

JRC PILOT PROJECT “Science meets Parliaments / Regions”

Final Report. May, 2019

1. Content

SCIENCE FOR THE TRANSITION TOWARDS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN THE PROCESSES INDUSTRY OF THE NATURAL PARADISE.

28th and 29th March. Covadonga, Asturias.

On 28th and 29th March, IDEPA met with around thirty experts in Covadonga to discuss and agree upon measures to facilitate the transition towards a circular economy. In the region of Asturias there is a coexistence between a heavily industrialised economic model and a highly valuable natural setting, so the challenge of this transition towards a circular economy was approached from a scientific perspective, with the recovery of industrial and urban waste reducing the impact of activity.

The opening and closure were proposed in sessions open to the public. The interventions were given by the Rector of the University of Oviedo, the Vice-Councillor of the Environment, the Vice-President of the Asturian Federation of Entrepreneurs, JRC representatives and international experts. A member of the European Parliament also attended.

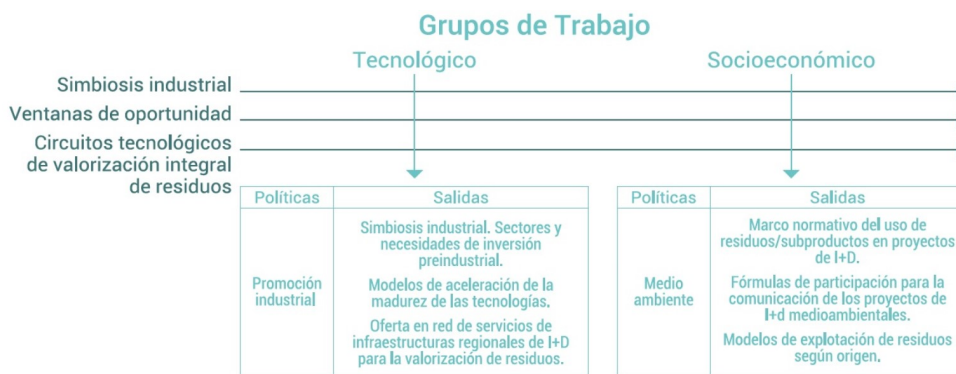
The work sessions were held over the day and a half, and the 38 participants were carefully selected, taking into account their skills and a balanced participation. Participants included representatives from the regional administration, the science sector, representatives from leading companies within the process industry, trade unions, and national and international experts.



<https://www.sciencemeetsasturias.es/participantes/>

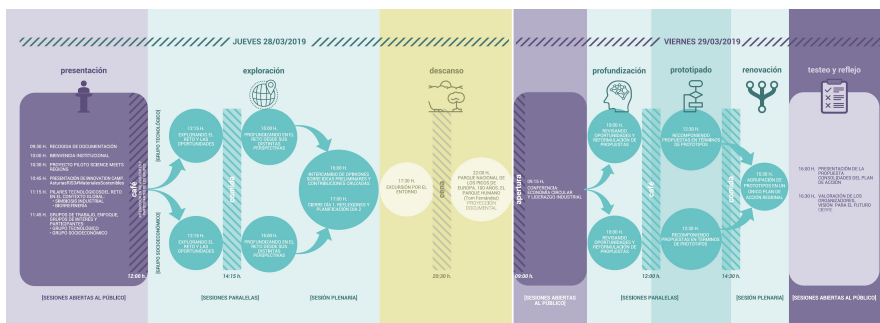
The challenge was addressed in parallel groups, with the establishment of two sub-challenges:
 Technological Group - Technological opportunities for the processes industry to harness industrial by-products and RSU.

Socio-Economic Group - Socio-economic aspects to take into account during the early R&D phases to encourage the industry to use by-products and waste.



The Challenge Owners were the Managing Director of innovation and entrepreneurship and the CEO of IDEPA for sub-challenge 1, and the Managing Director of Environmental Quality for sub-challenge 2.

The methodology used was that stipulated in the publication “Innovation Camp Methodology Handbook” edited by the JRC. For this event we have designed a diagram that displays the processes that stimulated the group work.



The event was funded by the JRC as part of the pilot project Science Meets Regions, which was the subject of a public tender in July 2018. The JRC was also responsible for the preparatory document: *Regional inventory of public and private R&D infrastructures for the recovery of by-products and waste*. Furthermore, it participated in the opening act with various representatives, and took part over the two days of work.

Eventually, two people from IDEPA attended the Science Meets Parliament event on 6th-7th February 2019, The Role of Science in 21st Century Policy-Making, organised by the JRC in the European Parliament, as training for the organisation of the Innovation Camp.

2. Logistics

The event was held in a spectacular setting: the Picos de Europa Natural Park (the oldest in Spain), which was celebrating its 100th anniversary, coinciding with the thirteenth centenary of the origins of the Kingdom of Asturias.

The hotel located in the very heart of the Natural Park, some 80 km from the centre of Asturias and the metropolitan area, made an ideal retreat for this kind of meeting. Participant stayed at the hotel and social activities were organised: trip to the Lakes of Covadonga and viewing of the “Picos de Europa Natural Park 100 years El Parque Humano” documentary.

The venue was organised so as to create the right atmosphere to encourage open dialogue and to explore ideas, with the preparation of a plenary, two spaces for the work groups, and a meeting place or Agora. A large central screen depicted images of what was going on in real time and allowed social networks to follow events and interact.

The Facilitator, who provided support in the preparatory phase, offered all the technical assistance needed during the event to enliven the debates. The preparatory work has been intense, with the following tasks standing out: support documentation was selected carefully; the participants were selected and contacted, and work instructions were given to them for which communication and outreach tools were designed; the methodology adapted to the Challenge was designed and a manual was elaborated as a programme and work tool.



3. Policy Impact



Materiales Sostenibles

The final objective was to identify consensual proposals that could be transferred to regional innovation and environmental policies, and in particular

to complete the draft of the Regional Agenda of Sustainable Materials and to evaluate the opportunity to create a Circularity Hub in Asturias.

The work groups have established that the Principality of Asturias fulfils the correct conditions to become a European benchmark in the circular economy, due to the potential of its industry, its technological and research capacities, and the uniqueness of the region, 50% of which is covered by some kind of environmental protection.

In this respect the idea of transforming Asturias into a Circular Paradise is gaining momentum. To do this, the proposal is to identify the possible participants and to get a solid social consensus, transferring the initiative to conciliation agreements. The governance model (hub members) will be conditioned by the profile of the Hub. The Circular Paradise is envisaged as a scenery in which the industry maintains its leadership through a high commitment to the setting; it is viable to identify the processes industry as the start and end of waste.

To facilitate the search for technological solutions, the following actions were proposed:

1. Complete the Mapping of R&D Infrastructures/by-products/resources of comprehensive valuation to facilitate the assessment of the existing technological offer.
2. Pre-empt the R&D phase with the economic viability of the circular economy projects using a quick assessment tool for proposals, which combines a life cycle analysis (LCA), best available techniques, available technological improvements (ATI), and productivity and market criteria.
3. Facilitate the Scalability of the solutions proposed by simulating processes or investments in demonstrators.

All are ideas to accelerate the transfer of technology to the market of interest for innovation policies and economic promotion. These may provide an opportunity to complement existing R&D equipment and infrastructures with specific financing models, including Innovative Public Procurement; and to design acceleration programmes for emerging technologies, placing comprehensive waste assessment circuits at the service of the process industry.

On the other hand, the socio-economic group members discussed the need to advance towards a favourable legal framework that enables the development of business projects focused on recovering by-products and waste, in which public-private collaboration will play an important role.

Among the ideas proposed is the creation of an abridged protocol to process industrial R&D trials, a methodical guide of end-of-waste status, and the creation of a database of waste inputs and outputs.

Furthermore, the importance of societal involvement has been highlighted, which involves informing society about the measures that are carried out, the economic activity that waste can generate, and the benefits this entails for Asturias, giving citizens a leading role in the transition towards the circular economy. In this respect, the proposal was to create the Asturias Circular Paradise Platform, actions aimed at improving social perception, and the use of mottos/logos aimed at highlighting the value of waste and its link to the region.

“YOUR WASTE GENERATES WEALTH” “RESOURCES NOT WASTE” “ASTURIAS AS CIRCULAR PARADISE”

Highlighted among the conclusions were the sustainable nature of the circular economy, and the drive that it is capable of producing in territorial development and in keeping populations in the region, thanks to its use of endogenous resources from the land. The implementation of a biomass waste harnessing model was suggested with proximity and local development criteria in small towns/villages (< 1000 inhabitants).

4. Deliverables

Several weeks before the event, the event image was introduced into IDEPA’s corporate digital signature, and a banner was activated on the IDEPA home page

Graphic elements were prepared and incorporated into the signage, posters, panels, Truss, documentation, accreditations and presentations. A specific website was also designed and developed

The IDEPA Communication team took care of the diffusion, previous information of the event was launched through regional and own media (IDEPA Newsletter). An advertising campaign was carried out on Facebook

During the event, the media were summoned and those present were attended to: La Nueva España and El Comercio newspapers. A photocall was held live, with constant activity on the social networks, interacting with followers, which could be monitored on the screen in the plenary hall.

RESULTS SUMMARY:

- 6 appearances in the regional print press, with coverage on 6 pages.
- 14 appearances in the digital press
- 5 outstanding appearances in the IDEPActiva newsletter and 2 news items on the IDEPA website
- 1 appearance on the RNE (Spanish National Radio)

- Social networks

	Tweets	impressions	interactions	Likes	Retweets
@idepasturias	17	13,611	544	150	48
@AsturiasRIS3	8	9,403	441	92	32
	post	reaches	interactions		
Facebook	14	5,910	434		
Paid publicity on Facebook		51,007	381 clicks on the link		

A photographic report was made over the two-day event, and videos were recorded in the meetings and interventions. After the event, the photographic report was uploaded on to Flickr (248 photos) and 1 summary video was edited, and 25 videos with interventions and interviews (32 GB), lasting a total of 4 hours.

<https://www.sciencemeetsasturias.es/resultados/>



5. Sustainability

The material distributed to participants consisted in an ECO KIT: Notebook with recycled paper and covers, recycled PET pen and 100% cotton bag. Paper documentation was not submitted, it was provided beforehand using an electronic tool (Aura) and posted on the event website. Just two sheets were printed to be used and shared in the respective WG. The invitations were also electronic.

The staging and space dividers were created using cardboard screens that can be recycled for other uses. The structure (Truss) for the canvas was rented in order to be reused.

Transfers in bus for the Covadonga Lakes trip were made in micro-buses of a local company, thus avoiding the transfer in cars.

6. Global evaluation

The Innovation Camp model was ideal for looking for solutions to complex technological problems that have a major social impact. Discussions have enabled consensus to be reached on strong ideas that bring together plural groups, we were even impressed how participants expressed their proposals as slogans. It has also been very interesting to integrate different public policies: Innovation, R&D, Industry, Environment and Cohesion.

Individualised selection of participants is important for its success, in our event for the issue that was addressed, efforts were made for some to take up positions of responsibility in related areas, and for them to contribute diverse points of view. Up to 10 profiles were identified, and each was assigned a particular role in the work groups. We also decided to opt for an inaugural open session with speakers, who helped channel the international direction into a regional challenge.

Finally, the Location: in this case, a very favourable setting for sustainability, and the presence of a Facilitator have been key to promoting the involvement of all participants.