



WESTERN BALKANS
CIRCULAR ECONOMY HUB

CIRCULAR ECONOMY AWARDS 2026

CONTENTS

- About the Awards
- Award categories
- Why should you apply?
- Timeline
- Application process and links
- Selection process



ABOUT THE AWARDS

The Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub (WBCEH) serves as a regional platform connecting businesses, institutions, organisations, and individuals to foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, and networking in support of the transition towards a circular economy in the Western Balkans.

Through its activities, the Hub supports stakeholders that are already implementing circular practices, developing circular products and services, or integrating circularity into their business models, while also encouraging and empowering those beginning their transition journey.

The Circular Economy Awards is one of the flagship programmes of the WBCEH, created to **recognise and celebrate pioneers, innovators, and changemakers** advancing circular economy solutions across the region. The Awards honour **outstanding achievements in implementing circular initiatives, projects, products, services, and business models** that contribute to sustainable resource use and circular transformation.



The Awards recognise stakeholders across **seven different categories**, showcasing inspiring examples of circular innovation and leadership from across the Western Balkans.

AWARD CATEGORIES

1. Circular Economy Pioneer Award

Recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to advancing circular economy concepts through leadership, advocacy, or entrepreneurship.

2. Corporate Leadership in Circular Economy

Honors companies that have seamlessly integrated circular economy principles into their core business strategies, demonstrating significant resource efficiency, reductions in waste and resource consumption.

3. Innovative Circular Design Award

Celebrates professionals and organisations that create innovative products or services, emphasising resource efficiency, longevity, reparability, and recyclability. These efforts support sustainable consumption and help shift markets toward circular economy principles.

4. Municipal Circular Leadership Award

Acknowledges municipalities ambitions implementing effective circular economy initiatives that enhance sustainability and community engagement.

5. Civil Society Circular Economy Award

Awarding NGOs working to accelerate the transition to CE, raising awareness, supporting policy implementation.

6. Circular Economy Education and Research Award

Acknowledges educational and research organizations that have significantly advanced knowledge or technology in support of circular economy objectives through research, projects, curriculum development and similar.

7. Circular Start-Up Award

Rewards start-ups that have developed innovative solutions for circular products, services and business models.

Why should you apply?



- Reflect on your achievements, results, and refine your communication by going through the entry process.
- The process of applying can motivate your team and stakeholders to see the benefits of the organisation's circularity efforts.
- The application process itself can be educational, helping you identify areas for future improvement.

Benefits for finalists and winners

- Showcase your success and be recognised as a circular economy leader.
- Gain visibility and attract attention from potential investors, partners, and customers who prioritise efforts for transitioning to circularity.
- Ensure your staff and team are rewarded and recognised for their efforts and contribution.
- Access a vibrant community of like-minded individuals and organisations, fostering connections and collaborations.

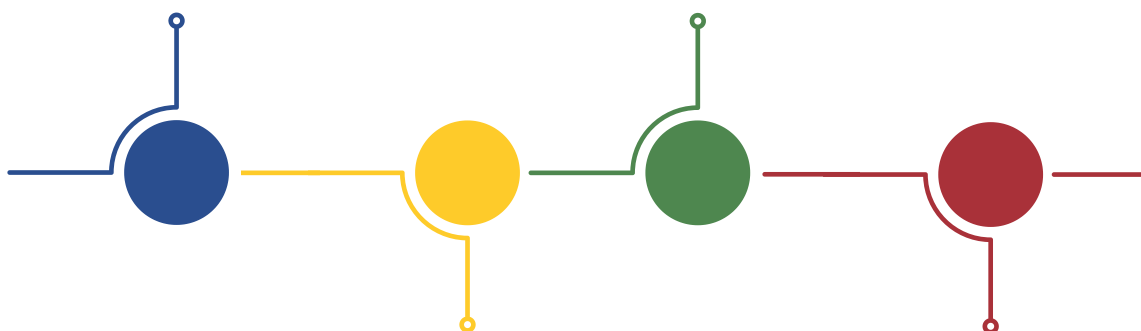
TIMELINE

15 May

Applications open

September - October

Review process and selection of best applicants



10 September

Applications close

October - November

Circular Economy Awards Ceremony

APPLICATION PROCESS

- To apply for the call, interested parties must **complete the application form** which is a separate Google form for each category. Each category application consists of several sections that represent different criteria such as integration of circular economy principles, measurable outcomes, demonstrated leadership and similar. At the end of the application you have the option to submit supporting material in the form of documents, reports, photos, links from social media posts and PR texts etc. which is highly recommended in order to substantiate your application;
- To be **eligible**, an entrant must demonstrate their effort and activities related to circular economy within the last 1-3 years, as well as tangible results and outcomes. While the initiative's results should fall within this time frame, the initiative itself may have been running for a longer duration.

APPLICATION LINKS

[Circular Economy Pioneer Award](#)

[Corporate Leadership in Circular Economy](#)

[Innovative Circular Design Award](#)

[Municipal Circular Leadership Award](#)

[Civil Society Circular Economy Award](#)

[Circular Economy Education and Research Award](#)

[Circular Start-Up Award](#)

SELECTION PROCESS

- The selection of winners will be done by a **jury of 5-10 members** from the Institute for research in Environment, Civil Engineering and Energy, Helvetas North Macedonia and the Chambers of Commerce from the Western Balkan Six;
- One winner from each category will be selected. Winners will be publicly announced on the **Circular Economy Awards Ceremony** which will take place physically in one of the six Western Balkan countries or online. Winners will additionally be announced on our social media and website;
- You are allowed to submit an **entry for multiple categories** if you can ensure that the results and impact align with the specific category criteria.

CONTACT



For any questions regarding the application process, selection criteria or the final ceremony, please contact us at **regionalcehub@gmail.com**

<http://wbcirculareconomy.com/>

The Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub is led by the Institute for research in environment, civil engineering and energy, and supported by Helvetas and Sida within the RECONOMY programme.



WESTERN BALKANS
CIRCULAR ECONOMY HUB

Launched in 2025, the Circular Economy Awards became the **first regional programme** dedicated to recognising circular economy leadership across the Western Balkans. The call attracted 55 high-quality applications from across the region, highlighting the growing momentum of circular innovation, entrepreneurship, research, community engagement, and sustainable business practices.

Key figures of the first 2025 edition

- 55 applications received from all 6 Western Balkan economies
- 7 award categories
- 7 additional “Catalysts for Circular Change” recognitions
- Awards ceremony held on 15 October 2025 within the FINNO Regional Conference – Digital. Green. Sustainable. in Budva, Montenegro

2025 Winners

1. Circular Start-up – **Recycling Albania** (AL)
2. Civil Society Circular Economy Award – **Rilindja Gjelbër** (XK)
3. Circular Economy Education and Research Award – **Brunilda Kosta** (AL)
4. Circular Corporate Leadership – **Hemosan** (MNE)
5. Innovative Circular Design – **3D Soba** (MNE)
6. Municipal Circular Leadership – **City of Smederevo** (RS)
7. Circular Economy Pioneer – **Radovan Nikčević** (MNE)

