Circular Furniture Business Model Innovation Toolkit

A structured framework and practical tools to help organisations design, test and implement circular business models in the furniture sector.



FRANCESCA
Circular Solutions for Furniture
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CONTENTS

What's inside

Foreword 4

About the Toolkit 5

PART I — FOUNDATIONS

1 The Circular Economy Transition 8

2 Circular Business Models 9

3 Circular Business Model Innovation 10

4 The business case for circular innovation 11

5 Circular business models in practice 12

PART II — THE CIRCULAR BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION JOURNEY

The nine-phase journey 15

Phases 1–9 in detail 16

PART III — PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Using the toolkit 26

Where should I start? 27

The toolkit at a glance — phases & tools 28

PART IV — TOOLS LIBRARY

All 21 Tools 30

APPENDICES

References 39

Glossary of circular economy terms 40

FOREWORD

Rethinking how furniture creates value

The furniture sector is undergoing a significant transformation as it responds to growing environmental pressures, evolving regulatory frameworks, and changing societal expectations.

Furniture production relies heavily on material resources — wood, metals, plastics, textiles — while product lifetimes, repairability and end-of-life management have become central to the shift toward more sustainable production and consumption. Across Europe, companies, policymakers and researchers are exploring circular approaches that rethink how furniture is designed, produced, used and recovered. Instead of a linear take–make–dispose model, circular systems emphasise durability, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling — which, for furniture companies, means rethinking not only product design but business models, capabilities and partnerships across increasingly complex ecosystems.

However, translating circular economy principles into viable business models remains a challenge for many organisations. Companies often face uncertainty regarding where to start, how to evaluate circular opportunities, how to design new value propositions, and how to test and implement circular business models in practice. The transition therefore requires structured approaches that help organisations explore opportunities, experiment with new models, and progressively integrate circular practices into their operations.

It is precisely this need — for structured, practical support in moving from circular ambition to day-to-day circular practice — that this toolkit was created to address. Rather than offering a single recipe, it provides a shared language, a sequence of clear phases and a set of hands-on tools that organisations can adapt to their own starting point, sector position and pace of change.

This toolkit was developed within the **FRANCESCA** project, funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe programme. The project brings together research organisations, industry partners and innovation actors to support the transition toward circular furniture value chains in Europe.

The *Circular Furniture Business Model Innovation Toolkit* presented here provides a structured framework and a set of practical tools to help organisations assess their position, identify circular opportunities, design value propositions, experiment with new business models, and build the capabilities to implement them. Rather than presenting circularity as a single fixed model, it treats circular transformation as a gradual process of learning, experimentation and collaboration — contributing to more circular and resilient furniture systems in Europe.

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

A structured approach to circular business model innovation

The toolkit was developed to support organisations in the furniture sector that seek to explore and implement circular economy practices. While the circular economy has gained significant attention, many companies still face practical challenges when translating circular principles into viable business models and operational strategies. The toolkit addresses this gap by bringing together conceptual insights, practical guidance, and a set of tools that support organisations throughout the different stages of circular transformation — from assessing current practices to experimenting with circular solutions before scaling them.

Who this toolkit is for

The toolkit is intended for a wide range of actors involved in the furniture value chain. Because circular transitions often involve multiple actors, it can also be used to facilitate collaborative workshops involving several stakeholders.

FURNITURE MANUFACTURERS & BRANDS

Companies redesigning products, services or business models to extend lifetimes, enable refurbishment or remanufacturing, and improve resource efficiency.

RETAILERS & SERVICE PROVIDERS

Organisations exploring service-based models such as furniture rental, refurbishment services, or take-back systems.

DESIGNERS & PRODUCT DEVELOPERS

Professionals integrating durability, repairability and modularity into furniture design.

CLUSTERS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

Intermediary organisations supporting companies in the transition toward circular practices.

POLICY & INNOVATION ACTORS

Public agencies, research organisations and innovation platforms accelerating circular transitions within regional or national ecosystems.

How to use the toolkit

The toolkit is organised around a structured **Circular Business Model Innovation Journey** composed of nine phases. Each phase addresses a specific step in the transition from understanding circular economy principles to designing, testing and implementing circular solutions within furniture value chains. Each phase is supported by specific tools that help organisations analyse their current practices, generate ideas, design solutions and structure decisions.

Organisations may follow the full process sequentially or select specific tools depending on their needs. A company might begin with an assessment of its current circular maturity, while another may start by exploring new circular value propositions.

THE TOOLKIT CAN BE USED IN DIFFERENT FORMATS

Internal strategic reflection

Involving management and innovation teams.

Facilitated workshops

Where teams work collaboratively on the tools.

Training programmes

Supporting capacity building within companies or clusters.

Innovation projects

Where organisations experiment with new circular business models.

Structure of the toolkit

- **Part I — Foundations** introduces key concepts related to the circular economy, circular business models, and circular business model innovation in the furniture sector.
- **Part II — The Circular Business Model Innovation Journey** presents the phases of circular transformation and explains how organisations move from strategic reflection to implementation.
- **Part III — Practical Guidance** provides recommendations on how to use the toolkit in workshops, training programmes or organisational transformation processes.
- **Part IV — Tools Library** contains detailed descriptions of each tool, including instructions for use and the associated canvases or templates.

PART I

Foundations

Key concepts behind the circular economy, circular business models, and circular business model innovation in the furniture sector.

PART I · FOUNDATIONS

1 The Circular Economy Transition

The circular economy has emerged as a key framework for addressing the environmental and resource challenges of today's production and consumption systems. Traditional models follow a linear logic — resources are extracted, made into products, used and discarded — driving pressure on natural resources, growing waste streams and significant environmental impacts. The circular economy proposes an alternative: rather than treating products and materials as disposable, it aims to retain their value for as long as possible through durability, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing, reuse and recycling — slowing, narrowing and closing resource loops.

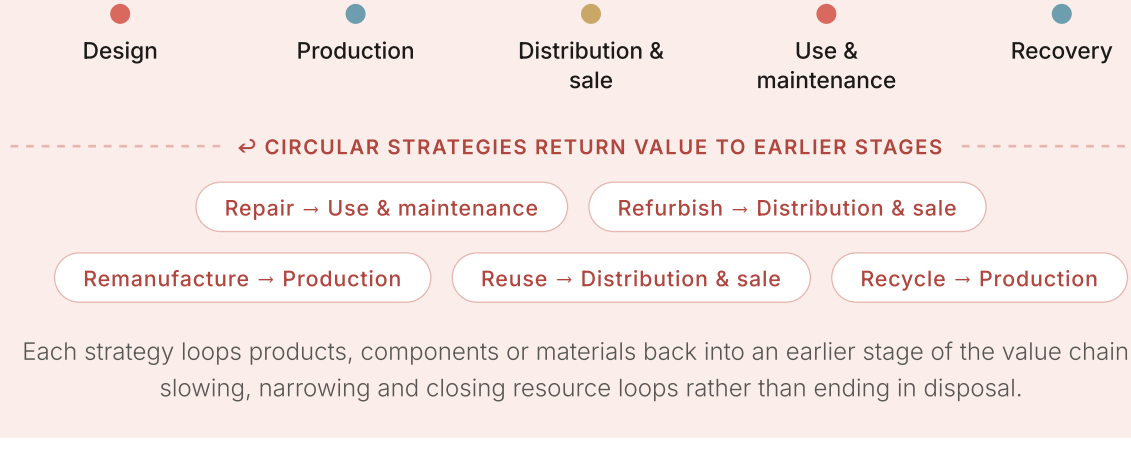
The transition is particularly relevant for sectors characterised by significant material use and long product lifecycles, such as the furniture industry. Furniture relies on a wide range of materials including wood, metals, plastics, foams and textiles. While many products are designed to last for years, they are often discarded long before the end of their technical lifespan due to changing needs, limited repair options, or logistical barriers to reuse.

Circular principles encourage a rethinking of how furniture is designed, produced, distributed, used and recovered. Products can be designed for durability, modularity and disassembly; companies can develop service-based models such as leasing or furniture-as-a-service; reverse logistics can enable collection, refurbishment and redistribution; and material recovery can support recycling where reuse is not possible.

Importantly, the circular economy is not only about improving waste management. It involves a broader transformation of value creation systems — product design, business models, supply chains and consumer practices — and often requires collaboration between manufacturers, retailers, service providers, recyclers, digital platform operators and public authorities.

For furniture companies, the circular economy therefore represents both a challenge and an opportunity. It challenges traditional production and revenue models, but it also opens new possibilities for innovation, new services, new customer relationships and more resilient resource use.

THE FURNITURE CIRCULAR VALUE CHAIN



Each strategy loops products, components or materials back into an earlier stage of the value chain — slowing, narrowing and closing resource loops rather than ending in disposal.

PART I · FOUNDATIONS

2 Circular Business Models

While the circular economy provides a broad framework, companies ultimately implement circular strategies through **business models**. In a circular context, the logic of how an organisation creates, delivers and captures value must evolve to support longer product lifetimes, resource recovery and new forms of value creation across the lifecycle. Rather than relying primarily on the sale of new products, circular models integrate maintenance, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing and reuse.

IN PRACTICE, CIRCULAR BUSINESS MODELS CAN TAKE SEVERAL FORMS

Circular supplies

Building circularity into inputs from the outset — renewable, bio-based, recycled or waste-derived materials that substitute conventional ones while maintaining performance and design quality.

Extended product lifetimes

Design improvements, maintenance and repair programmes. Designing for durability, modularity and ease of disassembly enables upgrades, refurbishment or component replacement that keeps products in use for longer.

Product-service systems

Providing access to furniture as a service rather than selling outright — leasing or furniture-as-a-service. Retaining ownership creates incentives to design durable, maintainable, recoverable products.

Reuse & refurbishment

Recovering used furniture and reintroducing it to the market. Returned products are inspected, repaired, refurbished and resold — requiring reverse logistics, quality assessment and refurbishment partners.

Material recovery

When products can no longer be reused, materials are recycled back into production. Though it retains less value than reuse, it remains important — especially with better design and material traceability.

Implementing circular business models often requires companies to rethink their relationships with customers and partners. Circular offerings frequently involve longer-term customer relationships, service provision, and collaboration with logistics providers, refurbishment specialists, platform operators and recyclers. As a result, circular business models are often embedded within broader ecosystems of actors working together to maintain product and material value — a shift from a product-centric logic toward a **lifecycle-oriented approach** to value creation.

PART I · FOUNDATIONS

3 Circular Business Model Innovation

Transitioning toward circular business models rarely occurs through incremental adjustments to existing practices. It often requires more fundamental changes in how companies design products, organise value creation, interact with customers, and collaborate with partners. These changes involve **business model innovation** — developing new ways of creating, delivering and capturing value.

Circular business model innovation introduces additional layers of complexity. Circular solutions typically extend beyond a single firm and involve multiple lifecycle stages such as use, maintenance, return, refurbishment and material recovery. Innovation therefore requires coordination between manufacturers, service providers, logistics operators, refurbishment partners, recyclers and digital platforms.

Another challenge lies in the uncertainty surrounding circular initiatives. Companies may face questions about customer acceptance, operational feasibility, financial viability and regulatory alignment. Introducing a refurbishment programme or a furniture-as-a-service model may require new logistics systems, service capabilities and forms of customer engagement. These uncertainties mean circular innovation often progresses through experimentation and gradual learning rather than fully predetermined strategies.

Circular innovation also frequently requires changes in organisational capabilities — new skills related to service delivery, lifecycle management, reverse logistics, digital tracking or ecosystem collaboration. These capabilities may not exist within the organisation initially and often need to be built over time.

Because of these challenges, circular business model innovation benefits from **structured processes** that guide organisations from early exploration to implementation. Rather than redesigning the entire business model at once, companies can progress through successive phases that help them understand opportunities, assess their position, develop concepts, test assumptions, and progressively integrate circular practices.

The toolkit follows this logic. It structures circular business model innovation as a journey composed of several phases, each addressing specific questions organisations face during the transition — guiding companies from initial awareness through to the design, experimentation, implementation and scaling of circular solutions.

> IN SHORT
>
> By combining analytical tools, design frameworks and experimentation approaches, the toolkit supports organisations in navigating the complexity of circular transformation — and in developing circular business models that are both environmentally meaningful and economically viable.

PART I · FOUNDATIONS

4 The business case for circular innovation

Beyond its environmental rationale, circular business model innovation responds to concrete commercial pressures and opportunities. For furniture companies, four drivers make a compelling case for acting now rather than waiting for change to be forced upon the sector.

New revenue opportunities

Services, subscriptions, resale, refurbishment and material recovery open recurring and second-life revenue streams that extend value well beyond the one-off sale of new products.

Customer retention & relationships

Take-back, leasing and refurbishment models create repeated, longer-term touchpoints with customers — deepening loyalty and generating data that informs future offers.

Regulatory preparedness

Furniture is a priority group under the EU Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, with durability, repairability and Digital Product Passport requirements approaching. Circular models position companies ahead of compliance.

Resource resilience

Reuse, recovered materials and closed loops reduce exposure to volatile virgin-material prices and supply disruption, strengthening security of supply and margins over time.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

An estimated 10 million tonnes of furniture are discarded in the EU each year, the majority sent to landfill or incineration. The value locked in that waste — and the regulation now targeting it — turns circularity from a reputational nicety into a strategic and economic priority.

PART I · FOUNDATIONS

5 Circular business models in practice

Across Europe and beyond, companies are already building circular models in and around the furniture sector. The examples below follow the five business-model archetypes introduced earlier — from circular supplies through to material recovery.

1 Circular supplies

Circularity built into material choice and product specification — renewable, bio-based, recycled or waste-derived inputs that substitute conventional materials.

BAUX
SWEDEN

Bio-based acoustics. Acoustic panels and interior products made from renewable, bio-based inputs that maintain performance and design quality.

ecoBirdy
BELGIUM

Recycled-plastic furniture. Turns plastic waste into durable design furniture — notably for children — with a strong material story.

Mater Design
DENMARK

Waste-based design materials. Combines recycled and waste-derived inputs with design-led furniture and material transparency.

2 Extended product lifetimes

Designing for durability, modularity and easy disassembly so furniture stays in use longer and components can be repaired or replaced.

Andreu World
SPAIN / GLOBAL

Durable eco-design. Designs seating and tables for longevity, easy disassembly and recyclability, backed by repair, refurbishment and long warranties.

Brunner
GERMANY

Long-life contract furniture. Durable construction with replaceable wear components and long spare-part availability; most parts separable for recycling.

Calmai Studio
SPAIN

Modular made-to-order sofas. Modular sofas made to order with replaceable parts, washable covers, take-back and a renewal service for covers, cushions and foam.

3 Product-service systems

The provider retains ownership and delivers furniture as a service, managing it across multiple use cycles through maintenance, repair and redeployment.

Ahrend
NETHERLANDS / GLOBAL

Furniture-as-a-Service. Subscription office furniture covering design, maintenance, refurbishment and final collection.

Martela
FINLAND

Workplace-as-a-Service. Flexible workplace furniture and optimisation with maintenance, reuse and recycling support.

NORNORM
DENMARK

Circular subscription. Standardised, reusable furniture sets redeployed between clients to maximise utilisation.

PART I · FOUNDATIONS · CONTINUED

5 Circular business models in practice

4 Reuse & refurbishment

Recovering used furniture and reintroducing it to the market through resale, refurbishment and remanufacturing.

IKEA Buy Back & Resell
SWEDEN / GLOBAL

Retailer-led resale. Customers return eligible used furniture, which is resold through second-life channels within existing retail.

Vitra Circle
SWITZERLAND

Premium second life. Resale, refurbishment and curated distribution that keep high-quality design furniture in use.

Rype Office
UNITED KINGDOM

Remanufactured office furniture. Collects, remanufactures and redeploys office furniture for workplace fit-outs.

5 Material recovery

Recovering waste streams — wood, textiles, urban timber — and converting them into new furniture and interior materials.

FabBRICK
FRANCE

Textile waste to interiors. Converts discarded textiles into bricks, panels and interior elements for design and architecture.

Gruppo Saviola
ITALY

Recovered-wood panels. Processes post-consumer and industrial wood into panels supplied to furniture manufacturers at industrial scale.

Room & Board Urban Wood
UNITED STATES

Urban wood recovery. Diverts urban trees from low-value disposal into durable, provenance-rich furniture.

> READING THE EXAMPLES
>
> Most real businesses combine several archetypes — a manufacturer may pair circular supplies with product life extension, or a service provider may add resource recovery at end of life. The archetypes are lenses for spotting opportunities, not rigid categories.

PART II

The Circular Business Model Innovation Journey

A structured pathway in nine phases — from understanding circular opportunities to designing, testing, implementing and scaling circular solutions.

PART II · THE JOURNEY

Nine phases of circular transformation

Each phase addresses a specific set of questions companies encounter during circular transformation. While the phases are presented sequentially, organisations may enter the journey at different stages depending on their maturity and strategic priorities.

1

Awareness

Build understanding of circular economy principles and identify circular opportunities relevant to the furniture sector.

2

Strategy Definition

Define the organisation's circular ambition and long-term strategic direction.

3

Exploration & Diagnosis

Assess the current level of circularity integration across products, processes and capabilities.

4

Ideation & Business Model Innovation

Identify circular value propositions and develop circular business model alternatives.

5

Design & Development

Translate circular concepts into concrete services, processes and customer experiences.

6

Experimentation & Validation

Test circular solutions and validate key assumptions through experimentation.

7

Implementation & Operation

Deploy circular systems — material loops, reverse logistics and organisational capabilities.

8

Circular Assessment & Monitoring

Measure circular performance and track progress over time.

9

Scaling & Governance

Coordinate ecosystem actors and plan the long-term scaling of circular initiatives.

PHASE 1

Awareness

Build a shared understanding of circular economy principles and explore how they apply to the furniture sector — helping organisations identify potential circular strategies and recognise opportunities for innovation.

WHY THIS PHASE MATTERS

Many companies are familiar with the concept of the circular economy but struggle to translate it into practical business opportunities. Without a clear understanding of circular strategies, organisations may overlook opportunities such as reuse, refurbishment, modular design or service-based models. Developing awareness helps teams align around a common language.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What circular strategies are most relevant for our products and materials?
2. Where are the largest sources of waste or value loss in our current system?
3. Which circular opportunities exist across the furniture lifecycle?
4. What examples from the sector could inspire our organisation?

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- A shared understanding of circular economy principles
- Initial identification of circular opportunities
- Inspiration for potential circular strategies

TOOLS USED IN THIS PHASE

Circular Pattern Cards for Furniture

USE CASE Furniture manufacturer

A furniture manufacturer explores circular pattern cards in a workshop with design and strategy teams. Through this exercise, the team identifies refurbishment and modular upgrades as promising strategies for extending product lifetimes.

PHASE 2

Strategy Definition

Define the organisation's circular ambition and establish a strategic direction for circular transformation.

WHY THIS PHASE MATTERS

Circular transformation often requires long-term changes in product design, operations and partnerships. Without a clear strategic vision, circular initiatives risk remaining isolated pilot projects rather than becoming part of the company's core strategy.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What role should circularity play in our long-term strategy?
2. Which sustainability objectives are most relevant for our organisation?
3. Where do circular opportunities align with our competitive advantage?
4. What priorities should guide our circular transition?

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- A clearly defined circular ambition
- Strategic priorities for circular transformation
- Alignment between sustainability and business objectives

TOOLS USED IN THIS PHASE

Circular Vision Canvas

USE CASE Furniture brand

A furniture brand uses the Circular Vision Canvas to clarify its ambition to shift from product sales toward service-based models, prioritising durability and refurbishment within its product portfolio.

PHASE 3

Exploration & Diagnosis

Assess the current level of circularity integration within the organisation and identify areas for improvement.

WHY THIS PHASE MATTERS

Before designing new circular solutions, organisations must understand their current capabilities, strengths and gaps. A structured diagnosis helps identify priority areas for innovation and ensures that future initiatives are grounded in realistic organisational conditions.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. How circular are our current products and processes?
2. Where do the largest resource losses occur in our system?
3. Which organisational capabilities support or limit circular innovation?
4. What gaps must be addressed to enable circular transformation?

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- A circular maturity profile
- Identification of capability gaps
- A baseline for circular transformation

TOOLS USED IN THIS PHASE

Circular Maturity Tool

USE CASE Contract furniture manufacturer

A contract furniture manufacturer assesses its circular maturity and finds that, while its products are durable and well made, it lacks the reverse-logistics systems and refurbishment processes needed to recover used furniture and return it to the market.

PHASE 4

Ideation & Business Model Innovation

Identify and develop new circular value propositions and business model opportunities.

WHY THIS PHASE MATTERS

Circular innovation requires rethinking how value is created, delivered and captured across the product lifecycle. This phase enables organisations to explore alternative models that combine product design, services and ecosystem partnerships.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. How can circularity create new value for customers?
2. What new services or offerings could extend product lifetimes?
3. How might we redesign our business model to support circular strategies?
4. Which partners are required to enable circular value creation?

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Circular value propositions
- Alternative circular business model concepts
- A better understanding of ecosystem roles

TOOLS USED IN THIS PHASE

- Circular Value Proposition Canvas
- Circular Consumer Compass
- Circular Business Model Canvas
- Circular Ecosystem Value Wheel

USE CASE Office furniture supplier

An office furniture supplier develops a furniture-as-a-service concept for corporate clients, pairing a subscription offer with refurbishment services and take-back agreements — echoing the lifecycle-service logic of providers such as Ahrend and NORNORM.

PHASE 5

Design & Development

Translate circular business model concepts into operational services, processes and customer experiences.

WHY THIS PHASE MATTERS

Ideas for circular offerings must be operationalised into concrete service systems. This includes defining customer interactions, operational processes and economic value-capture mechanisms.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. How will circular services be delivered in practice?
2. What customer interactions occur throughout the lifecycle?
3. What operational processes support the circular model?
4. How will value be captured financially?

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Detailed service design
- Customer lifecycle mapping
- Initial economic model

TOOLS USED IN THIS PHASE

Circular Service Blueprint
Circular Customer Journey
Circular Value Capture Tool

USE CASE **Furniture retailer**

A furniture retailer designs a refurbishment-service workflow covering product return, inspection, repair and resale through a dedicated second-life channel — a route comparable to premium resale programmes such as Vitra Circle.

PHASE 6

Experimentation & Validation

Test circular solutions and validate key assumptions before full-scale implementation.

WHY THIS PHASE MATTERS

Circular business models involve uncertainties related to customer adoption, operational feasibility and financial performance. Experimentation allows organisations to test ideas, gather evidence and reduce risk.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Which assumptions must be tested before scaling?
2. What experiments can validate customer demand?
3. How can pilot projects generate learning?
4. What metrics should be used to evaluate results?

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Tested circular business model elements
- Evidence from pilot experiments
- Reduced uncertainty for implementation

TOOLS USED IN THIS PHASE

Experimentation Roadmap

USE CASE Workplace furniture provider

A workplace furniture provider pilots a subscription-based furnishing service with a small group of corporate clients to test customer demand, pricing and the operational feasibility of redeploying furniture between sites.

PHASE 7

Implementation & Operation

Deploy circular systems within the organisation's operations and value chain.

WHY THIS PHASE MATTERS

Successful circular business models require operational capabilities such as reverse logistics, product recovery systems, supplier engagement and lifecycle management.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. How will products and materials circulate within our system?
2. What capabilities are required for circular operations?
3. How should suppliers and partners be involved?
4. What infrastructure is needed to support circular flows?

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Operational circular systems
- Capability development plans
- Circular supply chain processes

TOOLS USED IN THIS PHASE

- Material Loop Map
- Circular Capabilities Framework
- Circular Procurement Framework
- Reverse Logistics Canvas
- Circular Platform Model
- Circular Design Evaluation Worksheet
- Furniture-as-a-Service Readiness Tool

USE CASE Office furniture remanufacturer

An office furniture remanufacturer establishes a take-back logistics system and refurbishment facility to recover used workstations from corporate fit-outs and return them to the market — an operating model comparable to Rype Office.

PHASE 8

Circular Assessment & Monitoring

Measure circular performance and monitor progress.

WHY THIS PHASE MATTERS

Circular initiatives require clear metrics to track environmental, operational and economic outcomes. Monitoring helps organisations evaluate progress and guide future decisions.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. How can circular performance be measured?
2. What indicators reflect value retention and resource efficiency?
3. How can progress toward circular goals be tracked?

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Circular performance indicators
- Monitoring systems for circular initiatives
- Data supporting decision-making

TOOLS USED IN THIS PHASE

Circular Assessment Tool

USE CASE Furniture-as-a-service operator

A furniture-as-a-service operator builds a monitoring dashboard tracking product reuse rates, redeployment cycles, material recovery and the residual value retained across its furniture fleet.

PHASE 9

Scaling & Governance

Coordinate stakeholders and scale circular initiatives across the ecosystem.

WHY THIS PHASE MATTERS

Circular systems often require collaboration between multiple actors across the value chain. Governance mechanisms and strategic planning help align partners and support long-term transformation.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Which partners are required to scale circular systems?
2. How should roles and responsibilities be organised?
3. What governance structures support collaboration?

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Circular transition roadmap
- Ecosystem governance mechanisms
- Coordinated scaling strategy

TOOLS USED IN THIS PHASE

Circular Transition Roadmap

Circular Ecosystem Governance Canvas

USE CASE Regional furniture ecosystem

A regional furniture ecosystem develops a collaborative platform connecting manufacturers, refurbishment partners and logistics providers.

PART III

Practical Guidance

How to put the toolkit to work — in strategic reflection, facilitated workshops, training programmes and innovation projects.

PART III · PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Using the toolkit

The tools support both strategic reflection and practical implementation. They can be used individually to address specific questions, or combined into a structured process guiding organisations through the development of circular business models. Choose an entry point that matches your maturity and ambition.

Pathway 01

Internal strategic reflection

Management and innovation teams use the canvases to align on ambition and priorities before committing resources. Best for early-stage orientation and securing leadership buy-in.

Pathway 02

Facilitated workshops

Cross-functional teams work collaboratively on selected tools in guided sessions. Ideal for ideation, diagnosis and co-designing service concepts with multiple perspectives.

Pathway 03

Training programmes

Used to build capacity within companies or clusters, introducing circular concepts and methods step by step alongside the nine-phase journey.

Pathway 04

Innovation projects

Organisations experiment with new circular business models over time, moving through design, experimentation and implementation with the supporting tools.

A NOTE ON SEQUENCING

Follow the full journey sequentially, or select specific tools depending on your needs. One company may begin by assessing its current circular maturity (Phase 3); another may start by exploring new circular value propositions (Phase 4). The journey is a guide, not a prescription.

PART III · PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Where should I start?

There is no single entry point. Find the objective that best matches your situation and begin with the phase and tools alongside it — then move through the journey from there.

Get our team aligned *"We're new to circularity and need a shared starting point."*	Phase 1 · Awareness Begin with the Circular Pattern Cards to build a common language and surface opportunities.
Set our ambition *"We need a strategic direction for circularity."*	Phase 2 · Strategy Use the Circular Vision Canvas to define ambition, positioning and priorities.
Understand where we stand *"How circular are we today, and where are the gaps?"*	Phase 3 · Diagnosis Run the Circular Maturity Tool to baseline products, processes and capabilities.
Find new circular value *"We want new revenue, services or business models."*	Phase 4 · Ideation Work through the CBM Canvas and Circular Value Proposition Canvas to shape new offers.
Design & test a service *"We have an idea and want to make it real and de-risk it."*	Phases 5–6 · Design & Test Use the Service Blueprint and Customer Journey, then the Experimentation Roadmap to validate.
Implement, measure & scale *"We're ready to operate, track and grow circular practices."*	Phases 7–9 · Operate Set up loops with the Reverse Logistics Canvas, measure with the Circular Assessment Tool, and plan growth with the Transition Roadmap.

PART III · PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

The toolkit at a glance

The nine phases of the Circular Business Model Innovation Journey and the tools associated with each. Follow the sequence end to end, or enter at the phase that matches your maturity and pick the tools you need.

1 PHASE 1 Awareness

- 1.1 Circular Pattern Cards for Furniture

2 PHASE 2 Strategy Definition

- 2.1 Circular Vision Canvas

3 PHASE 3 Exploration & Diagnosis

- 3.1 Circular Maturity Tool

4 PHASE 4 Ideation & Business Model Innovation

- 4.1 Circular Value Proposition Canvas
- 4.2 Circular Consumer Compass
- 4.3 CBM Canvas (Circular Business Model Canvas)
- 4.4 Circular Ecosystem Value Wheel

5 PHASE 5 Design & Development

- 5.1 Circular Service Blueprint
- 5.2 Circular Customer Journey
- 5.3 Circular Value Capture Tool

6 PHASE 6 Experimentation & Validation

- 6.1 Experimentation Roadmap

7 PHASE 7 Implementation & Operation

- 7.1 Material Loop Map
- 7.2 Circular Capabilities Framework
- 7.3 Circular Procurement Framework
- 7.4 Reverse Logistics Canvas
- 7.5 Circular Platform Model
- 7.6 Circular Design Evaluation Worksheet
- 7.7 Furniture-as-a-Service Readiness Tool

8 PHASE 8 Circular Assessment & Monitoring

- 8.1 Circular Assessment Tool

9 PHASE 9 Scaling & Governance

- 9.1 Circular Transition Roadmap
- 9.2 Circular Ecosystem Governance Canvas

Understand & define — Phases 1, 4, 7 · Strategise & design — Phases 2, 5, 8 · Diagnose, test & scale — Phases 3, 6, 9

PART IV

Tools Library

Twenty-one practical tools, organised by phase. Each entry includes what the tool is for, its format, and links to the tool and its guidance.

PART IV · TOOLS LIBRARY

PHASE 1

Awareness

Build understanding of circular economy principles and their strategic implications for furniture businesses.

1 TOOL

Each phase of the journey is supported by specific tools that help organisations analyse their current practices, generate ideas, structure decisions and guide implementation. Each phase is presented on its own page — use the links to download each tool and its accompanying user guide.

TOOL 1.1

Circular Pattern Cards for Furniture

A visual exploration tool presenting recurring circular strategies, design approaches and business-model patterns relevant to the furniture sector. Helps teams rapidly identify opportunities such as reuse, refurbishment, modularity, take-back, leasing and material loops.

Card deck | Workshop cards | Printable PDF

Download the tool

Download the user guide

PART IV · TOOLS LIBRARY

PHASE 2

Strategy Definition

Support companies in defining their circular transition ambition and long-term strategic direction.

1 TOOL

TOOL 2.1

Circular Vision Canvas

A strategic framing canvas used to articulate a company's circular ambition, including positioning, value-creation logic, sustainability objectives and transformation priorities.

Canvas | Workshop template

Download the tool

Download the user guide

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PHASE 3

Exploration & Diagnosis

Assess the current state of circularity integration across products, processes and organisational capabilities.

1 TOOL

TOOL 3.1

Circular Maturity Tool

A diagnostic self-assessment tool evaluating the company's circularity level across products, materials, services, business model, supply chain, data and capabilities. Identifies strengths and improvement gaps.

Assessment tool | Questionnaire | Excel | Digital survey

Download the tool

Download the user guide

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PHASE 4

Ideation & Business Model Innovation

Facilitate the identification and development of circular value-creation opportunities.

4 TOOLS

TOOL 4.1

Circular Value Proposition Canvas

An adaptation of the Value Proposition Canvas integrating circular value elements. Helps define how durability, repairability, upgradeability, returnability and transparency generate customer gains and reduce pains.

Canvas | Workshop template

Download the tool

Download the user guide

TOOL 4.2

Circular Consumer Compass

A behavioural insight tool mapping consumer motivations, barriers, attitudes and decision triggers related to circular furniture practices.

Canvas | Mapping tool

Download the tool

Download the user guide

TOOL 4.3

CBM Canvas (Circular Business Model Canvas)

A circular-economy-oriented Business Model Canvas supporting the design or redesign of circular business models.

Canvas | Strategy template

Download the tool

Download the user guide

TOOL 4.4

Circular Ecosystem Value Wheel

A mapping tool visualising how value is created, exchanged and captured among ecosystem actors.

Visual mapping canvas

Download the tool

Download the user guide

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PHASE 5

Design & Development

Support the detailed design of circular services, operational processes and customer interactions.

3 TOOLS

TOOL 5.1

Circular Service Blueprint

A service-design tool detailing how circular services are delivered across frontstage and backstage processes.

Blueprint | Process map

Download the tool

Download the user guide

TOOL 5.2

Circular Customer Journey

A visualisation of the customer experience identifying lifecycle touchpoints for circular interventions.

Journey map | Experience map

Download the tool

Download the user guide

TOOL 5.3

Circular Value Capture Tool

An analytical tool exploring revenue models, cost implications and residual-value mechanisms.

Worksheet

Download the tool

Download the user guide

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PHASE 6

Experimentation & Validation

Structure the testing and validation of circular business model assumptions. 1 TOOL

TOOL 6.1

Experimentation Roadmap

A planning tool structuring circular innovation experiments, hypotheses, metrics and timelines.

Roadmap | Planning canvas

Download the tool

Download the user guide

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PHASE 7

Implementation & Operation

Build the operational capabilities and infrastructure required for circular flows.

7 TOOLS

TOOL 7.1

Material Loop Map

A visualisation mapping material flows, retention strategies, leakage points and recovery loops.

Flow map | Visual canvas

Tool | User Guide

TOOL 7.2

Circular Capabilities Framework

A framework identifying skills, processes and competencies required for circular implementation.

Capability framework | Assessment tool | Checklist

Tool | User Guide

TOOL 7.3

Circular Procurement Framework

A decision-support tool guiding sourcing strategies aligned with circular principles.

Framework | Guidelines | Checklist

Tool | User Guide

TOOL 7.4

Reverse Logistics Canvas

A design tool structuring product return, collection, sorting, refurbishment and recycling systems.

Canvas | System design template

Tool | User Guide

TOOL 7.5

Circular Platform Model

A digital or organisational infrastructure enabling circular exchanges and lifecycle tracking.

Digital platform | Concept model

Tool | User Guide

TOOL 7.6

Circular Design Evaluation Worksheet

A structured worksheet for evaluating how well a furniture design supports circular outcomes — durability, modularity, repairability, ease of disassembly and material recoverability.

Worksheet | Evaluation guide | PDF

Tool | User Guide

TOOL 7.7

Furniture-as-a-Service Readiness Tool

An assessment tool measuring your potential to develop a product-service system (PSS).

Assessment tool

Tool | User Guide

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PHASE 8

Circular Assessment & Monitoring

Measure and monitor circularity performance and progress.

1 TOOL

TOOL 8.1

Circular Assessment Tool

An evaluation tool measuring circular performance and regulatory alignment.

Assessment tool | Scorecard

Download the tool

Download the user guide

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PHASE 9

Scaling & Governance

Plan, prioritise and coordinate circular transformation across the ecosystem. 2 TOOLS

TOOL 9.1

Circular Transition Roadmap

A strategic planning tool outlining phased circular transformation actions and milestones.

Roadmap | Strategy plan

Download the tool

Download the user guide

TOOL 9.2

Circular Ecosystem Governance Canvas

A coordination tool defining roles, responsibilities, incentives and governance mechanisms.

Governance canvas | Coordination template

Download the tool

Download the user guide

APPENDIX

References

A selection combining foundational academic literature on circular business models with recent reports relevant to the furniture sector.

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APPENDIX

Glossary of circular economy terms

Circular economy	An economic model that retains the value of products, components and materials for as long as possible by slowing, narrowing and closing resource loops.
Linear model	The conventional take–make–dispose logic in which resources are extracted, used and discarded as waste.
Circular business model	A way of creating, delivering and capturing value that supports longer product lifetimes and resource recovery across the lifecycle.
Product-service system (PSS)	An offering that provides access to a product's function as a service — e.g. leasing or furniture-as-a-service — rather than selling it outright.
Remanufacturing	Restoring used products to like-new condition through disassembly, replacement of components and quality testing.
Refurbishment	Repairing and updating used products to extend their life and reintroduce them to the market.
Reverse logistics	The systems and processes that move products back from users for reuse, refurbishment, remanufacturing or recycling.
Design for disassembly	Designing products so components can be easily separated for repair, upgrade, reuse or recycling.
Material loop	The pathway by which materials are retained in use and recovered, minimising leakage and virgin material extraction.
Circular maturity	The degree to which an organisation has integrated circular practices across products, processes, supply chains and capabilities.

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