



Output 4

Activity 1 Learner's guide

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The starting point of the desk research is based on the informal dialogues with SMEs. The method of the analysis is a form of secondary research, namely desk research. The aim is to extend and to ensure the correct contextualisation for the development of the self-scan and learning materials.

The COVID-19 crisis accelerated the need for modernisation and digital transformation of training systems in Europe. CIRCULAR SME SCAN (CSS) connects this with a circular economy which is a strategic approach to a more green economy in support of European economic recovery.

Circular, sustainable, environment-climate friendly operation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) results in their competitive advantage over their rivals. However the over 25 million European SMEs encounter challenges in grasping these opportunities, as they do not have the knowledge, matching financial, non-financial resources that large companies have to make the due changes. As these enterprises constitute the main body of the business ecosystem in participating countries, a strategic alliance between them and circular economy experts has to be forged. This, especially in the COVID pandemic, generates awareness on and illustrates that outstanding quality, inclusive, digital vocational education tools on circular skills and competences are beneficial for this group.

The main goal of CSS, in support of innovative practices in digital era, aimed at creating a self-scan and learning platform that develops SME circular economy skills-competences by focusing on four main areas of entire SME circularity value chain (supply-acquisition, operation-production, retail, waste stream analysis).

The main results and outputs of the project are:

1. **A self-scan, which is an online tool for SME owners and managers to assess their current level of circularity and redirects to multiple tools, strategies and connections to apply a more circular approach in their current business models.**
2. **A platform which includes:**
 - a) **Local connections: Becoming more circular is not something one can do on their own. It requires collaborations, synergy and co-work. The platform includes access to several valuable connections in the relevant field of work or region, to support SMEs and guide them in their circular pathways.**
 - b) **To get a clear picture of how other SME owners and managers like you are upfronting the challenge of becoming more circular, Circular SMA Scan includes inspirational stories and clear examples, small and large, of other businesses.**

These are complemented with Stakeholders supporting Guides, which will help you in making the turnaround for the SMEs you support and support them in their efforts to become more circular. This guide is one of these.

Chapter 2 – the CSS guides





The CSS guides target different groups, representing the different stakeholders with the common denominator that all are interested and open towards the innovative methods in the service of circular SME operations.

The present guide is part of this effort and a wider set of guides developed for each of the SAGA stakeholders.

CIRCULAR SME SCAN learner's guide, supports the learners and explains in detail how to use the self-scan and learning materials and platform independently but is also inspires and motivates the representatives of the target groups to use the scan and engage in the learning platform.

CIRCULAR SME SCAN guide for VET: focuses on trainers and training organisations by sharing with them the project approach and the way on how to integrate the topics of SME circularity into the training courses they offer in the area of SME development and skills-competency training.

Supporting SMEs to become more circular: aimed at all those organisations and bodies that can support the SMEs in becoming more circular and how they can take stock of the CSS results to do so. Despite the difference between several of the identified stakeholders in the underlying reasons, all have reasons for wanting SMEs to become more circular. This is the guide that will help them in this effort.

CIRCULAR SME SCAN policy brief: set of guidelines for policy makers assisting them in addressing the uptake of good/best practices in circular SME scanning. The brief also elaborates on how to provide training and education in this SME circularity.

Chapter 3 – Target Group

The specific guide is created for the Circular SMEs Scan users, who use the CSS Self-Scan online space learners to learn more about circularity, it aims to advise them on how to use and take maximum advantage of the Circular SMEs Scan online resources. Additionally, the objectives of the Learner's Guide are to:

- a) to present methodological guidelines to learners that are going to undertake the CSS Self Scan and the subsequent use of the online materials provided,
- b) to support learners in the learning process and finally
- c) to advise on how to use and take maximum advantage of the online space.

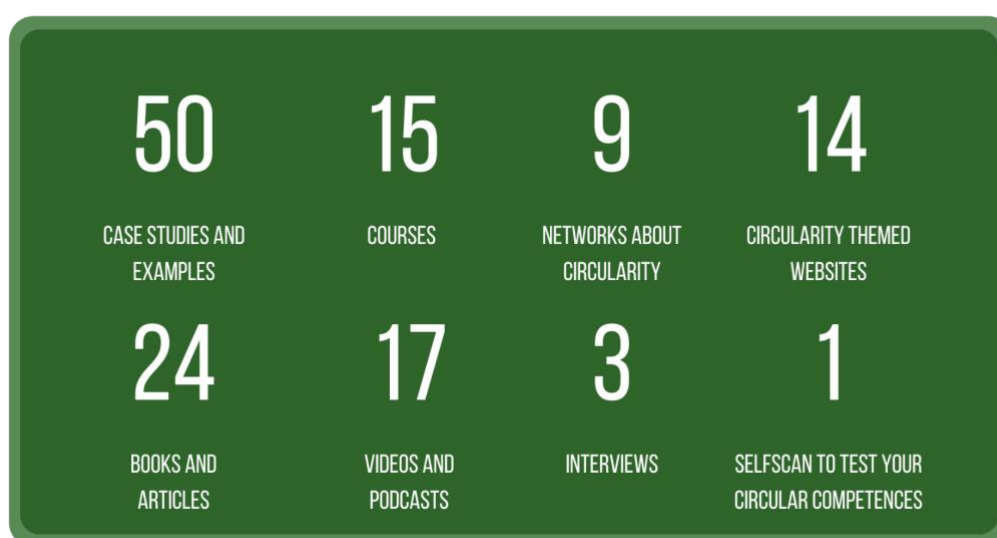
Because the project consortium wanted the learners to make the most of their CSS Self Scan experience, this specific guide had been created to help them learn how to navigate to the website in an easier and more effective way. The guide covers topics such as: navigating in the website, accessing the Self Scan and the use of said CSS Self Scan.



Chapter 4 – How to use the CSS Self Scan and online platform

As a first step we recommend you to use the CSS Self Scan to evaluate and assess the current circularity levels of your business or organisation. Through a set of questions on the a range of processes you will be able to gain insight into how you are doing with regards to circularity.

Once you have obtained the results you are guided towards the online platform where you can find multiple resources which will inspire, help and support you in improving the circularity of your business or organisation. Of course you can also go directly into the platform and search what you are looking for.



More concretely, the platform offers access to:

- **Examples/best practices:** These are real cases that have been selected to illustrate the possibilities of circularity in business and in particular in SMEs. They are intended to serve as inspirational examples and complementary training material.
- **Courses:** We have compiled circularity training courses on the topic of circularity, these will be helpful if you want to go deeper into a specific topic or item, or simply want to learn more about circularity beyond what is offered by CSS.
- **Networks:** defines existing networks which are active in the field of circularity and which can support you, they also have their own publications and reports in the majority of the cases. These will be helpful resources for more information if you need it.
- **Websites:** contains relevant links related to the topic of circularity in SMEs, the sites offer different contents and a wide range of information on the topic.
- **Books/articles:** Contains references to further reading on the topic of circularity for business, in particular SMEs. Here you can find books, articles and very relevant guides to investigate and learn everything about this topic.
- **Videos/podcasts:** As it's not all about reading, we have collected also multimedia content for more information and enhanced learning.
- **Interviews:** includes relevant testimonials on circularity in which different aspects of this topic are explained in more detail.





The ones that have used the CSS Self Scan and the platform are positive about our offer, here are some references:

“I have found learning materials and exercises that I can apply to my own company's day-to-day operations with a small investment”.

“You can find other projects, additional courses, articles, exercises. The most important materials on the circular economy are available in all formats in one place”.

“Everything has a source, everything is referenced, and is accompanied by pictures!”

The acquired information and acquired methods can be well utilised during adapting circular activities and/or increasing circularity in SMEs

“I had a good time looking for the sources that are most useful and instructive for me. Nice to be able to do a bit of research for yourself this way. Also nice to see examples from other countries”.

“Overall, it looks very good and you can find everything well with the filters. But if I have a company myself that I want to share my experience with as a best practice, I don't see an opportunity to add myself”.

“I was less aware than I thought of the steps I was taking, so it was good to be shown a mirror”.

Chapter 4 explains how to navigate and use both of the tool

Chapter 4 – Instructions for the CSS self-scan tool and platform

CSS PLATFORM Learner's Guide

This is the main page of our project where you will have an overview of everything we have to offer. You will be able to access all the contents as explained in the screenshot below.

CSS Home Page  <https://circularsmescan.eu/en/home>



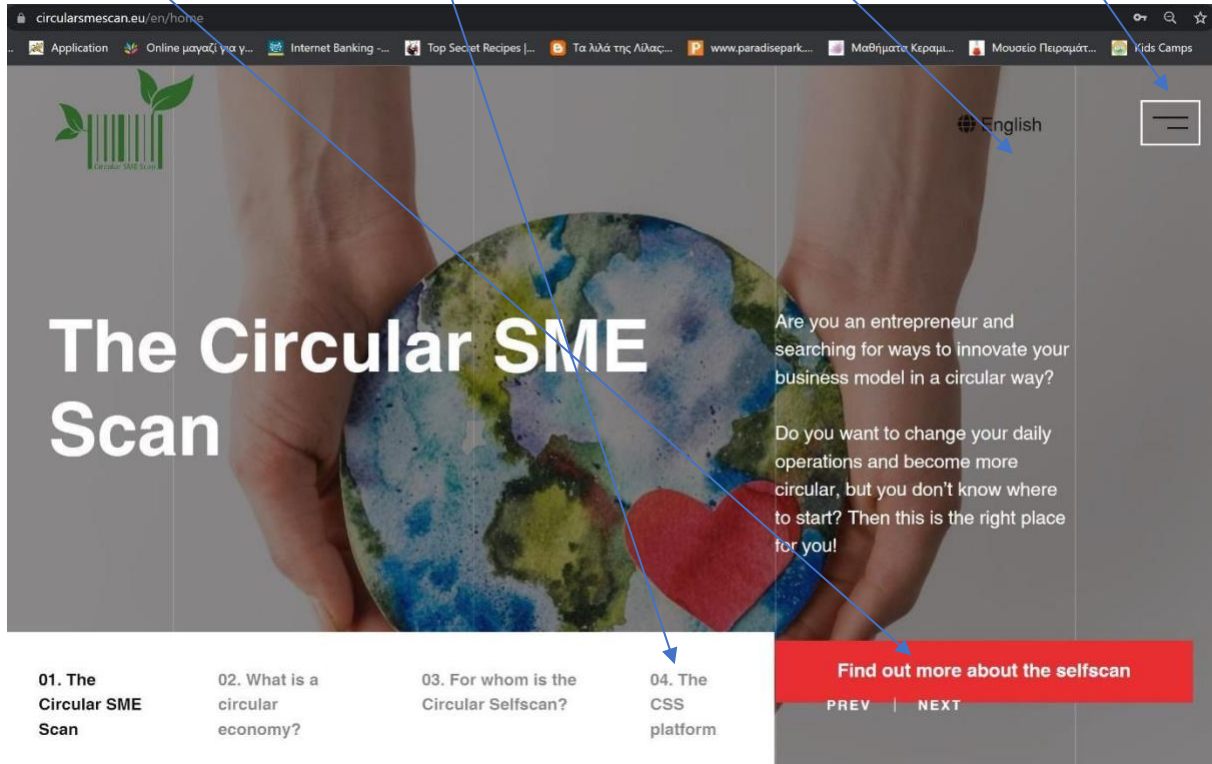


SELFSCAN

CSS PLATFORM

LANGUAGES

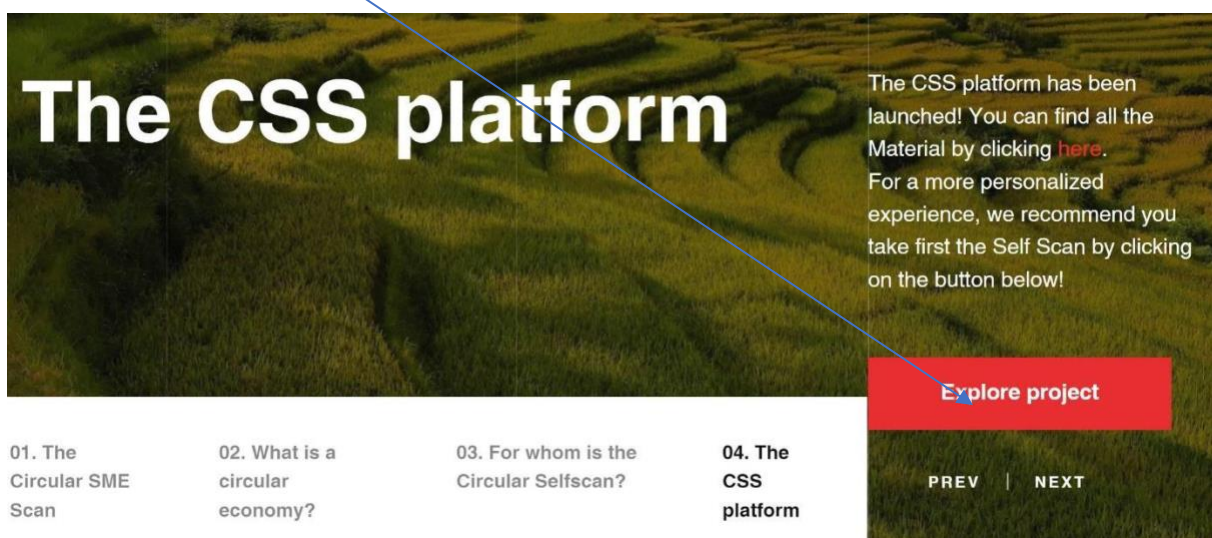
MENU



4.1. CSS SELF SCAN Tool

To access our CSS Self Scan, you can do so from the project's home page, where you will have to follow the steps indicated in the screenshot.

Self Scan assessment



When you access Self Scan, there will first be a question to find out in which field of work your company operates. After this question the Self Scan will start.

Choose Assessment options



As an entrepreneur it can be quite challenging to understand how you can become more circular. Where do you want to start? What are your options? The questions seem endless and the answers can feel intangible. To help you as an entrepreneur, the Circular SME Scan partnership has developed the Self Scan. This scan is a sort assessment which will help you asses your company based on four processes:

- Extraction (Acquisition process)
- Manufacturing (Waste management)
- Assembly (Production and transformation)
- Retail (Customer relation & logistics)

Self Assessment

Click the **Self assessment** and proceed answering the questions

Self Assessment

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Where is your company located?

- Netherlands
- Hungary
- Spain
- Other

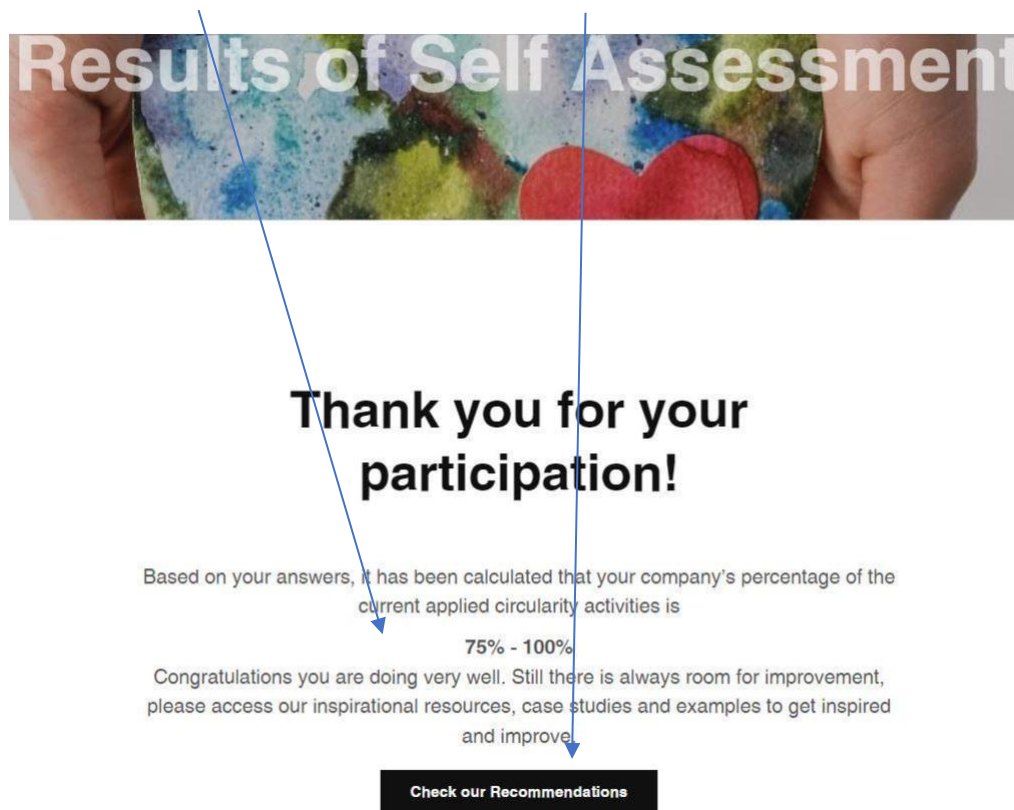
In which of the following sectors does your company operate?

- Plastic
- Biomass
- Food
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Consumer goods



Once the Self Scan is finished, results will be displayed indicating your company's circularity percentage based on the answers you have provided. This level will be an indication of whether your company has potential for improvement in terms of circularity.

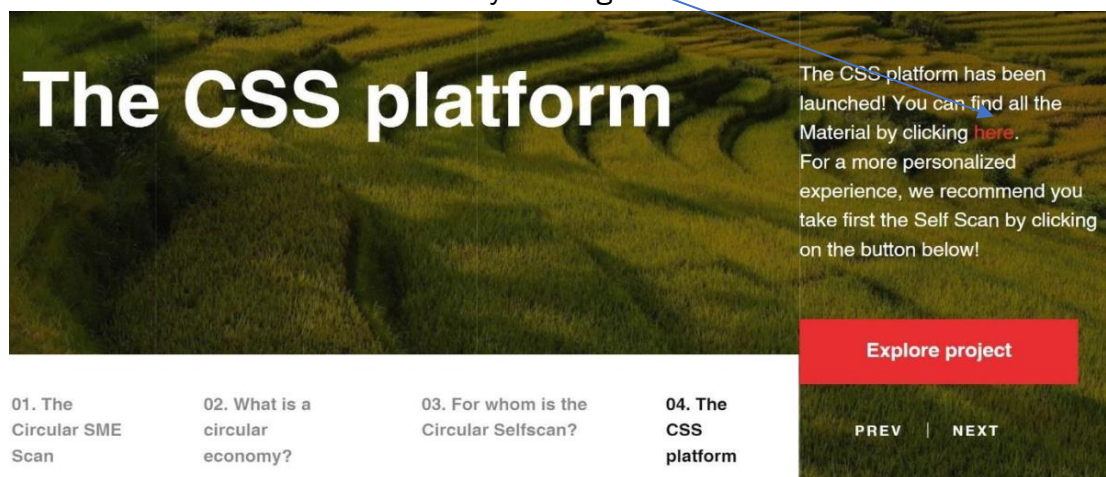
Results of Self assessment and Recommendations



4.2. CSS PLATFORM MATERIALS

To access the materials it is as simple as doing so from the menu or from the link shown in the screenshot.

You can find all the CSS materials by clicking

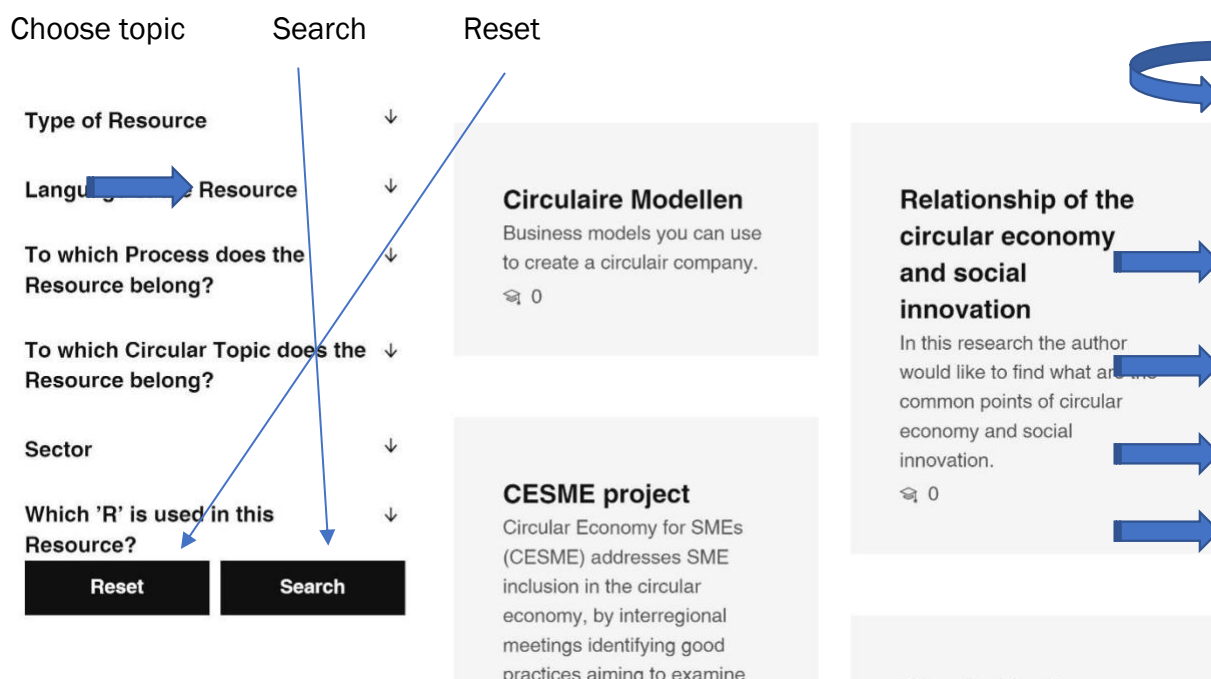


or from the Menu by clicking Material option



4.3. Materials Searching Machine

Once you have reached the section where you will find our materials, this is what you will see. On the left of this screen you will see a menu to filter the materials based on the different aspects shown in the screenshot. On the right hand side you will see the different training contents developed so that you can select the one that suits you best at any given moment.





Chapter 5 – Concluding Remarks

As you have seen the results from the Circular SMEs Scan (CSS), these are versatile enough to provide useful tools and contents for anyone who wants to learn about circularity in the entrepreneurial world, and the use of the materials is easily adapted to different kind of learners with different levels of knowledge about circularity. We already have given some ideas on how to use them, but there are some more things which are good to bear in mind:

- When learning circularity using The Circular SMEs Scan (CSS) we recommend not only to use the materials on the project web, but it also explore further accessing the websites, courses and networks provided with in order to further enhance your knowledge of circularity.
- In case you are working in a company or have the opportunity to do so due to a training internship, put into practice what you have learnt in Circular SMEs Scan and try to see the circular potential of the company you are in.
- Through our networks you will be able to access discussions on circularity on different websites that carry them out. Try to participate and ask as many questions as possible, there are many circularity experts out there who will be willing to help you with what you don't know and listen to what you have to contribute.
- Try to make the most of all the training content we have collected in the Circular SMEs Scan project. There is a material for every occasion if you know how to use it! (e.g. you can listen to our podcasts on circularity while making your lunch).

