FRANCESCA
Circular Solutions for Furniture
A Horizon Europe Initiative

FRANCESCA: A Circular Newsletter

Circular Efficiency Strategies for Furniture Renewal



Credits: SANCAL

Welcome to the first edition of the ***FRANCESCA Circular Newsletter***, which will accompany us throughout the project's three-year journey. Funded by the European Commission under the Horizon Europe programme, FRANCESCA brings together a **European consortium** of research organisations, companies, and sector associations working to accelerate the circular transition of the furniture sector across Europe.

SPOTLIGHT



Furniture is one of the objects we live with most closely, and one of the ones we think about least once it has served its purpose. As Europe moves towards a circular economy, the furniture sector is discovering that a sofa, a desk or an office chair can be designed, repaired, reused and remanufactured many times over. The FRANCESCA project deals with exactly this, and to find out more we talk to **Juan José Ortega**, Project Manager at **CETEM - Technology Centre of Furniture and Wood of the Region of Murcia** who coordinates the project.

For readers who have never heard of FRANCESCA, how would you describe the project in a couple of sentences, and what problem is it trying to solve?

FRANCESCA is about making circularity practical for the furniture industry. We are helping to turn the concept of a circular furniture value chain into practice. Rather than looking at a single part of the problem, **we work across the whole furniture lifecycle**, from how products are designed and which materials are used, to how furniture can be repaired, reused, refurbished, offered as a service or eventually recycled.

The challenge is that companies often understand the general idea of the circular economy, but translating it into everyday decisions is much more difficult. *Which material should I choose? How should I redesign this product? Is a leasing or refurbishment model economically viable?* **FRANCESCA is trying to provide practical tools, evidence and real industrial examples** that can help companies answer those questions.

Circularity sounds good in theory, but what is the hardest part of making it work in the real furniture industry?

The hardest part is that there is no magic solution that works for every company and every product. **Circularity depends on many factors**, and several things need to work at the same time. A sustainable material still has to meet technical, safety and durability requirements. **A repairable product also needs the right logistics, services and business model around it.** And ultimately, companies need solutions that are economically viable.
That is why the demonstrators are so important in FRANCESCA. We are not only asking whether a solution is circular, but also whether it works in practice, can be manufactured, meets performance requirements and makes sense for industry.

Imagine FRANCESCA has been a real success. Five years after the project ends, what would you like to see happening differently in a furniture company because of the work we are doing today?

I would like **circularity to become part of normal decision-making** rather than something treated as a separate sustainability exercise. Ideally, a designer developing a new product would routinely assess repairability, disassembly, durability and material efficiency. A purchasing department would have reliable information to compare circular material alternatives. A company considering refurbishment, take-back or Furniture-as-a-Service would have practical methodologies and real business cases to build on.
And importantly, I would like some of the tools and methodologies developed in FRANCESCA to still be used and improved after the project has finished.

> *The real success is whether something developed within the project becomes useful enough that companies continue using it when the European funding is no longer there.*



HIGHLIGHTS & RESOURCES

- **FRANCESCA Project Presentation.** Discover the project's objectives, approach, demonstrators and expected results.
- **Preliminary Standardisation Report.** Explore the standards and standardisation needs relevant to circular furniture solutions.
- **Briefing Note on Circular Materials.** A concise overview of key materials-related challenges and opportunities addressed by FRANCESCA.

FRANCESCA IN ACTION

Turning circularity into practice. FRANCESCA is developing solutions across the entire furniture value chain, from design and materials to real-world demonstration and business models, to help the industry move towards a more circular and resilient future.

Circular Design Assessment Tool

A practical tool enabling furniture companies to assess and improve the circularity of products from the design stage, supporting decisions on durability, repairability, disassembly and end-of-life management.



Circular Materials Selection

Investigation and testing of alternative and bio-based materials to support the selection of sustainable materials and accelerate closed-loop strategies in future manufacturing.



Circular Business Model Toolkit

Methodologies and guidance to test circular business models such as repair, reuse, refurbishment, take-back and Furniture-as-a-Service, helping companies create new value and increase their circularity.



Real-world Demonstration

Three industrial demonstrators testing solutions in real operating environments, showing how they work in practice and can be scaled across the sector.



RELATED NEWS

- CirCLER Webinar – "Women Driving Circular Innovation in the Furniture"
  22 October 2026 | 10:00 - 11:30 CET | Registration
- Discover FRANCESCA's "sister" projects: CIR4FUN & R-evolve
- ECOMONDO Fair
  3-6 November 2026 | Rimini - Italy
- New Digital Product Passport (DPP) web page launched

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