

Circular Economy Hotspot Cymru - Programme Overview

Monday, 7 October

Opening Reception : 17:00 – 20:00

Venue: National Museum Cardiff

An evening event held at the National Museum of Wales to kick-off the Circular Economy Hotspot Cymru. The Welcome Reception will allow delegates to network and meet fellow delegates and experience local food, drink, and entertainment, highlighting the culture of Wales. Delegates will be welcomed to Wales by dignitaries and hear the announcement of the 2025 Australasia Hotspot and the 2026 European Hotspot hosts.

Speakers include:

- Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader of Cardiff Council
- Freek van Eijk, CEO, Holland Circular Hotspot
- Andrew Slade, Director General, Economy, Energy and Transport, Welsh Government

Performances by:

- N'famady Kouyaté
- Qwerin

Tuesday, 8 October

Main Conference : Morning 08:30 – 13:30

Venue: National Cricket Centre, Sophia Gardens

Conference Session One: Wales' Circular Economy Journey

The main conference will commence with a session looking at key elements from Wales' journey so far, covering insights from Wales' transition from one of the first industrialised nations and an extractive economy to second in the world for recycling. This session will look at the role of crucial elements that have brought about Wales transformation to date covering the partnership approach that has underpinned it and the progressive policy approach undertaken by the Welsh Government.

Session includes:

- Councillor Andrew Morgan, Leader of the Welsh Local Government Association and Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Conversation with Councillor Morgan and senior Welsh Government official, facilitated by Dot Davies.

Conference Session Two: Growing the Circular and Green Economy

This session will look at the development of the circular economy and opportunities to contribute to the green economy and greening of the wider economy. It will examine how the circular economy transition can be accelerated and the role that industry and business can play.

Session includes:

- Sebastian Munden, Chair of WRAP
- Panel session on growing the circular economy in Wales and internationally, facilitated by Andrew Slade.

Conference Session Three: Developing a Circular Society

This session will cover the importance of transitioning to a circular society, including the circular economy's contribution to ensuring prosperous and healthy communities and looking at the role communities will play in catalysing this transition. This will include examining Wales' Well-being of Future Generations Act approach to drive social as well as environmental and economic benefits to ensure that the foundation is laid for a just transition.

Session includes:

- Derek Walker, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales
- Panel session on ensuring a just transition to a more circular society, facilitated by Dot Davies
- Showcase of how young people are shaping the circular economy in Wales

Main Conference : Afternoon 13:30 – 16:30

The afternoon of the main conference day will be dedicated to specific breakout sessions, covering a wide-range of topics. Including:

Breakout Session 1: Collaboration in Innovation: Brokerage Session

The Welsh Government Business Innovation Team will support a brokerage session aimed at fostering knowledge transfer connections between Welsh based organisations and international partners. This session will be supported by colleagues including WEFO (Welsh European Funding Office) and CEIC (Circular Economy Innovation Communities) and other key funding and support providers. Businesses, academics and third sector representatives are invited to attend and share their areas of interest so that brokerage matches can be facilitated. The session will be supplemented with information on the various businesses support packages available in Wales with to facilitate international innovation collaborative opportunities. Please note, supplementary information will be sourced from participants prior to this event to support appropriate brokerage / matching opportunities.

Breakout Session 2: Encouraging Circular Behaviours in Wales and Across the Globe

This session will deliver a deep dive into the insights that shaped Be Mighty. Recycle campaign strategy, exploring the activities that inspired audiences in Wales and revealing the impact on both food waste prevention and recycling behaviours. We'll also showcase food waste prevention campaigns we've delivered, in partnership with countries across the globe, demonstrating how tailoring approaches to cultural and audience nuances maximises impact.

Speakers include:

- Jackie Bailey, Senior Campaigns Manager, WRAP
- Mark Roberts, Senior Specialist, WRAP
- Angela Spiteri, Senior Campaigns Manager, WRAP Cymru

Breakout Session 3: Impact of Academia: Research, Skills, and Innovation

This session will feature a panel discussion with an emphasis on audience interaction and questions. Academics will share how their research is impacting the transition to a circular economy in Wales and beyond and will be discussing how students are developing the skills needed to further the circular economy.

Speakers include:

- Professor Gavin Bunting - Faculty of Science and Engineering, Swansea University
- Max Green - Research and Innovation Fellow, Swansea University

Breakout Session 4: Circular Economy in Action: Pathways to Sustainable Development

This experiential and immersive workshop will be delivered by CEIC team (Cardiff Met and Swansea Universities) and will explain how they have supported organisations to develop innovation and Circular Economy (CE) capabilities and reduce their carbon footprint and increase productivity. CEIC has supported over 120 organisations business and third sector organisations to develop a Clean Growth plan and a Carbon Reduction Plan by helping them understand circular economy (CE) principles and develop the innovation skills to implement new processes and practices within their organisation.

Speakers include:

- Dr. Gary Walpole - Director of CEIC, Cardiff Met University
- Jill Davies - Programme Manager - CEIC, Cardiff Met University

Breakout Session 5: Driving Circularity in the Public Sector

This session will examine the ways in which public sector organisations in Wales are using the estimated £8 billion of public spend per annum to drive forward sustainability and the circular economy.

Breakout Session 6: From linear to circular - repair and reuse across the value chain

This session will focus on how reuse and repair can work for citizens and consumers. Using Wales' repair and reuse route map: Towards a Universal Culture of Repair and Reuse in Wales, the panel will represent views to examine how reuse and repair can be expanded.

Breakout Session 7: Circular Innovation in Business: Case Studies

This session will feature innovative case studies from businesses investing in driving the circular economy through innovation and partnership. Each session will feature businesses from Wales and further afield sharing their story, sharing learnings, and detailing the successes they've had in embedding circular principles in their everyday practices.

Breakout Session 8: Wales' Recycling Successes

This session will explore the success Wales has had in becoming one of the top recycling nations and the progressive approach that the Welsh Government and local authorities have taken to enable these achievements. Panellists will cover topics such as the Welsh Government's collection blueprint, the recently enacted workplace recycling regulations, and Wales' ambitions to become the best recycling nation in the world.

Speakers include:

- Dr Andy Rees OBE - Head of Waste Strategy, Welsh Government

Conference Dinner : 19:00 – 23:00

Venue: Principality Stadium

Attendees have the option to purchase a ticket for the conference dinner, which will be held at the Principality Stadium in the heart of Cardiff. The dinner will allow delegates the opportunity for further networking and to enjoy some local entertainment and a selection of some of the best examples of what Welsh food and drink producers have to offer.

Performances by:

- Hanan Issa
- Catrin Finch

Wednesday, 9 October

Circular Economy Site Visits : 08:30 – 15:00

On the final day, Hotspot delegates will have the opportunity to attend Circular Economy Site Visits, where they will get first-hand experience by visiting organisations and businesses pushing forward the circular economy in Wales. With a thematic focus on industry, innovation, and communities, each itinerary is designed to showcase an innovative collaboration or initiative that is using the principles of circular economy to have a positive impact on people, communities, organisations and the environment.

Closing Reception : 15:00 – 16:30

Venue: National Cricket Centre, Sophia Gardens

Upon return from the Circular Economy Site Visits, an informal closing reception will be held. This will enable a final chance for delegates to gather and reflect as well as hear closing remarks to inspire action going forward.

Speakers include:

- Tracey Burke - Director General for Local Government, Housing, Climate Change, and Rural Affairs, Welsh Government