



CIRCULAR WEEK 2025

The Circular Shift: Business Reinvented **Student Competition for Developing a Circular** **Transformation Strategy for a Selected Corporation**



1. Information about Competition

Organising entity: Instytut Innowacji i Odpowiedzialnego Rozwoju

Duration: 22.04.2025 - 07.11.2025

Competition Final: 04.11.2025

Target Group: Undergraduate and graduate students from all universities in Poland

The competition is organized in cooperation with universities across Poland, including:

- AGH University of Science and Technology / Polish Academy of Sciences
- Kozminski University
- Lodz University of Technology
- Silesian University of Technology
- SGH Warsaw School of Economics
- SWPS University
- Lazarski University
- University of Warsaw

2. Problem Description

Although steps have been taken for many years to move away from the wasteful "take – make – dispose" model, these changes are occurring far too slowly to meet the challenges facing our planet. One of the main obstacles to more responsible consumption and production is the reluctance of multinational corporations to change their business practices. As a result, they help maintain the current status quo among millions of consumers worldwide.

An alternative to the current business model is the circular economy. This approach aims to maximize economic value and retain the value of goods within the limits set by our planet's resources. The circular economy closes economic loops throughout the entire product lifecycle. Products can be reused, repaired, repurposed, manufactured from recycled materials, and produced using renewable energy, among other possibilities. All these options aim to increase resource productivity, benefiting not only the environment and society but also the competitiveness of businesses.

More efficient resource use by the world's largest corporations can transform entire industries. Implementing a so-called circular transformation—closing economic loops within a company's operations and its broader business ecosystem—can have far-reaching effects. The scale of action by major market players can significantly expand the market for circular products and services, encouraging others to follow suit and ultimately leading to a closed-loop model across the entire economy.

Such initiatives start with simple ideas supported by thorough analysis. This is the essence of the student competition to which you are invited. We ask you to describe an innovative change in a product, service, value chain, business model, etc., that could significantly contribute to closing economic loops in the operations of a selected multinational corporation (without naming it) or an imaginary corporation based on existing global entities. This change should promote more sustainable



resource management within the chosen company and potentially its stakeholders. We are looking for innovations that will increase resource productivity, enhance the company's competitiveness, and simultaneously reduce negative externalities.

3. Competition Process:

Stage 1. RECRUITMENT

Dates: April 23 – July 31, 2025

Interdisciplinary teams or individual students register their interest in participating in "The Circular Shift: Business Reinvented" competition. Individual students will be connected to form teams.

Stage 2. EDUCATION

Date: June 2025

Teams will have the opportunity to participate in an online lecture on the concept of the circular economy, circular business models, and practical examples of circular transformation. The session will also provide an opportunity to ask organizational questions.

Stage 3. PREPARATION OF COMPETITION PRESENTATION

Deadline: October 10 2025

Participating teams must submit their competition presentation by October 10, 2025, in accordance with the requirements described in the "Competition Presentation" section.

Stage 4. SELECTION OF FINALIST TEAMS

Date: October 20, 2025

The jury, as described in section 5, will select five teams to be invited to the competition final. At this stage, only minor modifications to the presentation are allowed, such as clarifying the idea or making visual changes.

Stage 5. COMPETITION FINAL

Date: November 4, 2025

The final and a hybrid conference for students will be held on November 4, 2025, with invited international guests, including representatives from embassies, the European Commission, and the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, as part of Circular Week. The five previously selected finalist teams will participate. The final will begin with introductory lectures by circular economy experts. Each team will then present their project to the jury and audience. The jury will select the top three teams, including the grand prize winner.

Prizes for finalists:

- Grand Prize: 5,000 PLN
- Second Place: 3,000 PLN
- Third Place: 2,000 PLN



The winning project will also have the opportunity to be presented on the main stage at the most important Circular Week 2025 conference—the European Sustainability Congress—on November 5, 2025.

4. Competition Presentation

The main task is to prepare a presentation of the solution according to the following outline. The subchapters are to guide the suggested content and may be used at the team's discretion.

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. Company's Description
 - 1.2. General Context
 - 1.3. Analysis of the Current Market Situation
2. Our Approach
 - 2.1. Description of the Proposed Innovation
 - 2.2. Differences Compared to the Company's Current Operations
3. Results
 - 3.1. Economic Effects
 - 3.2. Environmental Effects
 - 3.3. Social Effects
4. Options for Implementation
 - 4.1. Proposed Method or Implementation Plan
 - 4.2. Resource Flow Diagram
 - 4.3. Financial Flow Diagram
 - 4.4. Marketing plan
5. Barriers and Opportunities
 - 5.1. Identification of Bottlenecks
 - 5.2. Technologies Facilitating Implementation
 - 5.3. Potential Legislative Challenges
6. Summary and Next Steps

The presentation should not exceed 25 slides. The expected presentation time is 15 minutes. Please send the PDF file to: g.pulawska@innowo.org by October 10, 2025.

5. Evaluation Criteria and Jury Composition

Submissions will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Implementability** – Feasibility of implementing the solution (25 points)
2. **Comprehensiveness** – The description should consider the characteristics of companies in selected industries, real operating conditions, and proven technologies (25 points)
3. **Innovation** – Proposed solutions should not directly replicate existing symbiotic applications but may significantly develop them (20 points)
4. **Effectiveness** – The solution should deliver results that can convincingly encourage companies to implement them (30 points)



The five best teams will be selected based on the jury's scores in these four categories. The jury, consisting of a representative from INNOWO and the co-organizing universities, will independently evaluate each presentation. After summing the scores, the finalist teams will be selected.

Final presentations will be evaluated according to the same principles. The extended jury will include, in addition to the President of INNOWO and university representatives, delegates from embassies, the European Commission, the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, and other circular economy experts.

6. Example Ideas for Circular Transformation of Selected Corporations

- A global soft drink producer switches entirely to aluminum packaging!
- 10% discount on purchases for a one-week delivery delay from a leading e-commerce platform!
- The world's largest taxi corporation introduces cost reduction through a "ridesharing" option!