear need for their involvement in circular value chains, especially during the ramp-up phase.

Additionally, as Digital Innovation Hubs also rank highly in partner requests, aligning them with both manufacturers and service providers will be key to facilitating effective consortia.

## 2.6. Geographic Distribution of Applicants

Applicants originated from a diverse range of **12 countries**, showcasing international interest in the CIRCULOOS initiative. The distribution is as follows:

Geographic Distribution of Applicants by Country

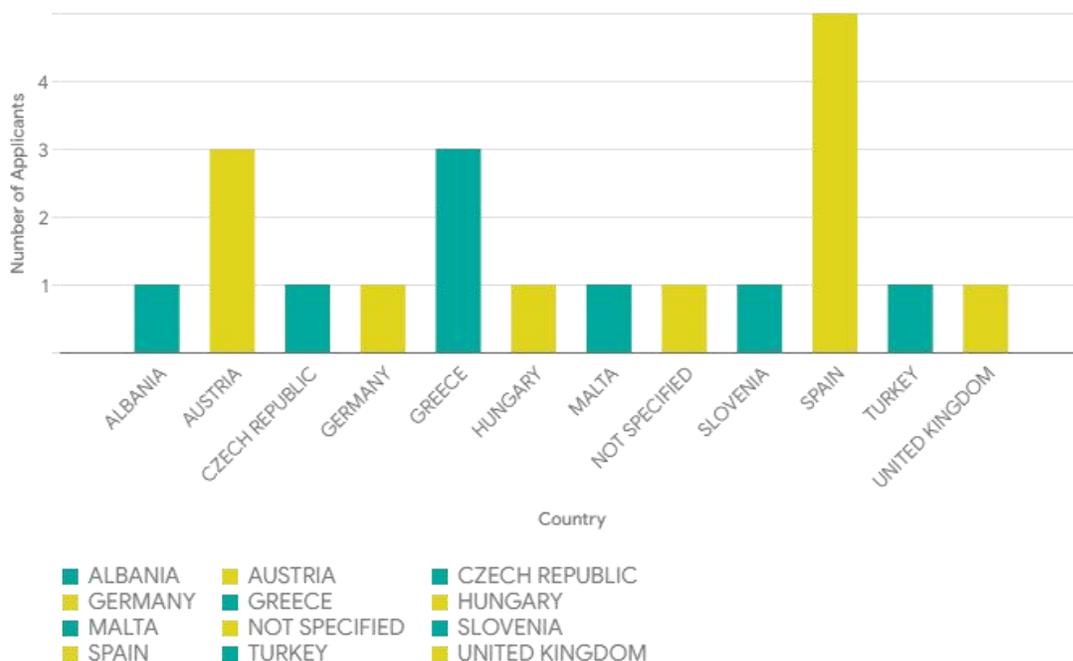


Figure 3,

Geographic Distribution of Applicants by country; Source: RAMP platform

- **Austria: 3**
- **Greece: 3**
- **Spain: 5**
- **Germany, UK, Hungary, Czechia, Malta, Slovenia, Albania, Turkey: 1 each**
- **N/A: 1**

The **Geographic Distribution of Applicants** reveals a diverse spread across Europe, with notable participation from **Spain** (5 applicants), **Austria** and **Greece** (3 applicants each), and several countries with a single applicant, including **Germany, UK, Hungary, Czechia, Malta, Slovenia, Albania, and Turkey**. This distribution demonstrates strong international interest in the open call, particularly from Spain, Austria, and Greece, which have shown an increase in engagement.

While the overall distribution remains diverse, there are fewer applicants from certain regions, indicating a potential opportunity for future outreach efforts to ensure balanced representation across all European countries. The single "N/A" entry might reflect incomplete or unspecified geographical information.

## 2.7. Sectors Represented

The applicants represented a variety of industrial sectors, with some organizations operating across multiple areas. The most represented sectors include:

Top 8 Industry Sectors

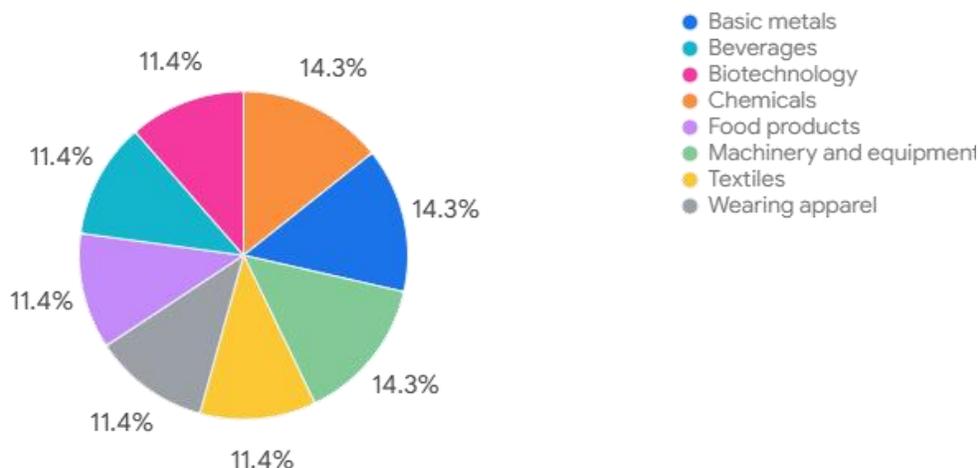


Figure 4, Top 8 Industry Sectors; Source: RAMP platform

- Chemicals: 5, Basic metals: 5, Machinery and equipment: 5, Textiles: 4, Wearing apparel: 4, Food products: 4, Beverages: 4, Biotechnology: 4, Construction: 3, Pharmaceutical: 3, Rubber and plastic: 3, Fabricated metal products, except machinery & equipment: 3, Other non-metallic mineral products: 3, Computer, electronics and optical: 3, Furniture: 3, Paper: 2, Recorded media: 2, Motor vehicles: 2, Marine: 2, Electrical equipment: 2, Wood products, except furniture: 2, Leather: 2, Other transport equipment: 1, Coke and refined petroleum: 1, Tobacco: 1, N/A: 2

The distribution of sectors represented by the entities indicates a strong presence from industries critical to the circular economy. The **Chemicals**, **Basic metals**, and **Machinery and equipment** sectors each account for 5 entities, marking them as the most prominent industries among applicants. These sectors are foundational in the transition to a circular economy<sup>1</sup>, with key roles in materials recovery, resource efficiency, and the development of technologies necessary for circular processes.

While the top three sectors lead in participation, industries like **Textiles**, **Wearing apparel**, and **Food products**, along with **Pharmaceutical**, **Rubber and plastic**, **Construction**, and **Furniture**, also show strong engagement. This reflects the broad push for circularity across diverse industries, each focusing on reducing waste, optimizing resource use, and promoting sustainability.

<sup>1</sup>Circularity Gap Report 2024. Available at: <https://reports.circularity-gap.world/cgr-global-2024-37b5f198/CGR+Global+2024+-+Report.pdf>

## 2.8. Analysis of Submission Trends

A time-based analysis of submission trends shows three key milestones:

### Evolution of Submissions on RAMP Platform

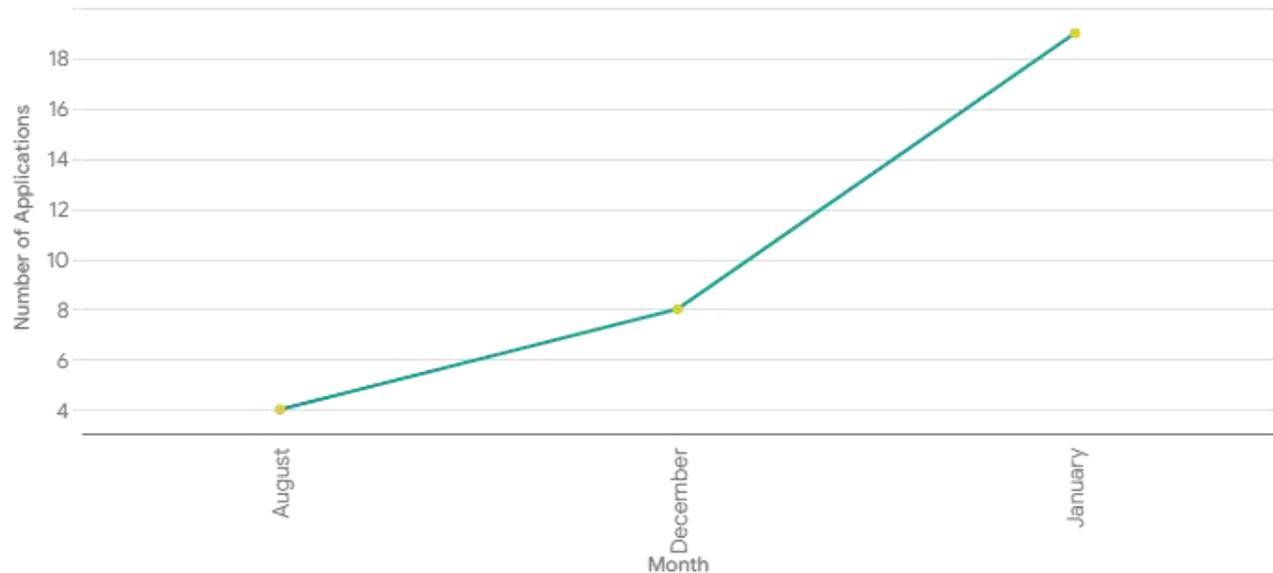


Figure 5, Evolution of Submission on RAMP Platform; Source: RAMP platform

- **August:** 4 applications
- **December:** 8 applications
- **January:** 20 applications

The **Submission Trends Over Time** show a steady increase in engagement, with **4 applications** in August, **8 applications** in December, and a significant rise to **20 applications** in January. This upward trend likely reflects the impact of increased outreach efforts, such as the **webinar in December** and the **matchmaking event in January**, which boosted awareness and participation in Open Call 2. A graph illustrating this trend will be included in the final version of the report to visually highlight the growing interest over time.

### 3. Matchmaking Process & Outcomes

#### 3.1. RAMP as a Matchmaking Tool

The RAMP platform played a crucial role in facilitating matchmaking between entities during the Expression of Interest (EOI) phase. It provided a centralized hub where applicants could express their interest in collaborating with others and explore potential partnerships. Let's take a closer look at the platform and its key sections that enabled this matchmaking process.

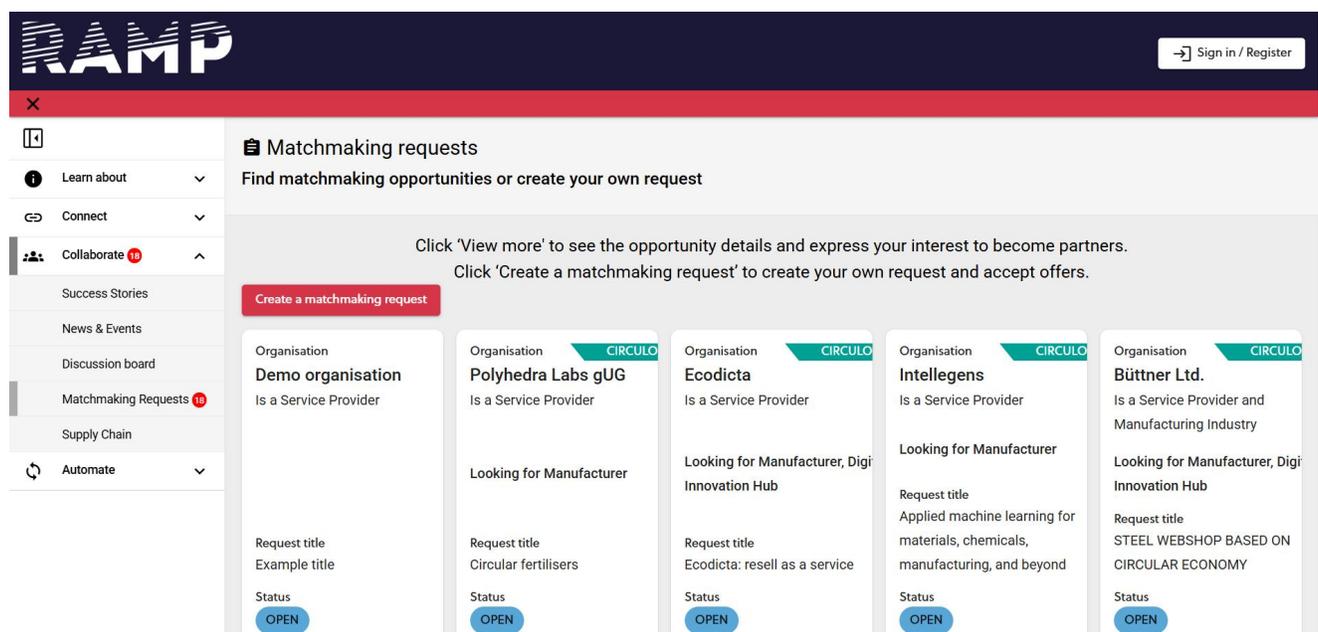


Figure 6, RAMP platform overview, matchmaking request for CIRCULOOS; Source: RAMP platform

#### 3.2. Platform Overview

RAMP's effectiveness as a matchmaking tool stemmed from its user-friendly interface and a suite of strategically designed features that streamlined the partner search and engagement process. These features empowered applicants to navigate the platform with ease, identify potential partners with precision, and initiate meaningful collaborations. Some of the key functionalities that facilitated this process include:

- **Partner Search:** A powerful search tool enables applicants to identify potential partners based on criteria such as industry sector, technological expertise, and desired collaboration type, facilitating efficient identification of compatible entities.
- **Matchmaking Requests:** Applicants could directly express their collaboration needs and aspirations through targeted matchmaking requests, fostering a more efficient and targeted

partner search process.

- **Collaboration Profiles:** Detailed collaboration profiles allowed entities to showcase their unique capabilities and resources, promoting transparency and informed partner selection.
- **Communication Tools:** Integrated communication tools, including messaging and forums, facilitated direct interaction between applicants, fostering a collaborative environment for exploring potential partnerships.

The matchmaking process on RAMP typically involved applicants exploring potential matches using the search tool, submitting targeted requests to find specific types of collaborators, reviewing profiles to evaluate potential partners' suitability, and engaging in direct communication to discuss opportunities and move towards forming partnerships. This streamlined approach fostered a proactive and efficient matchmaking experience, maximizing the potential for successful collaborations within the CIRCULOOS project.

### 3.3. Expanding the Network: Accessing RAMP's Broader Community

Beyond the matchmaking event, RAMP provided additional ways for applicants to network. By accessing the "Connect" tab and navigating to the "Find a Partner" section, participants could explore a directory of **more than 285 registered entities** on RAMP. This feature allowed users to filter by sector, location, and expertise, making it easier to identify and directly contact potential partners.

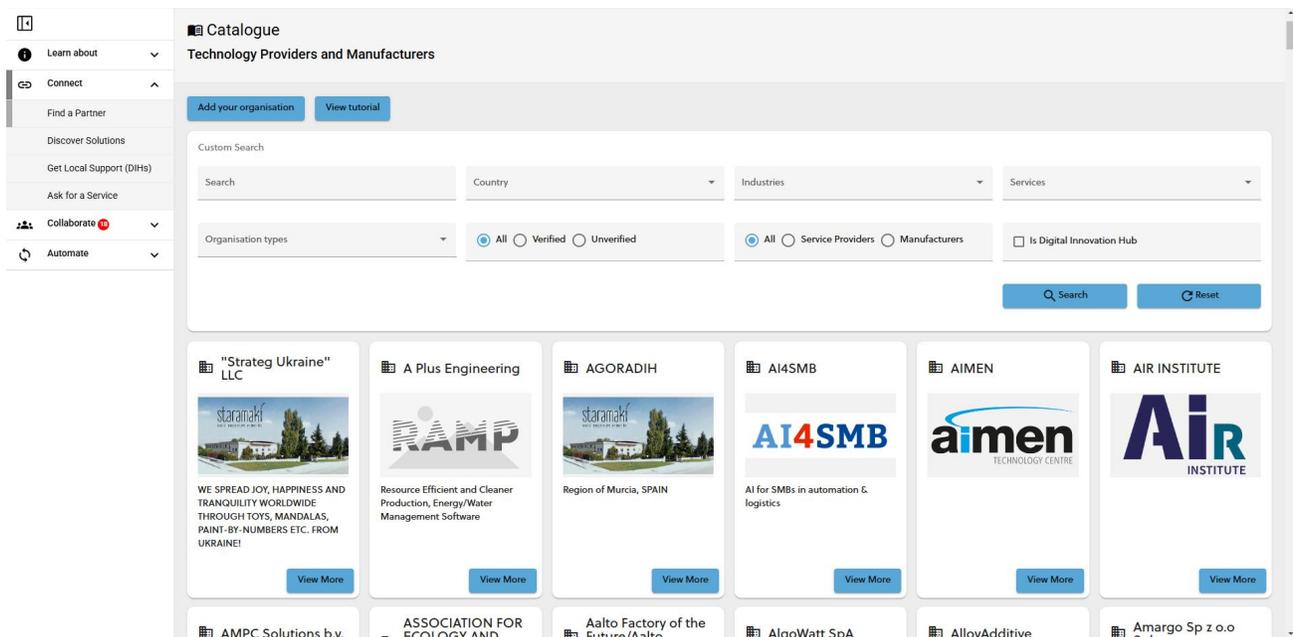


Figure 7, Top 8 Industry Sectors; Source: RAMP platform

### 3.4. Matchmaking Event Overview

To enhance partner connections, a **matchmaking event** was organized on 15/01/2025. This online session provided participants with the opportunity to introduce themselves, learn about Open Call 2 and Open Call 3, and interact with potential consortium partners.

The event was structured in two parts:

- **Main room presentations**, where each participant had 1 minute to introduce their organization and collaboration needs.
- **Breakout rooms**, where participants could engage in open discussions based on specific topics or industry needs.

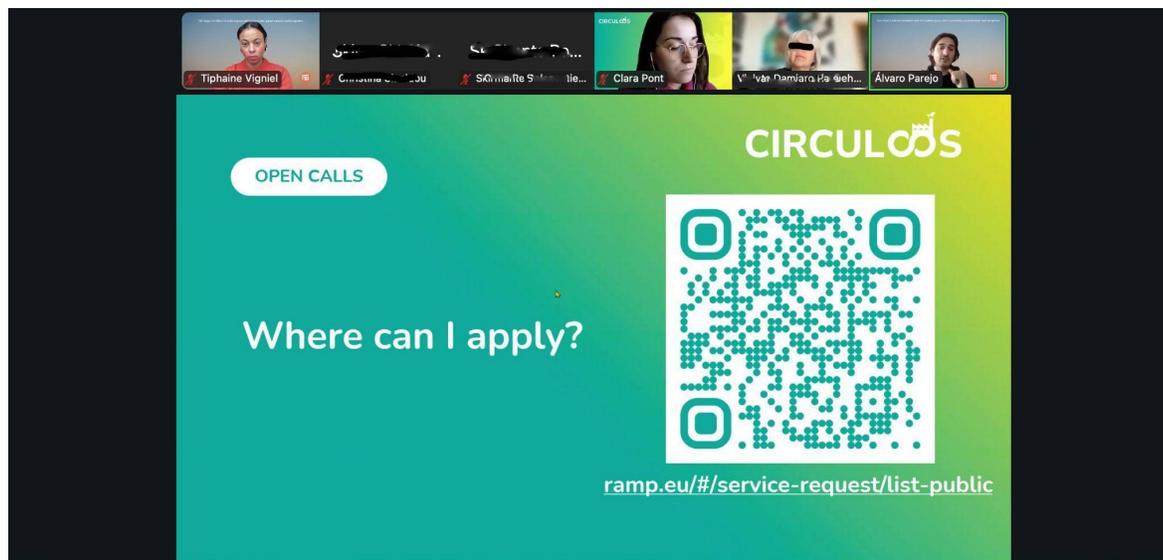


Figure 8, Matchmaking event, 15/01/2025; Source: ZOOM Platform

### 3.5. Task Distribution Among Partners

The success of the matchmaking event relied on **careful planning and coordination among partners**. Each consortium member had specific responsibilities **before, during, and after the event**, ensuring smooth execution and effective follow-up:

#### Pre-Event Responsibilities:

- **F6S** led the **planning and event organization** and defining the agenda. MWCB handled setting up the registration process and participant communications.
- **MWCB** supported outreach efforts, ensuring potential applicants were informed about the event through targeted dissemination.

**During the Event:**

- **F6S, MWCB, and ED facilitators** managed the **breakout rooms**, ensuring discussions remained productive and participants connected effectively.
- **A dedicated partner from MWCB remained in the main room** to provide ongoing support and guidance to attendees.
- **Technical support** was provided throughout the session to address any participant issues and ensure seamless interaction.

**Post-Event Follow-Up:**

- **MWCB** collected feedback from attendees and monitored **post-event engagement**, including tracking whether participants continued discussions beyond the session.
- **F6S** followed up with key participants to **encourage further networking and consortium formation**.
- **A satisfaction survey was sent to all attendees**, gathering insights on what worked well and where improvements could be made for future matchmaking events.

### 3.6. Participant Engagement During the Event

Participants engaged in discussions through **various channels** to explore collaboration opportunities. Some interacted **via the chat function**, sharing relevant details and contact information, while others **actively spoke using their microphones** to discuss potential partnerships. This flexibility allowed for both structured and spontaneous interactions, ensuring that participants had different ways to connect based on their preferences.

Facilitators from **F6S, MWCB, and ED** managed the breakout rooms, ensuring that discussions remained productive and that participants were able to engage with the right potential partners. Several attendees took advantage of this opportunity to **schedule follow-up discussions** after the event, further strengthening networking opportunities beyond the session itself.

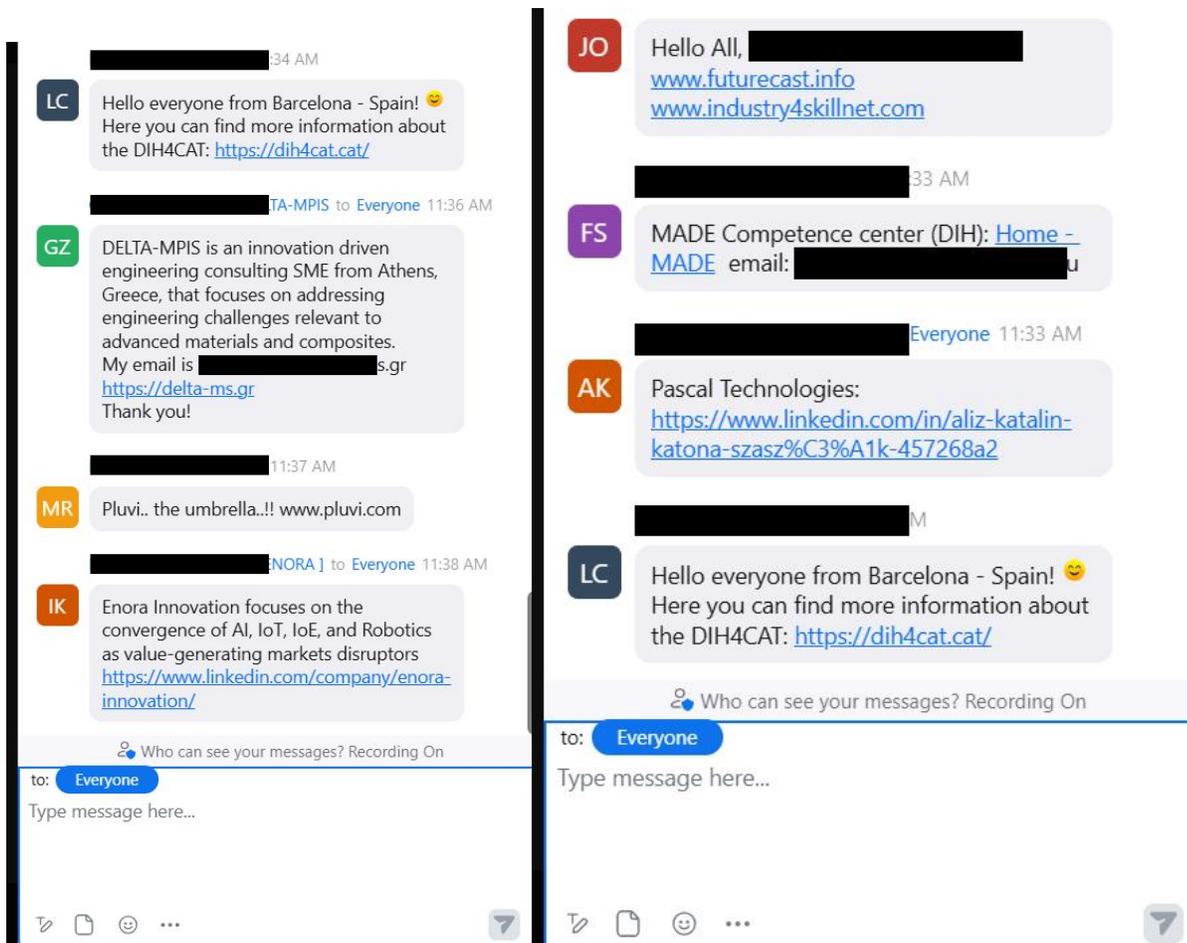


Figure 9, Matchmaking event chat, 15/01/2025; Source: ZOOM Platform

### 3.7. Satisfaction Questionnaire

Following the matchmaking event, a **satisfaction questionnaire** was sent via email to participants to gather feedback on the event’s effectiveness. The survey included questions on **the overall experience, event structure, and whether participants successfully connected with potential partners.**

**CIRCULOOS - Post-Event Satisfaction Questionnaire**

**Post-Event Satisfaction Questionnaire**

Thank you for attending the matchmaking event!

We'd love to hear about your experience to help us improve future sessions. Your feedback is invaluable for refining the event structure, ensuring it meets participants' needs, and creating even more effective opportunities for collaboration.

\* Indicates required question

**Instructions:**

- Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire.
- Answer only the questions you feel comfortable with. Required questions are marked as such.
- For open-ended questions, feel free to provide as much or as little detail as you like.
- Your responses will help us improve future matchmaking events and better support participants.

**Privacy disclaimer:**

F6S Network Ireland Limited processes names and email addresses to allow it to manage survey responses and any other information that might be relevant for the survey based on your consent.

You will have the right to withdraw consent at any time to this processing. The withdrawal of consent shall not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal. You can withdraw consent by contacting us at [privacyie@f6s.com](mailto:privacyie@f6s.com).

**Overall Experience**

1. How satisfied are you with the matchmaking event overall? (5 = Very Satisfied, \* 1 = Very Dissatisfied)

1 2 3 4 5

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

**Organization and Format**

2. How would you rate the following aspects of the event? \* (Rate each on a scale of 1-5, where 5 = Excellent, 1 = Poor)

a. Pre-event communication and instructions

1 2 3 4 5

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

b. Event structure (e.g., presentations, breakout rooms \* (5 = Excellent, 1 = Poor)

1 2 3 4 5

△ △ △ △ △

Figure 10, Matchmaking questionnaire, 15/01/2025

Participants were also asked about the helpfulness of the RAMP platform and their intentions to register on it. The questionnaire concluded with open-ended questions about the most valuable aspects of the event, suggestions for improvement, and any additional feedback. Based on the two responses received, participants were generally satisfied with the event, rating it with scores of 5 and 3 out of 5.

They also rated the pre-event communication and instructions with scores of 3 and 4 out of 5, and the event structure with scores of 5 and 3 out of 5. Both respondents indicated that they connected with potential partners during the event, with one stating they found the RAMP platform helpful and the other stating it was partially helpful. Both respondents also planned to register on RAMP after the event. The most valuable aspect of the event was the matchmaking opportunity, and suggestions for improvement included making pitches mandatory and splitting participants into different categories.

While response rates were low, the feedback highlights key areas for improvement in future matchmaking events, particularly in ensuring **structured interactions and better participant segmentation.**

## 4. Promotion & Outreach

The promotion and outreach of the Expression of Interest was done as a collaborative effort between F6S and Communication and Dissemination WP Leader MWCB, with the support from all consortium partners. In preparation of the EOI and during its 8-month run, many activities were carried out on several channels to promote this Open Call.

The Expression of Interest was promoted by MWCB, in collaboration with F6S through:

- **Social media campaigns** (LinkedIn, website, Newsletters, Youtube)

The targeted audiences on social media, on the website and in the newsletters are :

- Manufacturing SMEs (MSMEs) and micro-SMEs. MSMEs and micro-SMEs with a commercial activity in the manufacturing industry as a producer, or a technology/ service supplier for applications in the manufacturing industry. Entities that can adopt the role of: Recyclers, up-cyclers, repairers, waste collectors, or other entities enabling the circular loop.
- DIHs or eDIHs.
- Academic institutes (Universities), research institutes and other not-for-profit research entities.

Below are a few examples of LinkedIn organic (unpaid) posts promoting the Expression of Interest, related activities such as webinars, and promotion of the project's newsletters, that were showcasing the Expression of Interest to the relevant stakeholders. Activities carried out were also uploaded on Youtube.

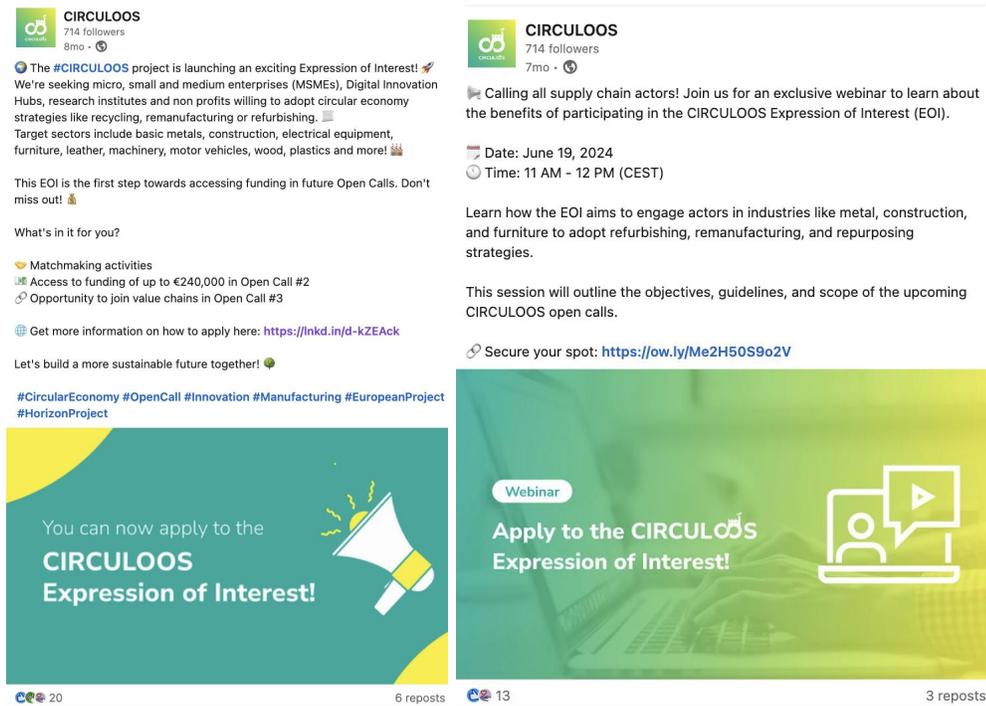


Figure 11, Expression of Interest and first webinar promotion posts

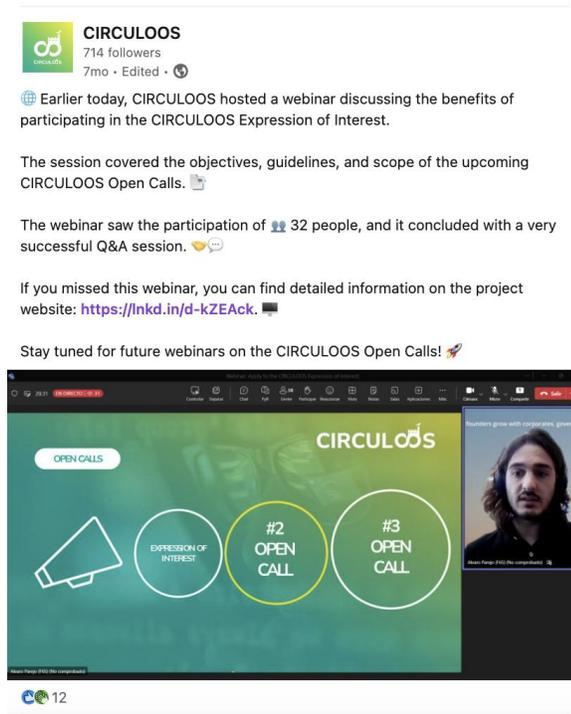


Figure 12, First webinar dissemination post

**CIRCULOOS**  
714 followers  
2mo · 🌐

Are you ready to take part in circular innovation? 🚀

Join our upcoming CIRCULOOS EOI Webinar on 11 December! We'll show you how to apply for the Expression of Interest (EOI), provide guidance on forming partnerships, and explain how to use the RAMP platform to submit your application. Connect with us and discover how to build a more circular supply chain! 🤝❤️

📅 Date: 11/12  
🕒 Time: 12:00-13:00 CET

👉 Register here: <https://lnkd.in/duhpzP4N>

#CIRCULOOS #CircularEconomy #SustainableManufacturing #Innovation #SupplyChain #CircularSupplyChains #Webinar

🌐 Sara Canedo and 16 others · 2 reposts

**CIRCULOOS**  
714 followers  
2mo · Edited · 🌐

🌟 This morning, **Anastasia Garbi** from **EUROPEAN DYNAMICS**, coordinator of the CIRCULOOS project, made an insightful presentation at the Cascade Funding Opportunities Webinar. 🗣️

During the session, she highlighted the project's goals and explained the Expression of Interest. This was a great opportunity for representatives from Digital Innovation Hubs, universities, research institutes, business intermediaries, and SMEs across the Western Balkans to gain valuable knowledge on leveraging these funding opportunities to drive impact. 🚀

The webinar, hosted by the **Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)**, included contributions from:

- 👉 **Brais Fernández** (Econet SL, **FundingBox**) – Intro to Cascade Funding
- 👉 **YOLANDA MORENO** (FundingBox) – TALOS EU PROJECT
- 👉 **Antonio M.** (FundingBox) – AIRISE
- 👉 **Graciela Garrido** (Econet SL, **FundingBox**) – R.E.C.I.P.E for success

The webinar also featured presentations from other European projects under the I4MS2 initiative, including **AIRISE** and **AI REDGIO 5.0**, showcasing their contributions to digital transformation in manufacturing. 🚀

#CIRCULOOS #CascadeFunding #Innovation #ResearchAndDevelopment #WesternBalkans #FundingOpportunities #DigitalInnovationHubs

🌐 You and 34 others · 3 reposts

Figure 13, Second webinar promotion and dissemination posts

Figure 14, Website’s Expression of Interest in the Open Calls section of the website

- **Newsletters and email communications** to key stakeholders.
- **LinkedIn newsletters and email communications** to key stakeholders were sent to further promote the EOI, as shown below:

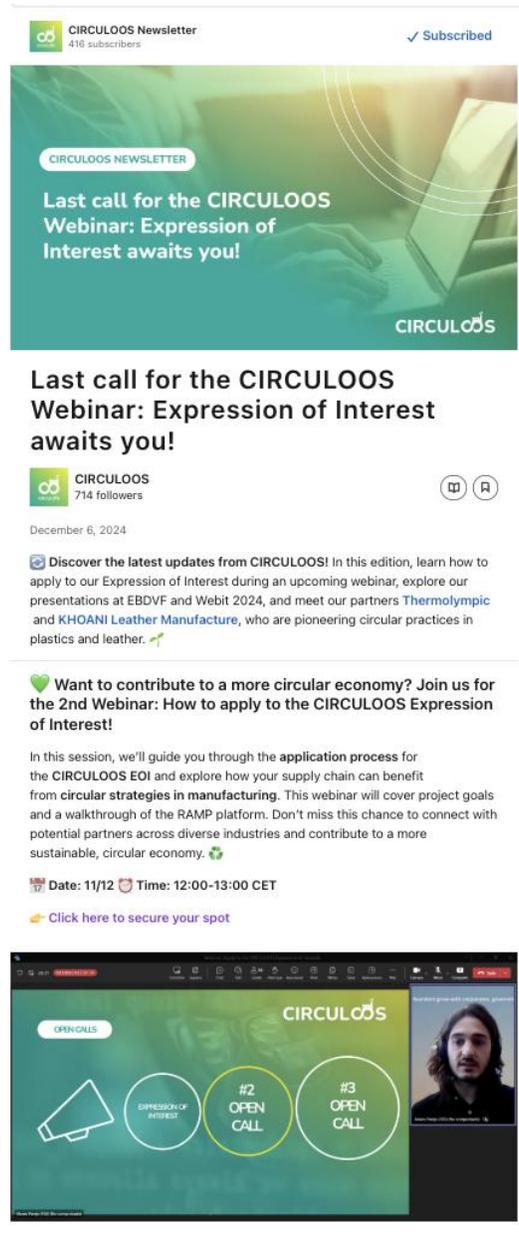


Figure 15, Newsletter promoting the EOI and the second webinar

Anecdotal evidence suggests that events (such as the webinars and the matchmaking activities) and social media were particularly effective. At the proposal submission stage, applicants will be asked to indicate how they learned about the open call, allowing for a more precise impact assessment in future reports.

● **Press release**

A press release focusing on the Expression of Interest was developed to support the communication effort, as seen below:

#### The European Project is accelerating the transition towards circular manufacturing through new collaborations and funding opportunities

The CIRCULOOS project, funded by the European Commission's Horizon Europe programme, officially launched its first Expression of Interest (EOI) on May 31st. It invites micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs), research institutes, and non-profit entities to adopt circular economy principles in their manufacturing companies.

#### Sustainability through the R- Strategies

The EOI targets organisations willing to adopt one of the R-strategies: recycling, remanufacturing, or refurbishing. Sectors of interest include but are not limited to basic metals, construction, electrical equipment, furniture, leather, machinery and equipment, motor vehicles, wood products, plastics, and other industries aligned with the project's objectives.

CIRCULOOS aims to bring these SMEs to these R-strategies through a case-driven framework. In this framework, new digital tools and models of circular supply chains are built on existing collaborations of commercial entities through the project's Pilots and Open Calls.

#### How to Apply

Interested parties are encouraged to register themselves or their organisations on the RAMP platform (<https://ramp.eu/#/service-request/list-public>). The registration for the CIRCULOOS EOI and support activities will remain open until Open Call #2.

The registration is open at any time during the matchmaking stage (from October 2024 to March 2025). However, registering before or during the official launch of the Expression of Interest will allow more time to participate in relevant match-making events and webinars that will be held under the responsibility of CIRCULOOS.

#### Pathway to Funding and Scaling Opportunities

The CIRCULOOS EOI serves as the first step in a three-step process, facilitating access to funding and scaling opportunities through the project's upcoming Open Calls #2 and #3 in 2025/2026.

The EOI will include matchmaking activities to form consortia of 2 to 4 entities that can apply to the #2 and #3 Open Calls. The matchmaking will be done through RAMP, where the objective is to help applicants to find partners to team up in a consortium. Thus, searching for a matching partner from available entities in RAMP from those already applied and published their interest will be achievable. CIRCULOOS will compile a list of registered entities available, and willing to match in a consortium. Other types of matchmaking activities will be held, including online events where participants will have the opportunity to meet each other and collaborate.

Afterwards, participants will be able to apply for CIRCULOOS open call #2 and #3.

The Open Call #2 will provide up to €60,000 per consortium of 2-4 entities, for a €240,000 total funding to 16 selected consortia during a 12-month implementation program. The Open Call #3 will invite new third parties to contribute to and benefit from the established value chains, extending and scaling up the circular economy initiatives to further improve sustainability performance.

#### About CIRCULOOS

CIRCULOOS is a European Union-funded project under the Horizon Europe program, aiming to deliver circular manufacturing tools that orchestrate and continuously optimize the supply chain end-to-end while comprehensively integrating planning and execution. The project follows a case-driven framework, where new digital tools and models of circular supply chains are built on existing collaborations of commercial entities through Pilots and Open Calls.

For more information about the CIRCULOOS project and the Expression of Interest, please visit <https://circuloos.eu/> or contact the team via our contact page: <https://circuloos.eu/contact/>.

Figure 16, [Press release promoting the EOI](#)

## 5. Key Takeaways & Lessons Learned

The **Expression of Interest (EOI) phase** provided valuable insights into the strengths and challenges of the open call process. One of the **main successes** was the **diversity of applicants**, with participation from a wide range of industrial sectors. This variety ensured that different perspectives and expertise were represented, enriching potential collaborations. Additionally, the **matchmaking event proved to be highly effective**, helping participants connect beyond the RAMP platform and facilitating direct exchanges between entities looking for partners. Another positive outcome was the **growing interest over time**, as the number of applications steadily increased, confirming that sustained outreach efforts lead to greater engagement.

However, the process also highlighted **key challenges** that need to be addressed in future open calls. The **limited participation from manufacturers** created an imbalance, as most applicants were service or technology providers. Since manufacturers play a crucial role in forming strong consortia, their lower participation rate could make consortium-building more difficult. Additionally, **some participants expressed the need for a more structured matchmaking format**, suggesting that more guided sessions could improve the effectiveness of the networking process.

Based on these findings, **several improvements will be implemented in future open calls**. Outreach efforts will be **more targeted towards manufacturers** to ensure a better balance between different types of applicants.

## 6. Next Steps & Future Open Calls

Building on the success of the first Open Call and the valuable insights gained from the Expression of Interest (EOI) phase, CIRCULOOS is moving forward with its ambitious plan to foster collaborative innovation in the realm of circular manufacturing. The upcoming Open Calls and planned activities promise to further accelerate the development and deployment of innovative solutions that drive the transition towards a more sustainable and circular economy.

Open Call 2 (OC2) Open call 3.1 (OC3.1) are set to launch on **March 26th, 2025**, marking a crucial milestone in the CIRCULOOS project. They both will be open for **two months**, closing on **May 28th, 2025**.

To ensure a smooth and successful OC2 and OC3.1, the consortium has meticulously planned the following steps:

- **Second Matchmaking Event:** To put learned lessons into practice, CIRCULOOS is now preparing a **second matchmaking event on March 12, 2025**, incorporating all the insights gained from the first round. This improved session will feature a **more structured format, guided networking activities, and better segmentation of participants** to foster stronger connections and help applicants build competitive consortia for Open Call 2. By applying these refinements, the next event aims to maximize engagement and further support the formation of high-quality proposals aligned with the project's objectives.
- **Targeted Manufacturer Outreach:** Given the **essential role of manufacturers** in developing **circular value chain demonstrators**, future outreach efforts will prioritize attracting a **higher number of manufacturers** to ensure a more balanced pool of applicants. While the EOI phase successfully engaged **service providers and enablers**, the lower participation of manufacturers remains a challenge for forming strong consortia. To address this, CIRCULOOS will implement **targeted outreach strategies**, including direct engagement with **manufacturing networks, industry associations, and sector-specific events** to strengthen participation in OC2. The **second matchmaking event** will also include **structured activities designed to connect manufacturers with enablers and service providers**, further facilitating consortium formation.
- **Application Support:** The consortium will provide **comprehensive support** to applicants throughout the application process, including guidance on **eligibility criteria, funding details, and the use of the F6S platform**.
- **Evaluation and Selection:** A **rigorous evaluation and selection process** will be conducted to identify the most promising and impactful projects.
- **Project Onboarding:** Selected projects will be onboarded in **July 2025** and will receive ongoing support and guidance throughout their implementation.

The launch of **Open Call 2 (OC2) and Open Call 3.1 (OC3.1)** is a key milestone for the CIRCULOOS project, strengthening its pilots and expanding its impact on circular manufacturing. These open calls

bring new expertise and solutions into the project, ensuring that innovation is tested and applied in real industrial settings.

**OC2** will attract **strong consortia**, bringing together **manufacturers, enablers, and technology providers** to develop **circular economy solutions**. These collaborations will drive **new processes, business models, and material recovery strategies**, reinforcing CIRCULOOS' goal of building **efficient, sustainable supply chains**.

**OC3.1** will directly support the **three pilot lines** by integrating **single entities** that contribute to the **development and enhancement of the tools being created**. These entities will bring **technical knowledge, industry experience, and innovative methods** to help optimize **materials tracing, circular design, and waste valorization solutions** within the pilots. Their contributions will make the pilots **more effective, adaptable, and ready for industrial adoption**.

By **expanding participation and strengthening the pilots**, these open calls will **maximize the project's impact**. They ensure that **CIRCULOOS delivers real, scalable circular economy solutions**, making the transition to a **more sustainable manufacturing industry possible**.

## 7. References

**Circle Economy. (2024).** *Circularity Gap Report 2024*. Available at: <https://reports.circularity-gap.world/cgr-global-2024-37b5f198/CGR+Global+2024+-+Report.pdf>

# CIRCULOBS



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101092295. The herewith information reflects only the author's view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information herewith included.