

Linda Grieder



The circular economy has been widely touted as a crucial part of the European Commission's commitment to the Paris Climate Change strategy and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

'Thanks to the circular economy, our food systems can deliver better nutrition and combat climate change. The circular economy is about smarter use of resources. It is about jobs and growth where people live. It is about applying research in concrete ways. And here a lot still needs to be done,' Carlos Moedas, EU Commissioner for research, science and innovation, said in 2018 at the Food2030 conference in Brussels.

The challenge at the moment is that numerous by-products emerge out of the value chain that are typically disposed of as waste, despite considerable potential to be repurposed for other uses.

This desire to use resources more efficiently inspired graduate, Linda Grieder, to pivot into entrepreneurship and create RethinkResource in 2016. The company aims to help organisations make more efficient use of their side and waste streams, and therefore bring resources that might otherwise have gone straight to landfill back into meaningful use.

Rethink Resource began life as a consulting business that provided support to companies looking to adopt circular technologies and business models. They achieved traction in the marketplace almost immediately and quickly began working with companies such as **Coop** to help develop new and more sustainable products. This early success, coupled with support from the MassChallenge Switzerland accelerator, provided crucial validation of the work they were doing, which in turn helped develop the revenue stream to allow the company to be largely self-financing from the very beginning.

The company continued to innovate with the creation of a digital trading platform for industrial side-streams, called Circado. Its aim is to provide a digital hub for the exchange of side-streams and facilitate the secondary sourcing of materials. The platform is still at the prototype stage and therefore the functionality is still fairly basic, but the response from the industry has been positive.



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The EIT Community has been a crucial partner in developing this ecosystem. RethinkResource was introduced to the EIT Community by Buehler's Ian Roberts, who in addition to advising the company, was a partner at EIT Food. After a transition period when the company learned how the EIT works and how they could benefit from the connections, they are now working on six projects through the EIT with a number of industrial partners, including Nestlé and Buehler.

'It's an extremely valuable network for us, as most of the EIT Food partners could become our customers or partners,' Grieder says. 'EIT membership really helps develop our network and supports us to work with industry on projects we're interested in.'

Cross-sector Work

The very nature of the circular economy means that it's vital for RethinkResource to have a good network of partners to pull into the ecosystem that will be powered by Circado.

'It's common for waste from one industry to be a valuable resource in another, especially if they can come out of production at as high a value as possible,' Grieder says. 'For instance, food side-streams can be used in cosmetics or in the packaging sector, so it's really important that we create a diverse ecosystem.'




Pomegranate peels

Create Offer

Details

Description: Pomegranate peels to fresh

Minimum amount: 0 t

Maximum amount: 2 t

Target price: 40 CHF/t

Incoterms:

Sample Required: Yes

Buy Request expires on: 2019-09-30

Material

No material specified

Shipping Information

Long-Term Vision

The funding structure of these projects also helps maintain the ambition Grieder has of remaining self-sufficient and not relying on external venture funding to grow the business. This desire to be self-sufficient ensures that the company has to grow sensibly and be careful with cash-flow, which Grieder believes to be the right strategy for their long-term future.

The European Commission adopted an action plan to move towards a circular economy back in 2015, and this emphasis on sustainable economic growth makes Europe a good place to build a business such as RethinkResource. Grieder believes the EIT's ecosystem has been the ideal environment to create and grow the business.

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Website: rethink-resource.com/

Twitter: twitter.com/rethinkcircular

Country: Switzerland

Innovation Community: EIT Food

