



Accelerating Circularity in the Built Environment: Key Highlights from the World Circular Economy Forum 2025

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As part of the **World Circular Economy Forum 2025 (WCEF2025)**, an impactful **Accelerator Session** united global leaders and innovators to explore how *measurement, policy, and practice* can collectively drive the transition to a **circular built environment**.

The session focused on aligning efforts to implement circular strategies that contribute to a **near-zero-emission, resilient built environment**, setting the tone with a compelling opening statement:

"We are not just building for today—we're harvesting the future. Our built environment should serve as a bank of materials and resources for future generations."

Driving Circularity through National-Level Policy

The session opened with two pivotal announcements designed to empower governments:

- **Actions Menu of the Global Framework for Action**
Developed by the One Planet Network at UNEP and aligned with Buildings Breakthrough Priority Action 2 on Demand Creation, this new tool offers practical guidance for integrating **sustainable and circular public procurement** into construction value chains. It empowers both governments and industries to create demand for **circular, low-emission building solutions**.
- **National Circularity Assessment Framework for Buildings**
Developed by UNEP, UNOPS, and UN-Habitat with support from the **Government of Finland**, this first-of-its-kind framework provides a national-level methodology for **measuring circularity** in the built environment. Pilots in **Senegal** and **Bangladesh** have delivered key insights on material reuse potential and data baselines.

Circularity in Practice: From Policy to Real-World Solutions

The session also spotlighted actionable solutions currently driving progress:

- **10 Whole Life Cycle Recommendations for the Buildings Breakthrough**
This set of recommendations enables scalable, replicable circular solutions. Featured case studies included:
 - *Prioritise Retrofitting: Renata Sampaio Ferreira Building*, São Paulo, Brazil
 - *Material Circularity: Seismic Retrofitting of Heritage Structures*, Lalitpur Metropolitan City, Nepal
 - *Design for Circularity: Low-cost Prefabricated Houses*, Uganda, Habitat for Humanity International
- **Circularity Transition Indicators for Buildings**
Developed by the **World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)**, this tool helps project developers measure **circular performance** throughout the building lifecycle.
- **CiCoSa Toolkit and Implementation Guide (UN-Habitat)**
Targeting **Sub-Saharan Africa**, this toolkit supports scalable, localized circular construction waste management.

Global Expert Insights

Key priorities emphasized during the session included:

- **Retrofitting** as a cost-effective, high-impact strategy to extend building life and reduce emissions.
- **Local circular practices** need stronger **policy support** and **quality assurance** to scale.
- **Circularity begins at design**, requiring flexibility, reuse, disassembly, and renewable materials.
- Greater investment in **localized R&D** to optimize upcycled materials.
- The importance of **context-specific metrics**, **youth inclusion**, and **extended producer responsibility**.

Conclusion: Circularity Is Already Happening—Now It Must Scale

The Accelerator Session demonstrated that **circularity in the built environment is already unfolding globally**. To achieve systemic impact, greater **coordination**, **investment**, and **political will** are now essential to scaling these innovations.

With new **measurement tools, policy frameworks, and practical solutions**, governments and stakeholders have a clearer pathway forward than ever before.

Organizers and Collaborators

This session was co-organized by the **GlobalABC Materials Hub Circular Built Environment Working Group** (Ministry of the Environment of Finland, RMIT University, Habitat for Humanity International), the **One Planet Network**, and the **Life Cycle Initiative**, in collaboration with:

UNOPS, UN-Habitat, Kenya Green Building Society, French Ministry of Ecological Transition, Ashok B. Lall Architects, Metro Arquitectos, Habitat for Humanity International, Lalitpur Metropolitan City of Nepal, WBCSD, Government of Chile, Ministry of Environment of Colombia, Asian Development Bank, Municipality of Walvis Bay (Namibia).

About Regenera Luxury

At **Regenera Luxury**, as the world's first and leading certification for regenerative luxury boutique hotels and retreats, we believe that true luxury is **regenerative**—restoring the health and well-being of both people and planet. We promote innovations such as **circularity in the built environment** as a core pillar of **regenerative luxury hospitality and tourism**. We celebrate the leadership shown during the World Circular Economy Forum 2025 and encourage our partners and members to integrate these practices.

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