

SDG VS. CIRCULAR ECONOMY

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e the global objectives that leaders adopted in 2015 to **eradicate poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity** for all as part of a [new sustainable development agenda](#). The **17 goals and 169 targets** that make up the SDGs are being adopted by both the public and private sectors across the globe.

In parallel, the [Circular Economy](#) (CE) is an **alternative economic framework** that has been gaining momentum over the past few years and offers a new approach to [achieving sustainability, local, national and global](#). The growing interest in CE is reflected by the many stakeholders, including [governments, cities and large multinationals](#), which implement practices to accelerate the transition towards a circular economy.

Despite the fact that the concepts of CE and SDG are relatively similar – both understood as the **quest for** social and economic prosperity within the natural limits of our planet – the link between both agendas is not as obvious as it may seem. In fact, the term “circular economy” is not included

in the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), where the SDGs are included and detailed.

A [recent research study](#), published in the [Journal of Industrial Ecology](#), analyzes the interrelationships between CE and the SDGs. This study, based on an extensive literature review, **examines to what extent CE-related practices are relevant to achieving the SDGs**, as well as **the points of conflict between the two**.

“CE practices”, as mentioned in the study, **“can be applied as a ‘toolbox’ to achieve a large number of SDGs”**. These practices comprise a wide range of business models, including reuse, repair, renovation, remanufacturing, recycling, industrial symbiosis or biomimicry, among others.

Below are the **5 types of relationships between CE and the SDGs**:

- **The SDGs directly benefit from CE.** Certain CE-related practices can help achieve *21 targets* of the SDGs. For example, industrial processes focused on water purification, renewable energy systems, or waste recovery, contribute to achieving SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (clean affordable energy) and SDG 8. (decent work and economic growth), respectively.

- **The SDGs benefit indirectly from CE.** Implementing CE practices contribute positively, albeit indirectly, to *28 targets* of the SDGs. For example, recycling, local agriculture, or waste prevention, would indirectly bring us closer to SDG 1 (end of poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 14 (underwater life).

- **The SDGs facilitate the adoption of CE practices.** *52 targets* of the SDGs contribute positively to the transition towards CE at a global level. Specifically, access to education, social inclusion, or practices to mitigate climate change would be contributing to achieving SDGs (4 (quality education), SDG 10 (reduction of inequalities) and SDG 13 (action for the climate)).

- **The SDGs have no, or very weak, relationship with CE practices.** *35 goals* of the SDGs, among the 169 existing ones, have no existing relationship, or it is very weak, with respect to CE. For example, the contribution of CE to SDG 3 (health and well-being) – including the reduction of child mortality through an improvement, among other things, in water treatment – exists, although it would be relatively limited.

- **Cooperation is necessary to achieve the SDGs to help promote CE.** In the latter case, almost all the SDGs have targets that contribute to promoting and fostering the transition towards a CE.

In short, **the transition to a CE is a necessary process to achieve most of the SDGs**. Likewise, **progressing towards the SDGs can help encourage the transition towards a CE**. Despite this reciprocal relationship, at Naider we believe that for the 2030 Agenda to support a transition towards a CE, the actions aimed at achieving the SDGs must be carried out taking into account the principles of CE. Otherwise, the actions aimed at achieving the SDGs could simply be based on "linear practices", which, despite being less harmful to the environment than current practices, may not be enough to encourage the necessary transformation towards a sustainable society.

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There are no comments yet.