

# The Role of Design in Circular Procurement

Spring 2015, series of workshops on circular procurement and design – organized by Rijkswaterstaat (NL)

Starting point:

- Importance of mobilizing the spending power of public institutions for achieving the transition to a circular economy;
- Policy and practical guidelines for circular public procurement have been developed;
- Technology and know-how available / under way.

Achieving 'circular procurement' is still difficult!

Circular economy gives a new emphasis on the role of design, because of the focus on materials, and the importance of extending lifespans, redesigning for recycling, remanufacturing etc. So we decided to bring them in to a series of workshops, together with other stakeholders.

What stakeholders took away from the workshops: meeting outside of competitive context; learning to understand each other's perspectives; learning to understand the complexity, the need for building trust, and the need for a shared narrative.

We discovered circular procurement is not (just) about the product value chain. In building circular value chains, there is a strong case for *product-service systems*:

- potential for resource efficiency;
- more complex working environments and individually differing needs require tailor-made solutions;
- cost reduction in a time of restrained public budgets.

PSS must be specifically designed and developed to deliver sustainability. Design must look at the whole production and consumption cycle. Key dimensions of the required transformation are:

- the technical design,
- the business model, and
- organizational changes.

These all have to be integrated into the design process. What is more, the designer becomes a 'hinge' or link between the world of production and that of the user and the social/societal surroundings. Design skills like storytelling, visualising, and prototyping can be very useful here.

Design, then, is no longer about making chairs, but about creating interaction and experience in integrated systems.

What is needed now:

- Design skills and design thinking are needed in the circular economy, and also in public procurement
- Building relationships and trust
- Impartial brokers
- Enabling space for experiments
- Brave individuals
- Supportive management

This poster draws on :

Vezzoli et. al, Product-Service System Design for Sustainability (2014)

Dahmani et. Al, Industrial Transition through Product-Service Systems (2013)

UNEP-10YFP Technical paper: Using product-service systems to enhance sustainable public procurement (2015)

This is CRISP, CRISP magazine #5, (2015), downloadable from: [http://www.issuu.com/crispnl/docs/csp\\_magazine\\_\\_5\\_32\\_\\_screen\\_\\_issuu\\_1](http://www.issuu.com/crispnl/docs/csp_magazine__5_32__screen__issuu_1)

The series of Rijkswaterstaat Circular procurement workshops (2015)

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