

SOUTH AFRICA – FINLAND



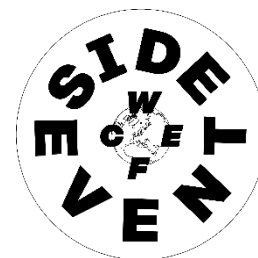
SECOND CIRCULAR ECONOMY DIALOGUE: SOUTH AFRICA – FINLAND TRANSITION TOWARDS CIRCULARITY 12 MARCH 2026

Following our strategic dialogue in 2023, there is significant potential to strengthen bilateral cooperation on circular economy between Finland and South Africa. Since 2021, Finland has been funding innovation support for organizations working with innovative circular economy startups and SMEs in South Africa, particularly in the energy, water, and waste management sectors, among others. Finland supports South Africa's further involvement with the Development Banks, African Circular Economy Facility (ACEF) which Finland funds. Policy discussions and experience sharing have taken place to some extent within the EU–South Africa strategic dialogue, as well as through the Africa Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA) and the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) events.

In South Africa, where economic disparities and environmental vulnerabilities are prevalent, circular economy adoption offers a pathway to more profitable, resilient, and inclusive business models that benefit both society and the planet.

The purpose of this dialogue is to bring together stakeholders to share knowledge and experiences in transitioning to a circular economy, showcase projects funded by the Embassy of Finland's Fund for Local Cooperation (FLC), and explore opportunities for joint, concrete action. The dialogue will bring together a broad range of public sector stakeholders, Private sector, civil society and academia from both countries, engaged in various aspects of the circular economy, including economic transition planning and facilitation, waste management, circular economy STI, mining, agriculture, and water.

The discussions will be held in hybrid format on the 12th of March 2026. The on-site part will be held at The Capital Hotel Menlyn Maine Conference Centre in Pretoria, South Africa. The event is an official World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) Side Event.



PROGRAMME FOR THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY DIALOGUE

[Link for the online participants](#)

Programme Director: Ms. Shahkira Parker, Senior Policy Advisor,
International Governance Management, DFFE (SA)

08:30 – 09:00 Tea and Registration, Technical Connections

Session 1: Opening

09:00 – 09:15 **Opening remarks for Finland**, Ms. Anna-Kaisa Heikkinen, Director General, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA)

09:15 – 09:30 **Opening remarks South Africa**, Mr. Surprise Zwane, Chief Director, Chemicals and Waste Economy Programme Coordination, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)

Transition to Circularity in South Africa and in Finland

09:30 – 9:45 **Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund**, Mr. Kari Herlevi, Project Director, Global Circular Economy

09:45 – 10.15 **Smart and Sustainable Mining**
Moderator: Tagara Hove, Embassy of Finland

- **Metso**, Mr. Charles Ntsele, Vice President for Minerals
- **Mining Finland**, Mr Aleksi Salo, CEO
- **South Africa Circular Mineral and Metal Initiative (SACMMI)**, University of Northwest,
Prof. Kaniki Tumba

10:15 - 10:45 **Circular Economy Transition in SA and Finland**
Moderator: Ms. Katharina Gihring, ACEN

- **Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**, Mr. Petri Wanner, Senior Specialist, Development policy
- **DFFE**, Mr. Kgauta Mokoena, Chief Director, Chemicals and Waste Policy, Specialist Monitoring Services
- **CSIR**, Prof. Linda Godfrey, Manager, Principal Scientist, Extraordinary Professor and International Fellow

10:45 – 11:00 Tee / Coffee Break

Session 2

11:00 – 11:30 **Private Sector and International Cooperation in Circular Economy**

Moderator: Ms. Cathy Wijnberg, FETOLA CEO

- **EU Delegation**, representative Mr. Jyrki Torni, First Counsellor, Head of Green Economy, Infrastructure, Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation
- **Department of Science Technology and Innovation (DSTI)**, Ms. Alinah Mthembu, Acting Director, Environmental services and Technologies
- **Block solution**, Mr. Leon Naidoo, Principal consultants
- **Nordic paper and packaging PTY(LTD)**, Mr. Leo Lahtinen, Business development Manager

11:30 – 12:00 **Case studies presented by FLC partners on Circular Economy Sustainable business**

Moderator: Ms. Tsakane Bok, Embassy of Finland

- **FETOLA**, Ms. Cathy Wijnberg, CEO FETOLA
- **ICLEI AFRICA**, Mr. Paul Currie, Director, Urban Systems and Ms. Kiera Crowe Pettersson, Senior Professional Officer: Urban Systems, ICLEI Africa
- **WOMHUB**, Ms. Anjani Harjeven, COO Womhub

12:00 – 12:20 **How to take the Circular Economy Agenda forward**

Ms. Shahkira Parker, Senior Policy Advisor, International Governance Management, DFFE (SA)

12:25 – 12:50 **Q & A**

12:50 – 13:05 **Closing Remarks**

Pekka Metso
DFFE (speaker tbc)

13:10 – 14:30 **Lunch and networking**