

Strengthening the private sector’s innovation potential for the implementation of a circular economy in Colombia.

ProUSAR

Context

Growing industrialization and a rising urbanization have increased pressure on natural resources and exacerbated their environmental and social impacts in Colombia. At the same time, Colombian companies show a reduced diversification rate with regard to products with high added value and a relatively low participation in international value chains. These factors severely limit the possibilities of many companies to acquire state-of-the-art technologies and initiate innovative processes along their production chains, which would allow them to increase their efficiency in terms of resource use and close the economic circle.

Against this backdrop, and given its admission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2020, Colombia has been prioritizing the sustainable restructuring of its economy, pushing particularly the efficient use of resources. In line with the National Strategy for Circular Economy (ENEC) adopted in 2018, Colombia has officially initiated the transition from a linear economy towards a circular one, a process that is oriented along two main streams of action: i) industrial material and mass consumption products and ii) packaging material. In addition to that, new legal frameworks seek to regulate the use of plastics and electrical and electronic equipment and emphasize extended producer responsibility in particular.

Although the country has made significant progress when it comes to waste management and the inclusion of the recycling population into the disposal circuit ("downstream practices"), the new challenge is directly related to production and usage patterns ("upstream practices").

ProUSAR centers its work on 3 value chains:

- Textiles
- Containers and packaging
- Electrical and electronic equipment

Objective

ProUSAR enhances innovation opportunities that emerge in the context of so-called "upstream" practices, which include waste **prevention**, utilization optimization procedures, and circular economy approaches. As such, the project targets various activities along the entire production chain of selected value chains, such as the design of products, their inputs and components, the production process, as well as their final use. In close cooperation with our implementing partners, and especially with the private sector, ProUSAR not only seeks to make the value chains of textiles, packaging, and electronic devices more resource-efficient, the project simultaneously also achieves important social, environmental, and economic benefits for Colombia.

Project name	ProUSAR: Sustainable and efficient use of resources in Colombia
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Colombia
Lead executing agency	Presidential Agency for International Cooperation of Colombia (APC-Colombia)
Duration	08.2022 – 06.2025
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	8: Decent work and economic growth 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure 11: Sustainable cities and communities 12: Responsible consumption and production 13: Climate action



Output and expected results

- Output 1. Improve the **intersectoral dialogue** between **public and private actors** to implement innovative "**upstream**" **circular economy practices** in selected value chains.
- Output 2. Implement **innovative and economically viable circular economy measures** in the private sector that are both resource and climate friendly.
- Output 3. Increase awareness about **sustainable production and consumption patterns** in the context of the circular economy by fostering **knowledge partnerships**.

What we have reached so far

- We are implementing plans to strengthen the National Plastics Roundtable and the Textile Circularity Roundtable, building intersectoral tools to facilitate the transition to a circular economy based on innovation at the source.
- In June 2023, we supported the Corona Sunset Festival in Colombia, which received the Blue Standard Certification from Oceanic Global, providing recognition for strategies that promote the elimination of single-use plastics. This initiative was possible thanks to the implementation of ProUSAR's first innovative measure in Packaging, which consisted of piloting the use of reusable cups at a massive event.



- In cooperation with the project Iniciativa Bogotá 2.0, we established a collaboration with the *Parche Costurero* of the Procrear Foundation to develop a methodology for creating circular business models focused on the re-manufacture of clothing. This way, we support the generation of productive linkages between vulnerable population groups and companies in the textile sector and facilitated the launch of the first textile remanufacturing collection at the largest fashion fair in Latin America, Colombiamoda, in July 2023.



Next steps

- Knowledge partnerships will be established between national and international actors to multiply knowledge about a circular economy in the three value chains in Colombia (output 3).
- A results-based financing fund will be launched to recognize companies' efforts in circular economy issues in the three value chains (output 2).
- Innovation will be introduced in line with the individual circumstances of each value chain. Nonetheless, the exchange with our various partners coincides in one orientation:

"Innovation is not only thinking about new technologies... there are innovations in products, services, use, processes, marketing... A range of options to work for the circular economy."

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Inexmoda, A member of the *Parche Costurero* at Colombiamoda 2023.

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