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Regional Civil Society-Industry Dialogue Report



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1 Introduction

The objective of the Regional Civil Society-Industry Dialogue Report is to distil key lessons learnt and from the Regional Civil-Society-Industry Dialogues, thus give direction to the COBALT closing conference for guiding stakeholder debate. Three Regional Civil Society-Industry Dialogues were organised in 2014 with the key objectives to:

- To foster a targeted European dialogue between civil society and industry, on topics related to raw material efficiency and sustainable raw material use;
- To facilitate the exchange of ideas and solicit feedback on research needs; and
- To inform relevant EU policy and to recommend strategies for improved communication between civil society and industry

The first Regional Dialogue took place in Madrid, Spain, on 12 June, 2014, and was focused on sustainable raw materials management in the Iberian Peninsula and the role of industry and consumers in driving a circular economy. The second Regional Dialogue, organised in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 8 October, 2014, addressed the role of industry and civil society in moving towards a more sustainable mineral production. The third Regional Dialogue took place in Bucharest, Romania, on 27 November, 2014, and focused on the role of industry and civil society in driving sustainable consumption and production in Eastern Europe. Key thematic outcomes of the Dialogue are presented in Chapter 3.

The Regional Dialogues had an interactive format (described in Chapter 2) allowing participants to engage with the speakers and amongst each other. They included a combination of

- presentations, which helped framing the dialogue from different perspectives and providing specific practical examples,
- as well as guiding interactive sessions which allowed participants to interact closely with both similar and different stakeholders.

Participants were separated in inter- and intra-stakeholder group discussions to engage with the topics under discussion, and to facilitate active knowledge sharing and exchange.

The main outcomes of the Regional Dialogues and lessons learnt from their interactive format (keynote speakers, best practices, inter- and intra- stakeholder dialogue sessions) are described in Chapter 4 of this report. There, key lessons learnt from preparing and organising the events, from the engagement of participants with speakers and from the intra- and inter-stakeholder dialogue sessions are illustrated. Based on these lessons learnt, thematic and organisational guidelines regarding the upcoming closing conference are drafted in Chapter 5.



2 The COBALT Regional Civil Society – Industry Dialogues: objectives and format

2.1 Dialogue objectives

The Regional dialogues aimed to bring together a mix of different stakeholders, particularly, but not exclusively civil society and industry representatives, and to facilitate active interaction and exchange of ideas, with the objective of encouraging further collaboration and partnerships.

The Regional Dialogues, in particular, aimed to focus on topics of common regional interest, engaging stakeholders involved in relevant issues at a regional level. Three regions of focus were selected at the outset of the project, and a regional dialogue event was held in each. In the project consortium there are three partners, each with experience, networks and language competences within one three regions. In each region of focus, invitations were sent to target countries, and participants were selected from these countries, as specified below:

1. Iberian Peninsula (including Portugal and Spain): Madrid, June 12 2014
2. North Sea (including Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, Sweden and the UK): Copenhagen, October 8 2014, and
3. Eastern Europe (including Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia): Bucharest, November 27 2014

The three Dialogues were organised in collaboration with project partners, each with experience, networks and language competences within one of the three regions.

2.2 Overview of dialogue format

The Regional Dialogues included the following format:

- Presentations framing the dialogue from different perspectives and providing specific practical examples,
- As well as guiding interactive sessions, which allowed participants to interact closely with both present stakeholders.

All three Regional Dialogues were structured along three interactive sessions:

- Keynote presentations from different stakeholder groups (policy, industry and civil society) to help frame the thematic context from the perspective of each key stakeholder, followed by intra-stakeholder discussion;
- Examples of practical experiences and case studies presented by representatives from different stakeholder groups, followed by discussion and exchange; and
- Inter-stakeholder discussion, reflecting on future pathways for multi-stakeholder collaboration in relation to the discussed topic.

The lessons learnt from the dialogue format are outlined in Chapter 4.



3 Key thematic outcomes

The Regional Dialogues allowed participants to reflect on current efforts, strategies and examples fostering (systemic) changes towards a more integrated circular economy (in the Iberian Peninsula Dialogue), a more sustainable mineral production (in the North Sea Dialogue) and a more sustainable production and consumption (in the Eastern Europe Dialogue). As the shift towards a more sustainable raw materials management is already underway in many places, examples of innovative initiatives and best practices were presented during the regional workshops.

Participants discussed underlying factors and framework conditions which can foster or impede a more sustainable raw materials supply and use. For instance, new business models securing an effective transition towards a greener economy and a smarter use of raw materials emerge and need to be fostered and further developed through new types of cooperation. To that end, inter-stakeholder discussions provided valuable insights on the possibilities offered by an improved collaboration amongst the industry, civil society, policy making bodies and academia. Their specific expertise and inputs can drive change and could help bridging opposing interests towards creating common ground and synergies. For example, policy makers can benefit from the knowledge produced by industry, civil society and researchers when drafting policies. The industry can increase the legitimacy of its actions by collaborating closer with civil society, and by informing or involving citizens on their activity. Still, participants underlined that, in order to be effective, stakeholder collaboration needs tailor-made frameworks (such as networks), enabling conditions (transparency, trust) and arenas for an open dialogue (information sessions, participative workshops, etc.).

3.1 First Regional Dialogue: “Sustainable raw materials management in the Iberian Peninsula: the role of industry and consumers in driving circular economy”

The first Regional Dialogue took place on 12 June, 2014, in Madrid, Spain. Participants in the Dialogue reflected on the topic selected by the regional partners: the role of industry and consumers in driving a circular economy in the Iberian Peninsula. Although both ends of a linear raw materials value chain were of interest in the Iberian Peninsula (extraction for the increasing interest of re-boosting mining activities as reflected in the amount of commitments presented in the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) call; and recycling as the Iberian Peninsula is far from meeting the EU recycling targets in most of the waste streams), the regional partners decided to opt for circular economy as a more holistic topic focused on critical and scarce raw materials, which would encompass the whole value chain.

The Dialogue addressed key issues arising in the mining industry. This sector is a major driver for local economic development and growth in the Iberian Peninsula. As policy makers underlined in their presentations, several initiatives already exist to make extraction more environmentally sound and safe, such as tax incentives for exploitation royalties when improving social and environmental local performance. Participants expressed their concerns around the lack of efficiency in the recovery of certain raw materials at products' end of life. In this context, representatives from the mining and recycling sectors would benefit from a closer cooperation in conjointly addressing circular economy challenges.



Participants noted the lack of representation of civil society organisations in the decision-making arena. Nonetheless, civil society can bring valuable inputs to promote new business models (e.g. social economy models that drive a sustainable use of resources and waste, and effectively integrate people at risk of social exclusion); its expertise could be useful to other stakeholders in addressing existing gaps, questions and barriers towards a more sustainable raw materials management in the Iberian Peninsula.

3.2 Second Regional Dialogue: “Towards sustainable mineral production – the role of industry and civil society”

The second Regional Dialogue took place on 8 October, 2014, in Copenhagen, Denmark. Participants were invited to discuss the role of industry and civil society in driving a more sustainable mineral production.

The topic of the Dialogue was chosen in collaboration with the project team. After one EU and one Regional Dialogue each having focused on the entire raw materials value chain, the COBALT consortium decided that it was crucial to focus the second Regional Dialogue on mineral production. The topic suited perfectly the North Sea region which benefits from its proximity to the vast European market to the south, and the mineral wealth of the Fennoscandian Shield.

The keynote presentations underlined the idea that sustainable mineral production requires all three dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental and economic) be taken into account. Stakeholders need to seek the appropriate balance between these three priorities. One keynote reflected that mining companies make efforts to establish dialogues with civil society, informing citizens and NGOs through public information sessions. These initiatives can bring to the fore and help reduce social challenges arising in relation to mining projects (e.g. responsibility for safety standards). Legal and regulatory frameworks can help to anticipate risks and negative impacts and to address them in a more targeted way, for example through Environmental impact assessments.

However, simultaneously and continuously assessing the social, environmental and economic dimensions of mining activities in local contexts is a complex task. Therefore, participants agreed on the need to develop cooperation and to build up mutual trust amongst stakeholders in order to move towards more responsible and sustainable mining practices. National networks of sustainable mining (such as the Finnish Network of Sustainable Mining) were presented and discussed as good practices. They could be further developed and implemented elsewhere in the EU. The creation of such arenas (networks) can foster a more open and balanced inter-stakeholder exchange. The Dialogue also shed light on the benefits of a participatory approach, which can improve stakeholders’ commitment and understanding of various interests. However, the Dialogue shed light on potential challenges of such dialogue, as the Nora Kärr mine example showcased (e.g. foreign CSO opposition, undermining local perceptions, etc.).



3.3 Third Regional Dialogue: “Towards sustainable consumption and production – the role of industry and civil society in Eastern Europe”

The third Regional Dialogue took place on 27 November, 2014, in Bucharest, Romania. In this Dialogue, participants reflected on the role of industry and civil society in Eastern Europe in driving sustainable consumption and production. The choice of this rather broad topic was made in order to adapt the dialogue discussions to the regional “maturity” in terms of sustainability issues.

Throughout the discussions, participants noted that product sustainability is a complex goal which requires new production patterns and should take place via greater optimisation. They discussed the benefits of various initiatives in securing greener products along the value chain, such as improving the recycling potential of products, encouraging design-for-recycling initiatives, regulating the use of harmful substances, and enhancing recycling and collection rate.

In order to facilitate such shifts, participants suggested that the industry and civil society should use a more collaborative and integrated approach. Consumers also have a key role to play in enhancing the efficiency of these new platforms: sustainable production and consumption greatly depend on consumers being proactive and involved. Thus, they need to be informed in order to make decisions which will have a positive impact on the environment.

Participants reflected on the lack of enabling frameworks and tools for successful stakeholder collaboration. However, many underlying factors were mentioned as potential solutions:

- Rewarding best practices to provide incentives for greater cooperation;
- Improving transparency amongst stakeholders; and
- Defining and agreeing upon objectives and scope of actions to implement in a collaborative way.



4 Outcomes and lessons learnt from the Regional Dialogues

The structure of the Regional Dialogues served the overarching key objectives to engage participants with the topic at hand and to give them the opportunity to interact with colleagues from their own stakeholder group and, most importantly, with other stakeholders across the raw material value chain.

To begin with, lessons learnt from the preparatory and organisation stage of the dialogues are discussed. Subsequently, lessons learnt from the structure of the three overall dialogue sessions, and their contribution to achieving key dialogue objectives, are summarised below.

4.1 Engaging participants with the topic

4.1.1 Preparatory and organisation stage

Overall, the preparatory and organisation stage was key in ensuring successful dialogues. In the context of the Regional Dialogues, this stage was more challenging than in the EU Dialogues as it required constant coordination with the regional partners.

The organisation of the Regional Dialogues started 2-3 months before the event. The identification of the topic of the Dialogues was done in collaboration with the regional partners which had a better understanding of the themes of interest in the region. The partners also identified key stakeholders and participants using their own regional networks.

The preparatory work unfolded as follows:

- ✚ Identification of the overall topic

Topics of common regional interest in the three ex-ante defined project Region were elaborated by the project team. The chosen topics and the reasons behind their selection is detailed in Chapter 3.

- ✚ Preparation of a preliminary agenda

The topic chosen for each Regional Dialogue was then translated into a preliminary agenda. Based on the positive feedback received from stakeholders via post-event questionnaires and partners alike, the same agenda structure was used for all three Dialogues as follows:

| Timing | Session | Speaker |
|--|---|---------|
| 08:30-09:00 | Registration & welcome coffee | |
| 09:00-09:45 | Introduction to the project and workshop objectives | |
| 09:45-10:00 | Speed-dating and informal get together | |
| Session 1: Framing the dialogue | | |



| | | |
|---|--|---|
| 10:00-10:15 | Keynote 1 | |
| 10:15-10:30 | Keynote 2 | |
| 10:30-10:45 | Keynote 3 | |
| 10:45-11:00 | Discussion | |
| 11:00-11:30 | Coffee break | |
| 11:30-12:15 | Intra-stakeholder dialogue: roles, responsibilities and perspectives of different stakeholder groups with regards to more sustainable mineral production | |
| 12:15-12:45 | Presentation and discussion of group results | Rapporteurs from stakeholder groups |
| 12:45-13:30 | Lunch | |
| Session 2: Learning from practical experiences | | |
| 13:30-14:30 | Best practice 1 | |
| | Best practice 2 | |
| | Best practice 3 | |
| 14:30-15:15 | Discussion | |
| 15:15-15:30 | Coffee break | |
| Session 3: Future avenues for collaboration | | |
| 15:30-16:00 | Inter-stakeholder dialogue: pathways for multi-stakeholder collaboration to drive sustainable practices in mineral production | |
| 16:00-16:15 | Presentation and discussion of group results | Rapporteurs from intra-stakeholder groups |
| 16:15-16:30 | Outlook and conclusions | |

 Selection of targeted stakeholders

Targeted stakeholders were selected from an extensive contact list compiled by COBALT project partners, including stakeholders of all key groups and from the regional partners’ own stakeholder databases. The Regional partners’ stakeholder databases were very useful since most of the actual participants and speakers came from this list.

 Save-the-date email

The save-the-date email targeting stakeholders and outlining the topic and its relevance was sent 2 months before each of the Regional Dialogues. The preliminary agenda along with the COBALT Background Paper¹ were attached to the email.

 Selection of speakers

Keynote speakers and those presenting best practices were selected from the existing database or via a targeted Internet search to identify key regional-level players, particularly

¹ http://www.cobalt-fp7.eu/pdf/2013%20-%20opening%20conference/COBALT_Background_Paper_FINAL.pdf



those attending or speaking at other relevant regional and EU workshops and conferences. The project team focused on achieving a balanced representation of speakers from all stakeholder groups, in order to address the topic at hand from differing perspectives. The team exchanged with speakers on a regular basis, and most speakers were confirmed about a month prior to each event.

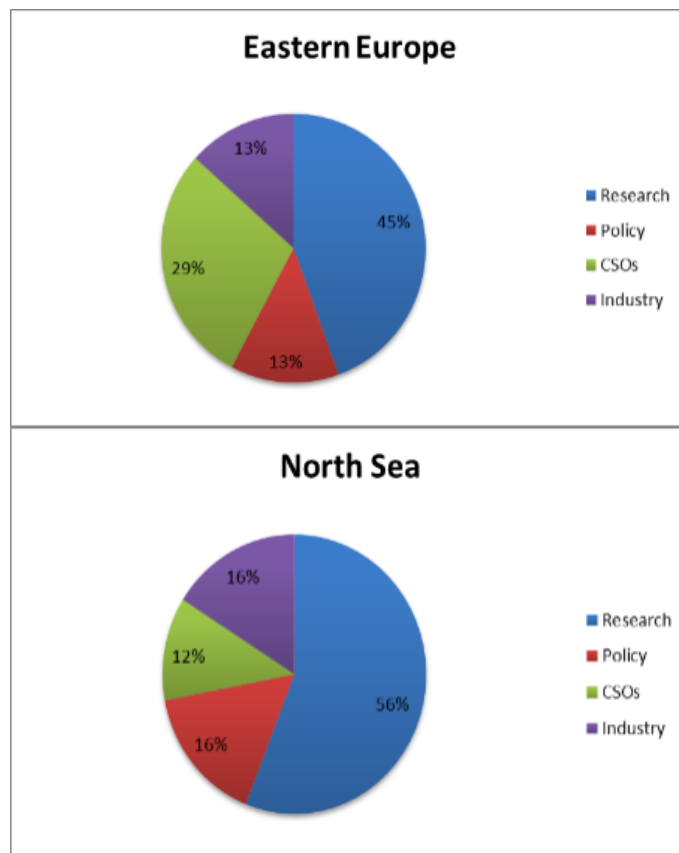
✚ Official invitation email

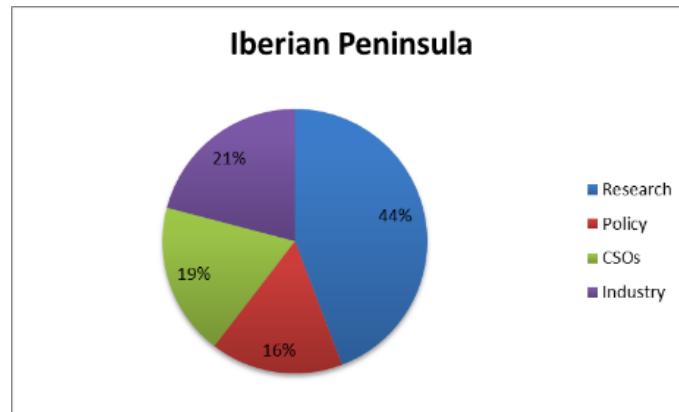
Roughly 3 weeks after the save-the-date email, a follow up email with a more elaborated agenda and the names of the first-confirmed speakers was sent to stakeholders. In the meantime, additional invitees were continuously identified and contacted by the team. Throughout the invitation process, the team replied to both positive and negative answers.

✚ Final reminder email with phone calls

The last three weeks before each event required a strong push for attendance, with follow-up emails and phone calls to invitees where needed. This is why a final reminder email was sent by the team with the final updated agenda. This final push was in most cases very successful in getting more replies from stakeholders and in balancing the mix of stakeholders.

The breakdown of each event’s participants by stakeholder groups is given below:





✚ Final email to confirmed participants

One week before the event, confirmed participants received a final email with the final agenda attached and a link to a pre-event questionnaire. As in the case of EU Dialogues, the pre-event questionnaire gave a general idea of participants’ expectations regarding the Dialogues and the type of stakeholders attending the event. The results of the questionnaires were presented at the beginning of each Dialogue by the project team.

✚ Thank you email and post-event questionnaire

Two days after the event, stakeholders who attended the event received a thank you email with the participant list with contacts attached in order to ensure that the exchange continues after the dialogue. A link to a post-event questionnaire was either attached to the email or sent separately. Follow up calls were organised in order to have as much feedback as possible on the event from participants.

✚ Dialogue summary and Policy Brief

After each Regional Dialogue an executive summary of the workshop was drafted, integrating key outcomes of the day and the written consultation. A policy brief drawing on each Regional dialogue and outlining the most important policy related results of the workshops were also drafted. These two deliverables along with the presentations of the speakers, the agenda and the participant list were uploaded on a dedicated sub-site on the website setup. Subsequently, participants were informed via email when the documentation was uploaded online.

Lessons learnt:

- The role of the regional partner in selecting speakers and targeting potential participants is crucial. Most of the participants and speakers were from the regional partners’ database and network.
- Communication with potential speakers and participants is more efficient when done in the native language by regional partners.
- Similarly to the EU Dialogues, dedicated team resources for regular follow-ups in the last month are necessary.
- For the Regional Dialogues organised in Eastern Europe, it is important to prepare in advance materials to disseminate to participants such as roll-ups, pens, notebooks etc. in order to meet participants’ high organisational expectations.



4.1.2 Keynote speakers

A minimum number of three keynote speakers, representing different stakeholders' perspectives (policy, civil society and industry), have successfully framed the Regional Dialogues: four keynote speakers at the first Regional Dialogue in Spain, three keynote speakers at the second Regional Dialogue in Denmark and five at the third Regional Dialogue in Romania. The structure of the sessions previously presented in Chapter 4.1.1 was adapted to the number of keynote speakers in order to ensure that participants were not overwhelmed with too much information during the morning session.

In these Regional Dialogues, the keynote speakers who presented during the morning session were more “high profile” than those present at the EU Dialogues; they included representatives from national Ministries, advisers to the Prime Minister, etc. In order to ensure that the content of each presentation was compatible with the chosen thematic discussions and with the allocated speaking time, all speakers were briefed on the structure and thematic direction of the Dialogue and were asked to send their presentations in advance.

Furthermore, in order to reduce language barriers and encourage exchanges, it was decided to recur to simultaneous interpretation during the third Regional Dialogue in Romania. This decision was taken upon consultation with the regional partner who had a better understanding of the region's cultural reality and unanimously decided by the project team.

Lessons learnt:

- In the case of the Eastern (Third) Regional Dialogue, it proved more challenging to receive the keynote presentations in advance due to the hierarchical structure of the public administration and to the last minute confirmation of some speakers.
- In the case of the Romanian Dialogue, high-profile keynote speakers attended the Dialogues because regional partners had previously collaborated with them in the context of other projects. This was not the case however for the Regional Dialogue organised in Madrid.
- High-level and other parallel and content-related events can affect the attendance of high-profile keynote speakers. For example, the general elections in Sweden influenced the participation of ministers in the North Sea (Second) Dialogue.
- Simultaneous interpretation was very useful (in the Third Regional Dialogue) as it allowed speakers and participants to express themselves in their native language, hence improving the exchanges.
- Also, the formula of attendees working at the tables in the language they were most comfortable in, and then reporting to the plenary in English worked very well (in the First Regional Dialogue). For this, it was important to inform in advance in the invitations about English language being used during the workshop.
- There is, in general, always a level of uncertainty regarding the participation of keynote speakers. For instance, two keynote speakers (one for the North Sea Dialogue, and one for the Iberian Peninsula one) cancelled their participation at the very last minute. Back-up keynote speakers were therefore necessary but they were rather difficult to find.
- Content heavy presentations, as well as longer presentations, limit participants' capacity to interact and concentrate for a longer time.



4.1.3 Presentation of Best practices

The role of case studies speakers was to present interesting examples of practical experiences on the chosen themes from different stakeholders' perspectives. This was especially achieved in the Second (North Sea) Regional Dialogue where the case studies presented managed to create very lively debates amongst participants and to engage them in the inter-stakeholder dialogue that followed. By contrast, the very diverse and broad case studies presented during the Third (Eastern European) Regional Dialogue did not engage participants as much in the follow-up discussions. However, as previously indicated, the topic of that Third Regional Dialogue was broader than in the other Regional Dialogues. The language factor may have also played a role in limiting the possibility of exchange amongst stakeholders, in spite of the simultaneous interpretation.

Lessons learnt:

- Targeted case studies, well-adapted to the topic of the Dialogue, create more debate amongst the participants and are generally seen as more successful by participants.

4.2 Driving intra- and inter-stakeholder dialogue

4.2.1 Ice-breaker

Similarly to the EU Dialogues, an ice-breaker session was planned at the beginning of each Regional Dialogue. The participants were asked to stand at the back of the room and introduce themselves in groups of two. These sessions set the tone for the event and put participants in an interactive mind-set and an open as well as trusting atmosphere. The session was particularly successful in the First (Iberian Peninsula) Regional Dialogue where participants were very keen to discuss amongst each other and to exchange business cards.

Lessons learnt:

- Both EU and Regional Dialogues have shown that the ice-breaker session is very important in making participants feel more comfortable and willing to communicate in later sessions.
- Other factors, such as road traffic, need to be taken into account when organising a regional event. Heavy traffic in Bucharest delayed the beginning of the Third Regional Dialogue by around 30 minutes.

4.2.2 Intra-stakeholder dialogue assignment

Following the keynote presentations which framed the dialogue topic from multiple perspectives, participants were asked to exchange with others from their own stakeholder group. The various stakeholder groups were identified by coloured badges, thus making it easy for each stakeholder to join their group. Participants were asked to reflect on their roles, responsibilities and perspectives with regards to the chosen topic of each Regional Dialogue.



Based on the experience from the EU and previous Regional Dialogues, the project team adapted these questions and made them more targeted in order to ensure that the discussions at the tables were less generic as, for example, in the First (Iberian Peninsula) Regional Dialogue. Consequently, questions asked in the First (Iberian Peninsula) Regional Dialogue:

- What are **two major competencies** / skills of your stakeholder group with regards to the topic at hand?
- What is **one main role** of your stakeholder group in facilitating more sustainable raw materials management with regards to the topic at hand?

Were reformulated in the Second (North Sea) dialogue into:

- What is your stakeholder groups' **role** and **competence** in fostering a balance between the three sustainable development dimensions (please list two). // What is **your added-value** for sustainable mineral production?
- Provide two concrete examples of how such a balancing in sustainable mineral production could look like? // What made them unique in terms of sustainable development?

Participants were asked to note their ideas on long moderation cards, and rapporteurs chosen among the group presented the results to all the participants.

Lessons learnt:

- The inter-stakeholder dialogue was generally very successful and useful in both EU and Regional Dialogues as it allowed participants to reflect on their common roles and competencies with regards to the topic at hand and to consider in the inter-stakeholder dialogue how these could be brought together to foster collaboration.
- In the case of the First (Iberian Peninsula) Regional Dialogue, participants were generally surprised by the 'unusual' participative format but they were keen to experience a different kind of more dynamic meeting. This very much reflected the need for such interactive and collaboration-forming events overall, and, in particular, among civil society and industry stakeholders.
- Participants usually discuss at the tables in their native languages but they are generally comfortable to present the results of the group in English.
- Having to present the ideas in front of other groups is a great technique to drive stakeholders to reach an agreement on the discussed questions.

4.2.3 Inter-stakeholder dialogue assignment

Following the case study presentations, participants were pre-assigned to tables, each of which included a mix of stakeholders from different groups. The participants were asked to reflect on the following questions:

- Which **framework conditions** are needed to foster collaboration between stakeholder groups regarding the topic at hand (please list 2)? // What are **enabling factors** for success?
- Please provide **an example** where multi-stakeholder collaboration with regards to the topic at hand worked well and why? // What do we learn from good examples?



Participants were asked again to write down their ideas on long moderation cards, and rapporteurs for each group presented the results to all the participants.

Lessons learnt:

- The inter-stakeholder dialogue generally serves its objective of engaging different stakeholders on a given topic.
- Most of the time, after several negotiations stakeholders managed to reach an acceptable conclusion to all parties and present recommendations together.
- The exercise serves as a live example of how stakeholders from different groups can collaborate to work towards the same goal.



5 Guidance for the closing COBALT conference

5.1 General guidance

5.1.1 Thematic directions

It is recommended to build the thematic direction of the closing conference upon the knowledge provided by the EU and Regional Civil Society and Industry Dialogues, to be fed by the issues previously identified, both regionally and at the EU level.

For example, the closing conference could be organised on the basis of the following list of non-exhaustive thematic issues:

- Future trends and challenges in the global supply of relevant raw material;
- Future needs in Europe for a sustainable raw material supply (Urban mining and recycling; Product Eco-design; Primary raw material extraction);
- Sustainable primary raw materials extraction;
- Secondary materials and the role of the circular economy;
- Etc.

A specific session could tackle the transversal issue of stakeholder collaboration, which was the Dialogues' thread. It could be devoted to governing and co-managing change and present selected case studies.

Finally, the lessons learnt from the thematic directions of the Regional Dialogues could feed into D4.3 COBALT Recommendations which will integrate the findings from all events and Dialogues organised throughout the project.

5.1.2 Format and organisation

Participants in the Regional Dialogues appreciated the interactive sessions. Thus, the closing conference should also create space for direct inter- and intra- stakeholder dialogue, to foster debate and knowledge exchange. The closing conference should therefore propose a mix of round tables sessions with stakeholder workshops where participants could exchange in smaller groups on a given topic related to sustainable management of raw materials. The workshops could for example focus on the following themes: sustainable primary raw materials extraction, circular economy, product and eco- design. Moreover, the discussions could be animated by the project partners who have attended the previous Dialogues.

A final session could be dedicated to the draft COBALT recommendations. This would allow the consortium to discuss the recommendations with participants and receive feedback which could be later on integrated in the final version of the paper.

Finally, the closing conference should take into consideration the lessons learnt from both the keynote and best practice sessions organised during the Regional Dialogues.



5.1.3 Integrating elements and outcomes from Regional Dialogues

Avoiding repetition and duplication is crucial to the success of the event, especially for participants who have already attended one or more Dialogues. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, the closing conference has to integrate elements and outcomes from Regional Dialogues. This could be done through the choice of the thematic orientations as presented above. Moreover, results from previous Dialogues have to be presented to the audience to frame the discussion. For example, recommendations developed during the Regional Dialogues could be presented and discussed. This would allow the consortium to test the recommendations developed in the previous Dialogues and translate them in the final deliverable D4.3.

6 Conclusions

Based on the feedback provided by participants and project partners, it is safe to conclude that Regional Dialogues achieved their objectives. They provided a space for knowledge exchange and discussion on three topics of public interest concerning the role of civil society and industry in driving circular economy in the Iberian Peninsula; sustainable mineral production in the North Sea; and sustainable consumption and production in Eastern Europe.

The key to their success did not only lie in the choice of topics, and keynote and case study speakers, but also in the interactive format of the Dialogues which allowed participants to engage in the chosen topics and to exchange knowledge.

The outcomes and lessons learnt described in this report addressed the three stages which are key for a successful dialogue: the preparatory and organisational stage, the engagement of participants with the topic, and the intra- and inter-stakeholder dialogue sessions. One of the most important lessons to be drawn is that ensuring a good mix of participants and speakers (civil society, industry, policy making, research) is essential for driving active exchange and allowing diverse positions to be represented.

Having regional partners who co-organise the event was helpful in providing relevant keynote and case study speakers. The appropriateness of the topic was enhanced by regional partners' knowledge of the regional context. Moreover, the geographical proximity of the event and the local networks ensured a high attendance of high-level policy making speakers. However, these are generally more difficult to contact and more likely to cancel their participation last minute.

Similarly to the conclusions drawn from EU dialogues, it has proven essential to request from keynote and case study speakers that they send their presentations in advance in order to ensure that the content of each presentation was compatible with the chosen thematic discussions and with the allocated speaking time. However, some participants did send their presentation at the last minute, leaving very little time to the project team to prepare the session.

Interactive frameworks such as the intra- and inter-stakeholder dialogue sessions encouraged exchange between participants. More specifically, the intra-stakeholder dialogue sessions were helpful in determining each stakeholders' specific role in driving systemic changes



(towards circular economy, sustainable mineral production, sustainable consumption and production) and opportunities for collaboration. The inter-stakeholder dialogue sessions fostered the identification of issues at stake, points of disagreement and areas of potential compromise.

Based on the lessons drawn from the Regional Dialogues, thematic and organisational guidance for the upcoming closing conference were developed. Presenting results from the Regional Dialogues to a larger audience is a key point which the closing conference will need to address. A draft version of the final deliverable D4.3 COBALT Recommendations should also be presented and discussed at the closing conference. The feedback received from stakeholders should be integrated in the final version of the deliverable.