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Towards a Circular Wellbeing Economy

Report Launch Webinar

Systems Transformation Hub

Earth 4All

MATERIALS & CONSUMPTION TASKFORCE

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WELLBEING ECONOMY ALLIANCE

16th June 2026

Agenda

- Scene setting and work of the Taskforce on Materials and Consumption – Lewis Akenji
- Presentation of the report findings – Luca Coscieme
- Reflections from the panel
- Breakout groups: practitioner showcases & open dialogue
- Close & next steps

Material basis of Wellbeing

- We live in a **resource** and **carbon constrained** world, and yet materials provide the basis for our societies key **provisioning**: nutrition, housing, mobility, goods and services.
- **Wellbeing** for many is being compromised, cost of living, failing public services, growing inequality.
- We have two **deeply interconnected crises**.
- Yet **circularity** and **wellbeing** economy have sat as parallel agendas and policy domains.

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Background:

- Established in May 2025
- Partnership between key experts and institutions.

Goal:

- An **economy** that delivers human **wellbeing** within planetary **boundaries**, where essential services are provided fairly and efficiently through **sufficiency**-based, **circular**, and intelligently designed provisioning and aspirational systems that operate with radically lower material and energy footprints.

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Objective:

- **Integrated policies, governance and metrics, that address resource use and align climate, biodiversity, social justice, and wellbeing objectives**

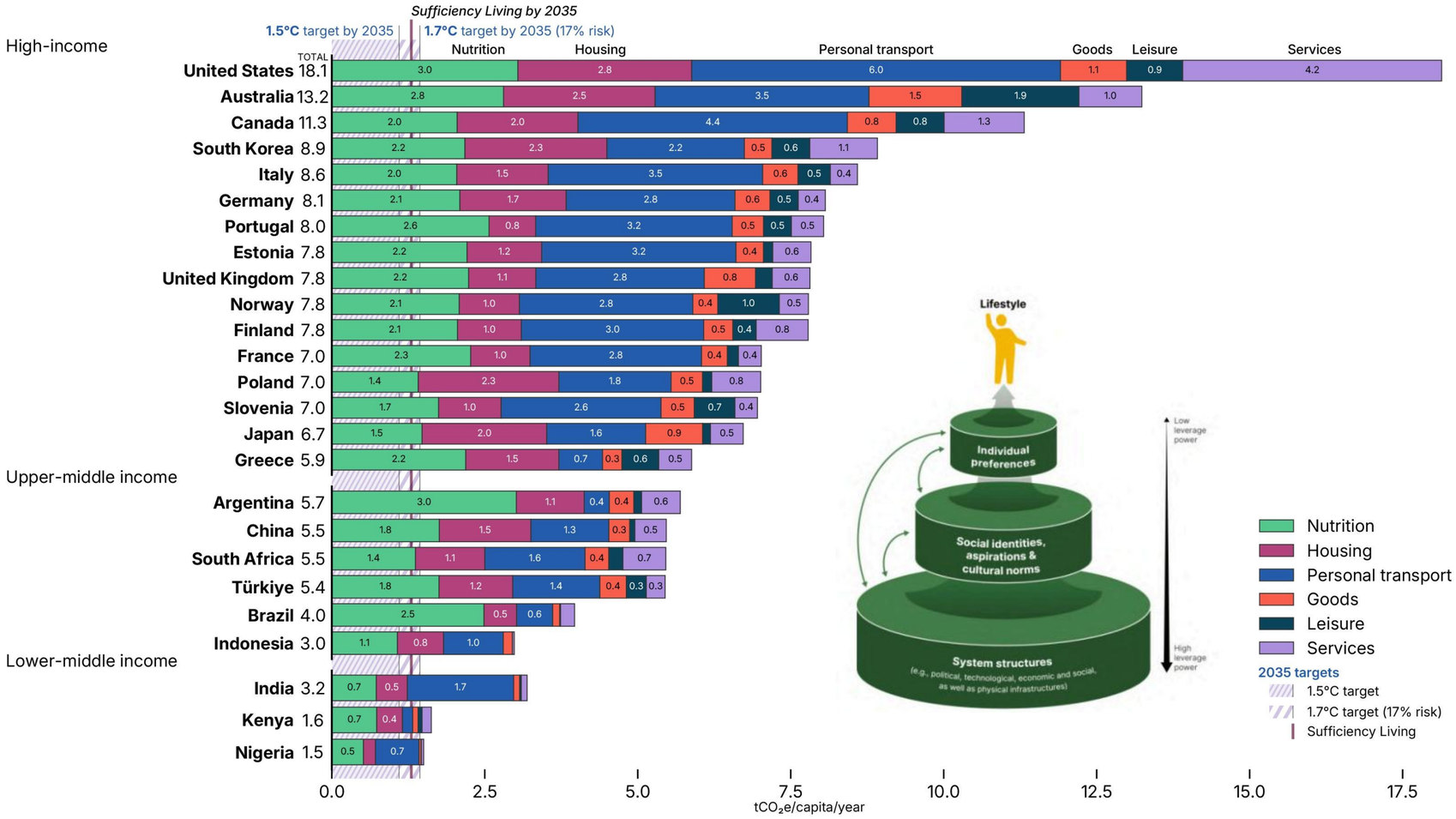
Towards a Circular Wellbeing Economy

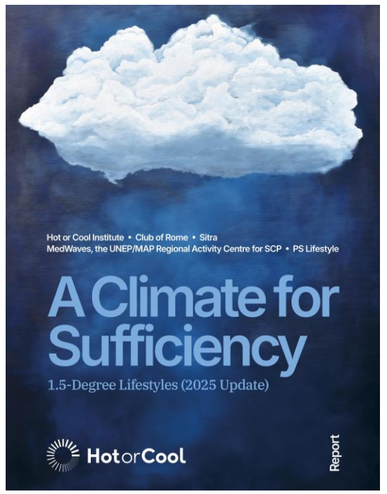
Key Messages of the Report

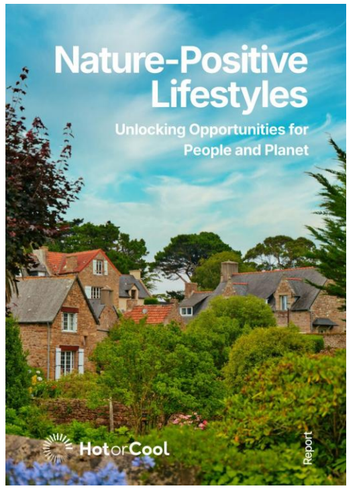
Authors: Luca Coscieme, Lars F. Mortensen, Alessandro Galli, Lotte van Rossum, Milan Petit, Valeska Götz, Juliana Subtil, Janez Potocnik, Sandrine Dixon-Declève, Lewis Akenji

Current lifestyle carbon footprints (LCFs)

Current average: **7.1 tCO_2e/capita**.
(~7× the 1.5 °C-aligned target)







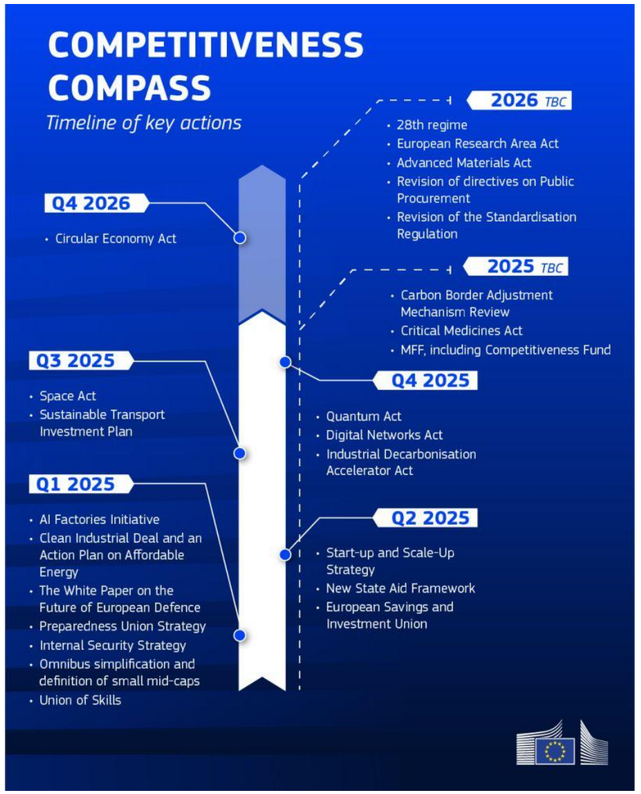
"Having the right policies, infrastructure and technology in place to enable **changes to our lifestyles and behaviour can result in a 40-70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions** by 2050. This offers significant untapped potential"

IPCC Working Group III Co-Chair

Circular Economy Act

Due for adoption in 2026, the Circular Economy Act aims to establish a Single Market for secondary raw materials, increase the supply of high-quality recycled materials and stimulate demand for these materials within the EU. It will contribute to the ambition laid out in the Competitiveness Compass to make the EU the world leader in the circular economy by 2030.

The **circularity rate** is one way to measure how circular our economy is. This number shows how much of the materials we use are recycled or reused instead of being thrown away. Right now, Europe's circularity rate is about 12%, but the goal is to **double it to 24% by 2030.** This target is part of the EU's Clean Industrial Deal.



Timeline: *Clean Industrial Deal*

European Association for Storage of Energy

- *Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act*
- *Recommendation on energy taxation*
- *Guidance on CfD design & PPAs*
- *Guidance on flexibility in retail contracts*
- *Flagship call under Horizon Europe*
- *Trans-mediterranean Energy & Clean tech cooperation initiative*
- *Quality Jobs Roadmap*

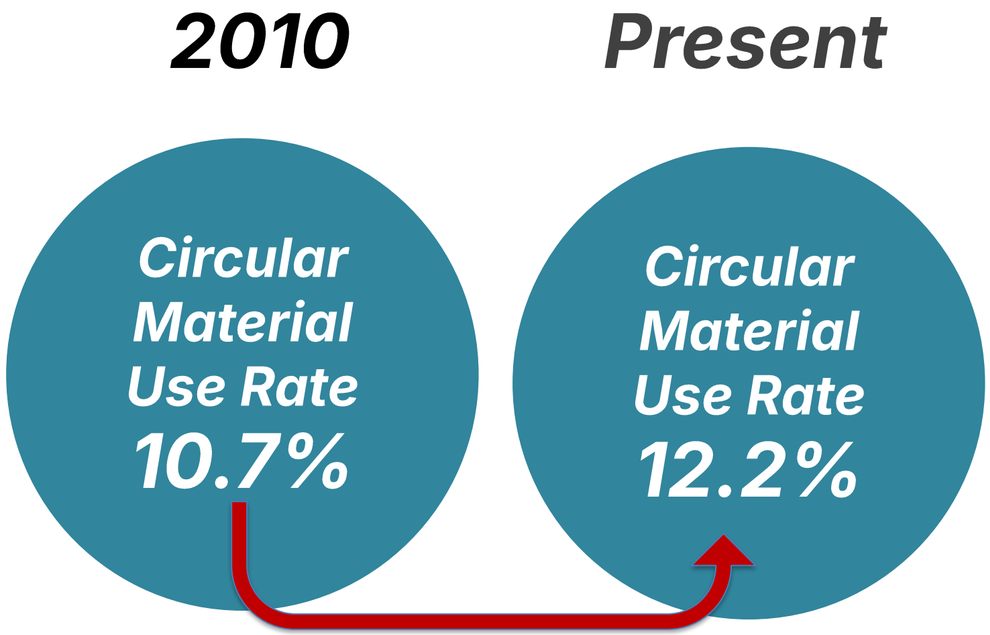
Q4 | **2026** | **2027**

- *IPCEI Design Support Hub* ***(2025)***
- *Pilot auction under the Innovation Fund* ***(2025)***
- *Guidance on social leasing for clean products* ***(2025)***
- *Initiatives on greening corporate fleets* ***(2025 / 2026)***
- *European Grids Package* ***Q4 2025***

- *Guidelines on Foreign Subsidies Regulation* ***Q1 2026***
- *Legislative proposal on an extension of CBAM* ***Q1 2026***
- *European Fair Transition Observatory* ***Q1 2026***
- *Industrial Decarbonisation Bank* ***Q2 2026***
- *Circular Economy Act* ***Q4 2026***
- *Green VAT initiative* ***Q4 2026***
- *Trans-Regional Circularity Hubs* ***Q4 2026***
- *EU Critical Raw Materials Centre (joint purchases & strategic stockpiles)* ***Q4 2026***
- *Revision of Public Procurement* ***Q4 2026***
- *TechEU investment programme on scale-ups* ***(2026)***
- *Skills Portability Initiative* ***(2026)***

- *Review of State aid GBER* ***Q4 2027***

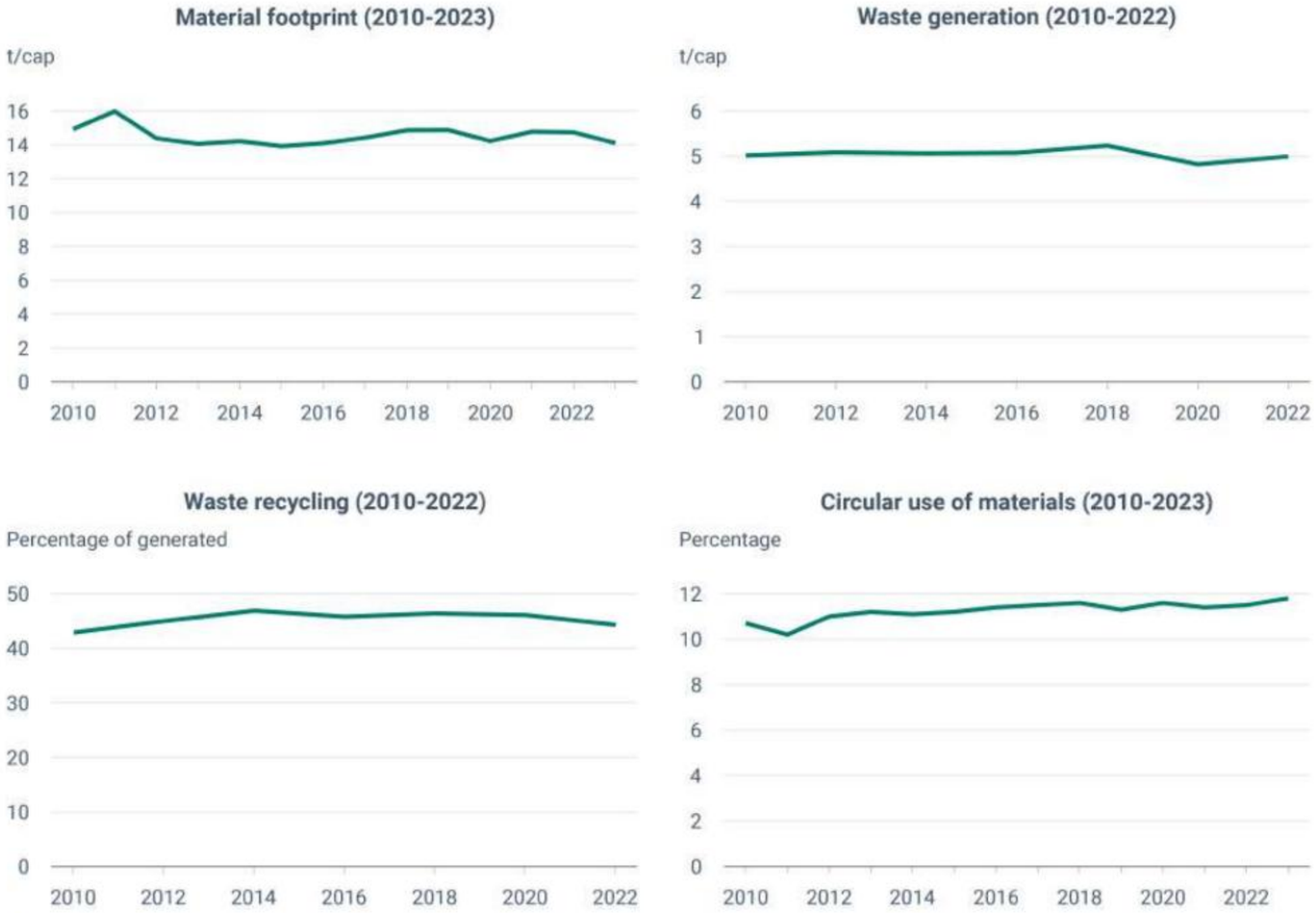
Circularity targets and developments



In EU documents, the goal for the circular the "circularity rate" is to double the share of materials coming from recycled / secondary sources by 2030, relative to the 2020 baseline.
Target is therefore to reach approximately
***24% by 2030**.*

***Source:** Eurostat*

Figure 1. Key material flow indicators in the EU-27.

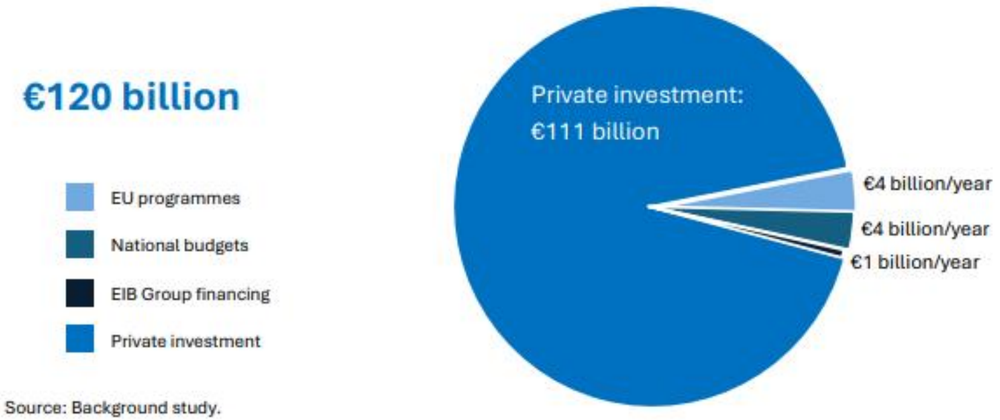


Source: EEA, 2024a

TRANSITIONING TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

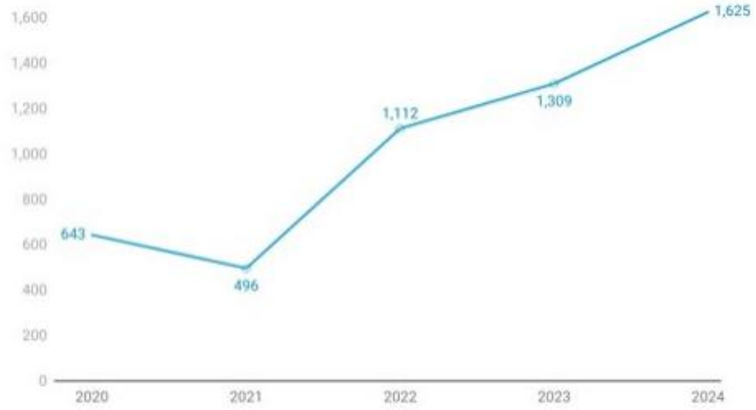
CLOSING THE INVESTMENT GAP IN EUROPE

Figure 2. Annual circular economy investment in the European Union in recent years



Source: Background study.

Figure 6. EIB circular financing in the European Union, 2020-2024 (€ million)



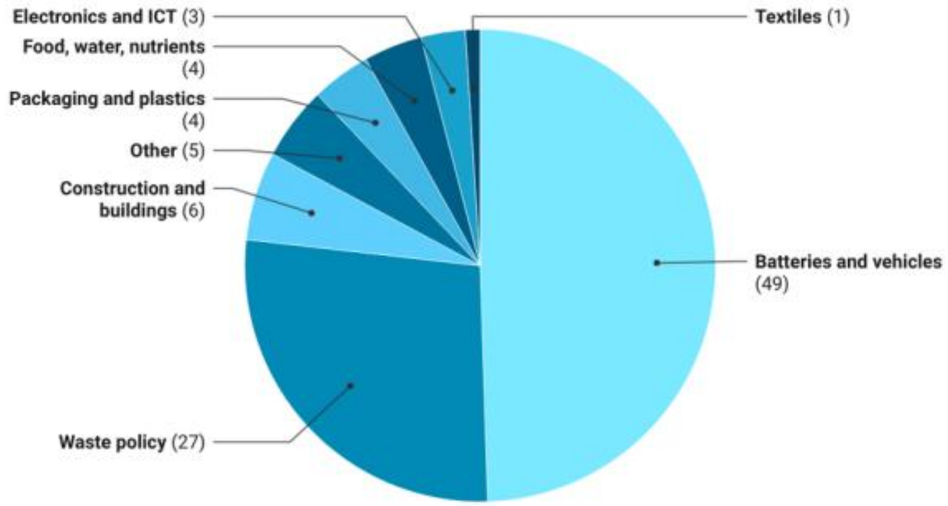
Source: EIB.

Circular economy financing is concentrated in industries and services, which account for roughly 40% of the total. This is followed by agri-forestry and the bioeconomy[10] (30%).

Figure 8. The annual circular economy investment gap (€ billion)

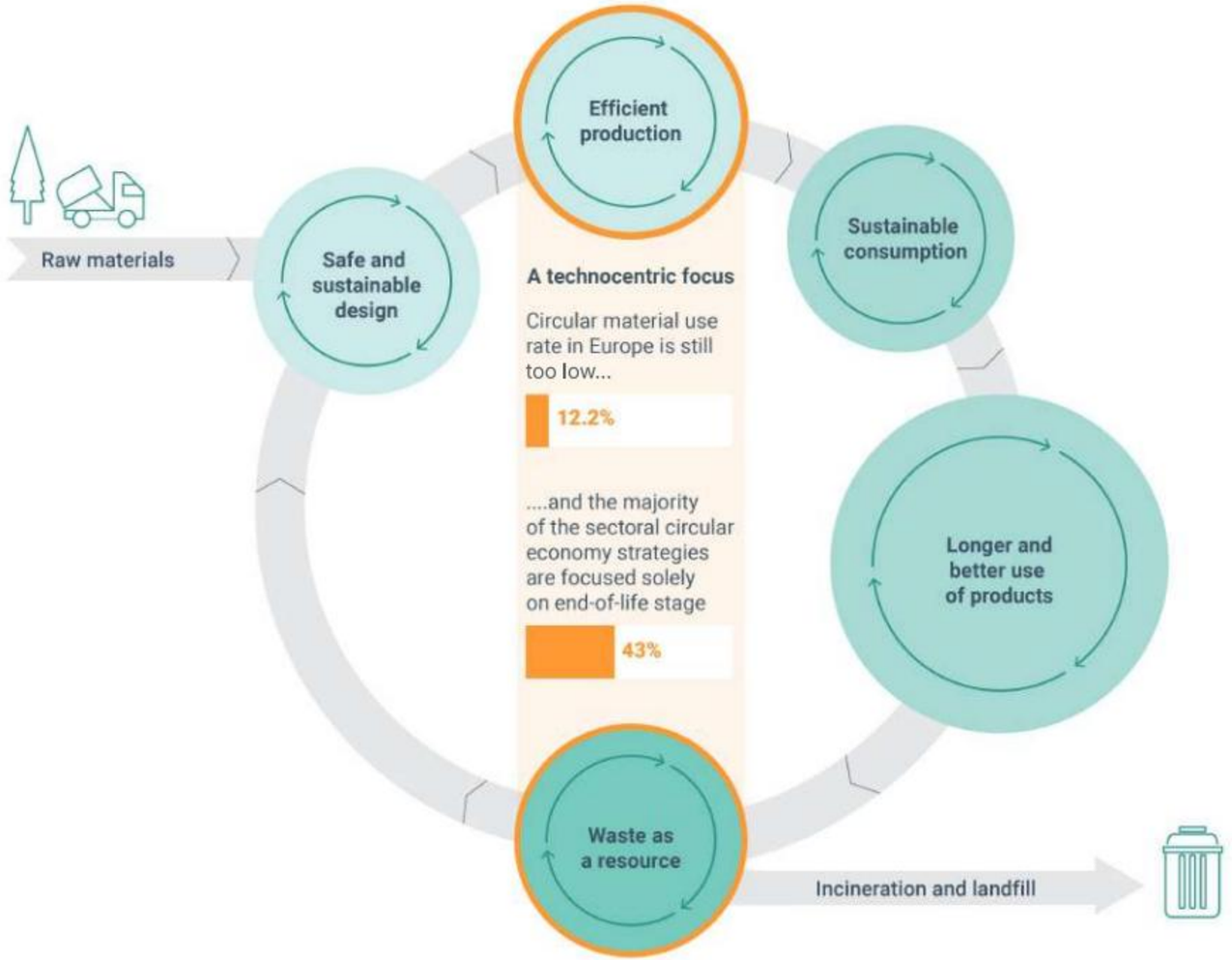
Source: Authors' calculations based on the background study.

Figure 3. Split of EU circular economy investments by sector, 2021 (% of total)



More Circular Flows, Same Linear Pressures

Figure 3: Limitations of the predominant technocentric focus on recycling and production efficiency.



Source: Future Impacts / Bertelsmann Stiftung: basic closed-loop cycle based on EEA 2024, Circle Economy 2024, Bahn-Walkowiak et al. 2019; data from de Pascale et al. 2023, EEA 2024

Efficiency lowers costs, which can lead to increasing production.

Recycling and waste-to-energy risk locking the economy to high-waste volumes.

Trust, Legitimacy & Policy Coherence

Elements for the EU's economic and social development

Respondents consider that the **standard of living** (45%), **fair working conditions** (44%) and **access to quality health care** (44%) are key elements for the EU's social and economic development.

QB2T In your opinion which elements are the most important for the EU's economic and social development? Firstly? And then? (EU27 - %)

Forgetting social dimension reproduce same unsustainable patterns of linear model.

Societal Vision or Technical Agenda?

Vision: *Reducing the need for resources in the first place*

"The circular economy … reduces waste, resource use and pollution" and "reduces our consumption footprint and emissions.“ Going circular means **using fewer natural resources** and reducing dependence on imports of raw materials. It means producing less and so **releasing fewer greenhouse gas emissions**, thus reducing our impact on the environment and nature.
EU Council

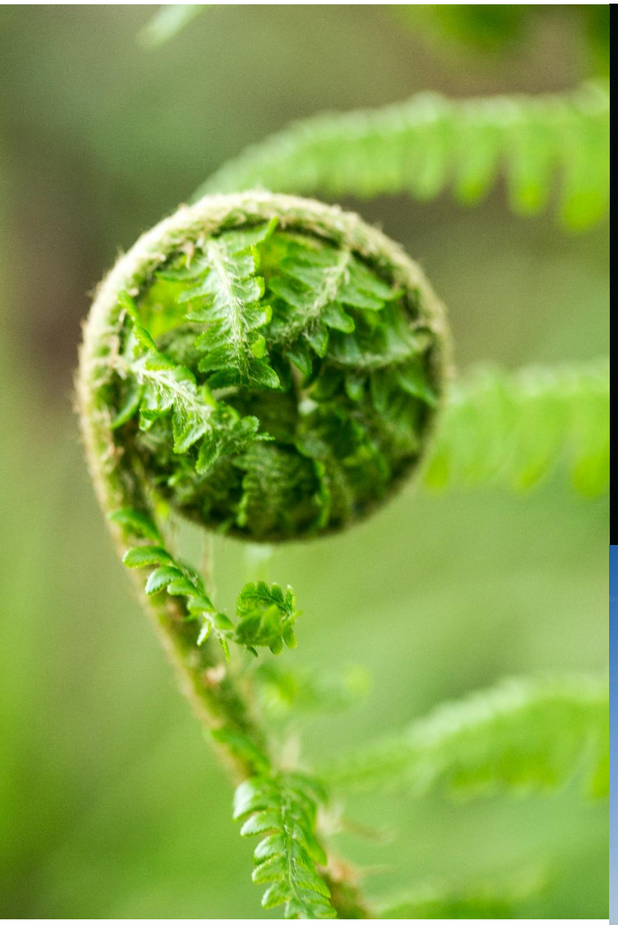
“To achieve a truly circular economy we must decrease our need for new raw materials in everything that we produce and consume.”
EEA

Implementation: *Making waste circular*

"The circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. … In practice, it implies reducing waste to a minimum. When a product reaches the end of its life, its materials are kept within the economy wherever possible thanks to recycling.“

EU Parliament

Going in Circles



Circularity is the how

Wellbeing is the why

Photo: Diana Parkhouse Unsplash

Wellbeing in EU´s Circular Economy

A **Wellbeing Economy** redefines what progress means. Instead of treating economic growth as an end of itself, it places quality of life at the centre of economic purpose. Prosperity becomes the ability of everyone to live healthy, secure, meaningful, and connected lives within planetary boundaries.

Example: social enterprises and businesses owned by their workers, community wealth building and living wages.

Pre-distribution

Purpose

Example: adopting a wider suite of success measures Beyond GDP, and visionary national development plans.

Example: Outcome budgeting and circular production and consumption.

Prevention

People-powered

Example: Citizen assemblies and participatory budgeting.

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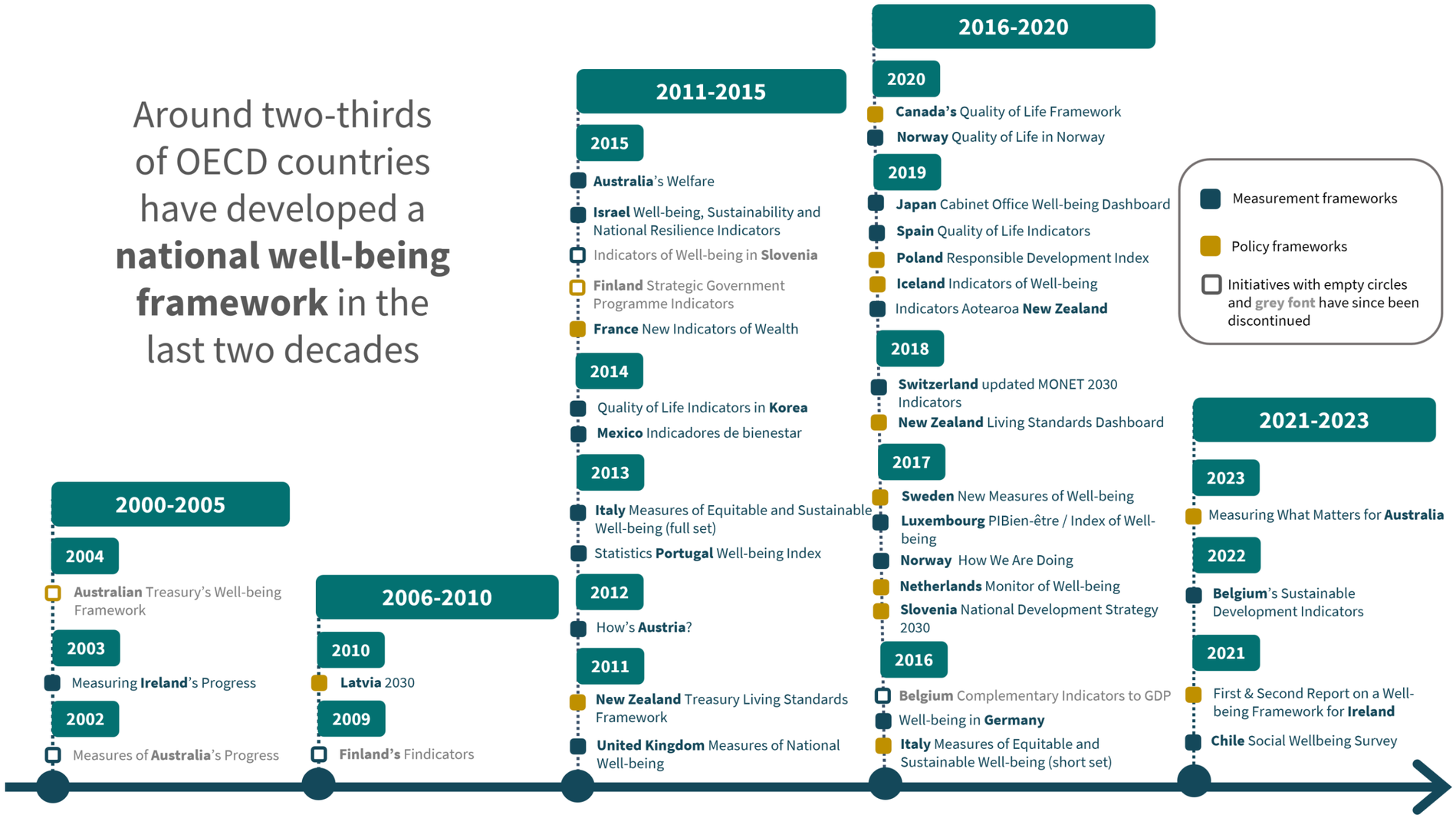
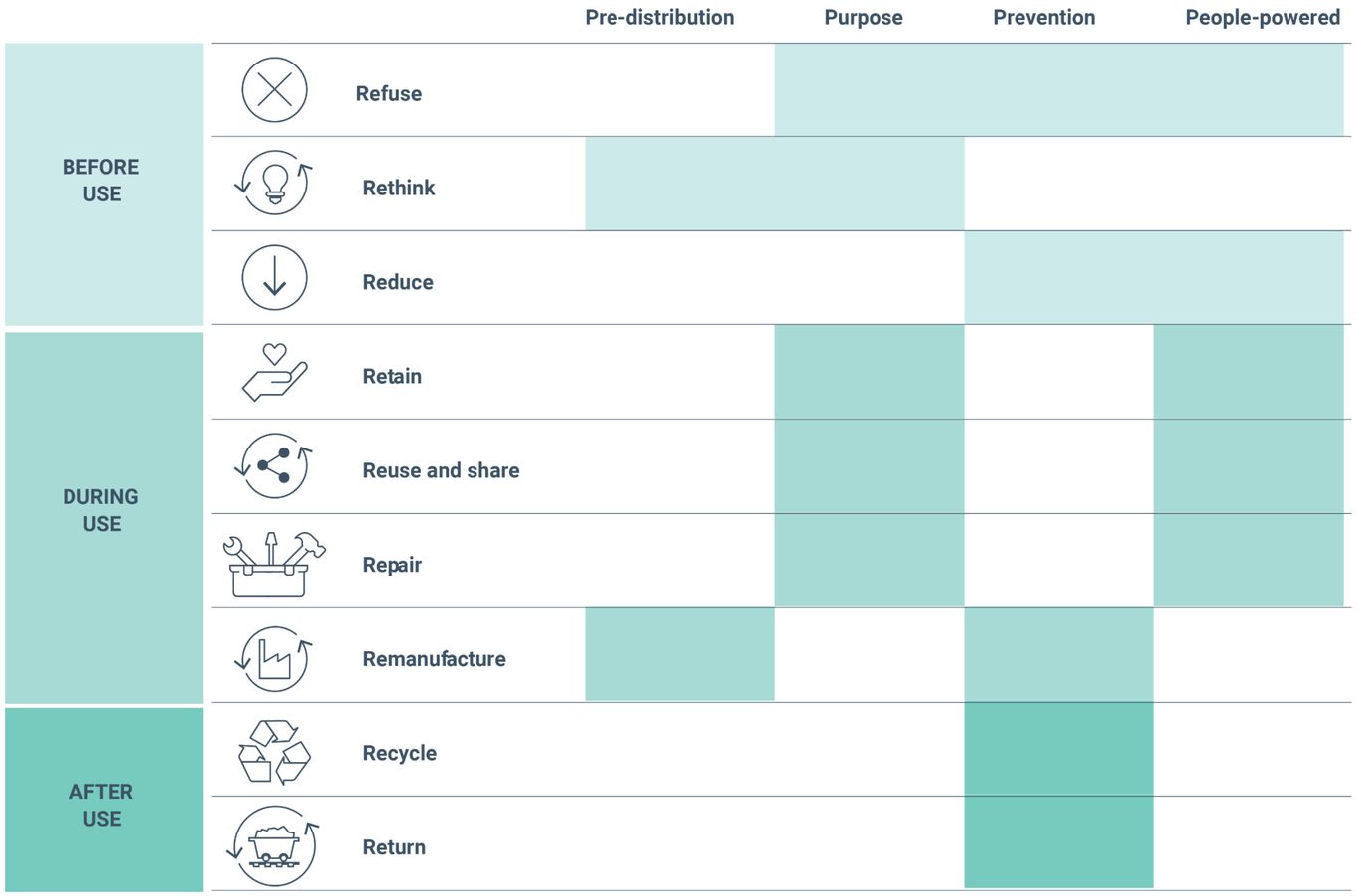
Wellbeing in EU´s Circular Economy

Around two-thirds of OECD countries have developed a **national well-being framework** in the last two decades



Two separate agendas?

Mapping of synergies between circular R-strategies and wellbeing economy P-principles

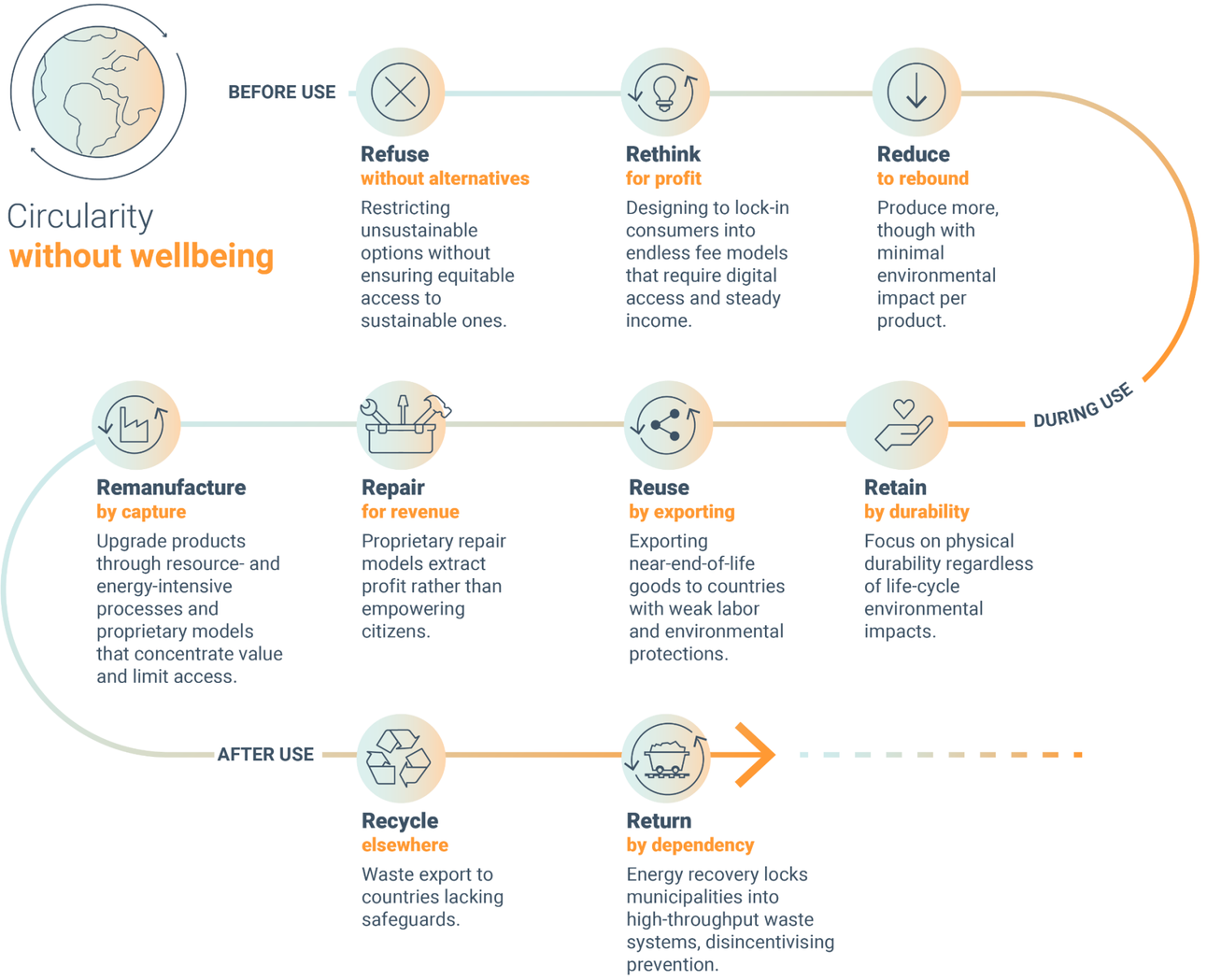


Engage early with material flows (pre-production):

- Greater potential to prevent environmental and social harms.
- Widest scope of rethinking business models.

Deliver wellbeing by using existing assets better—not by consuming more resources.

The risks of circularity without wellbeing



A transformative vision

Circularity
with wellbeing

BEFORE USE

Refuse
for purpose
Challenging over-consumption and its hidden harms.

Rethink
for shared-benefits
Designing products and services for sharing and co-ownership.

Reduce
equitably
Produce less, with minimal environmental impact and fair access.

DURING USE

Retain
emotionally
Build a culture of care and emotional attachment to products.

Reuse
for community
Empower communities for local reuse and sharing.

Repair
for all
Open repair models accessible in low-income areas.

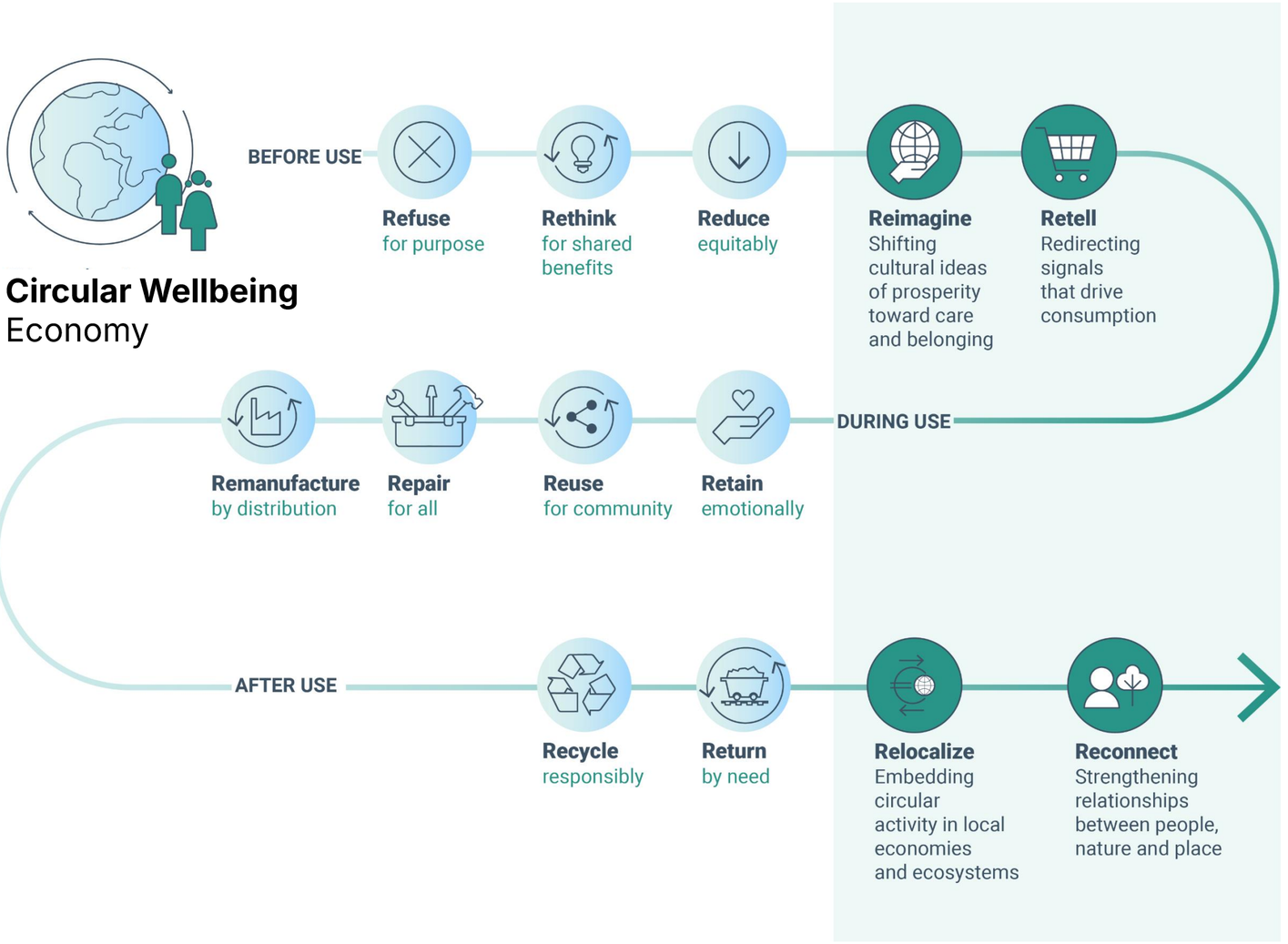
Remanufacture
by distribution
Upgrade products to extend their functional life, while minimising additional resource inputs and distributing skilled employment and economic value.

AFTER USE

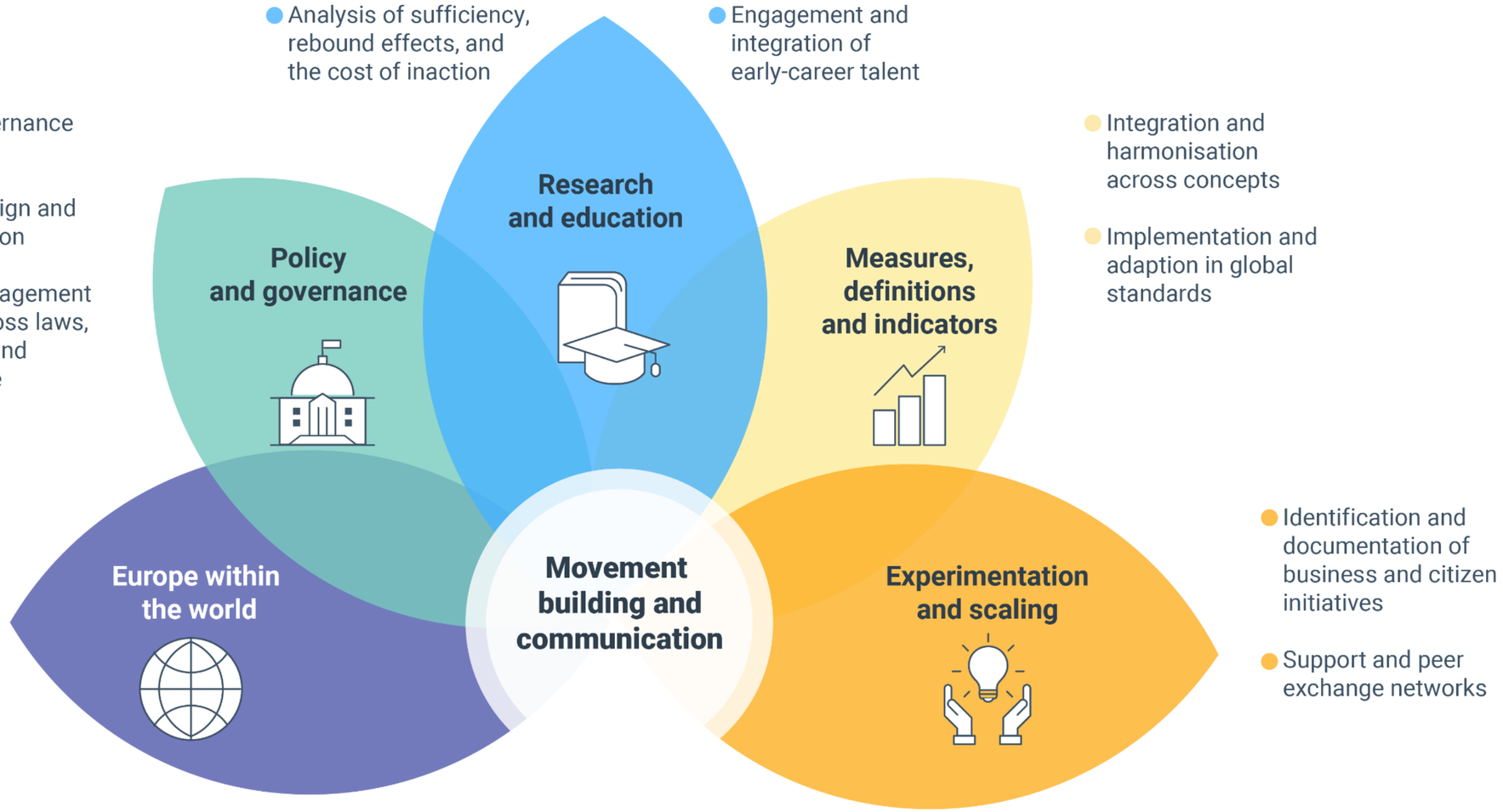
Recycle
responsibly
Closing loops while avoiding legitimisation of over-consumption.

Return
by need
Align return strategies with waste reduction targets.

A transformative vision



Movement building



Panel Reflections

Sandrine Dixson-Declève

Honorary President **Club of Rome**; Executive Chair **Earth4All**

Ladeja Godina Košir

Founder and Executive Director
Circular Change

Michael Weatherhead

Co-founder and Development Lead
Wellbeing Economy Alliance

Frank Siebern Thomas

Head of Unit
DG EMPL

Deep Dive into the Recommendations

BREAKOUT GROUPS – please select from the following options

1. Policy and governance in the EU
2. Movement building and communication
3. Experimentation and scaling: Enabling Circular Wellbeing in Practice
4. Indicators and measurement
5. Europe in the World

Reflections from the groups

- What partnerships can move this recommendation forward?
- What are the next steps for action?

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Thank you!

Please get in touch to explore further: hello@hotorcool.org

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