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ISSN: 2315-7844
Review of
Public Administration
and Management

Commentary

Implementation of Circular Economy Projects in Major Public Sector Organizations

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DESCRIPTION

The Circular Economy (CE) is usually described as an opportunity to address the environmental and social issues caused by the present linear economic system, which is unsustainable. The establishment of a CE is anticipated to change the way businesses and supply chains deliver goods and services and to bring about a paradigm shift in how people and organizations utilize and consume those resources. Within the limits of the planetary bounds, the goal is to keep the value of resources at their highest level for as long as is practicable in the system. With the creation of suitable public policies and governmental interventions that affect both businesses and citizens of the public sector or the government is primarily acknowledged as a significant driver to the CE transition. This is because it has the potential to enable the implementation of a sustainable CE at the macro level. Less frequently mentioned is the public sector's considerable role as an economy-wide buyer, consumer and user of resources.

Due to the multidimensional character of CE and the numerous practices that must be taken into account in practice, it is crucial to assess the implementation process using methods that offer an overview of those various circularity features. Because of this, survey research on Public Sector Organizations (PSO) looking at the current level of implementation will substantially contribute to addressing the current gaps in CE research and giving practitioners information on the current awareness and implementation of CE in the public sector. PSOs may differ from business companies in various respects in terms of functional and organizational traits. PSOs are service-oriented businesses that carry out a variety of tasks, including policy formation, resource reallocation, and the provision of public services. Additionally, unlike businesses pursuing commercial aims of profit-making, PSOs pursue many, frequently complex, and more nebulous political and social goals of public accountability requiring openness and representation. PSO are therefore vulnerable to political influences from the electorate, as well as institutional, legal, and budgetary restrictions.

Public sector initiatives for the circular economy are one way the public sector can encourage supply chains to adopt sustainable and circular practices is through Public Procurement (PP). The potential of Circular Public Procurement (CPP) as a public sector tool to promote innovation, the development of new markets consistent with a CE, and to hasten the transition towards circularity has frequently been noted in the literature on CE. CPP strategies incorporate factors such recycled content of materials, potential for reparability and recyclability, reuse of products or components, rework, and remanufacturing of items or equipment into the specifications for tenders. Other CPP initiatives include larger-scale plans that rethink purchasing at the supplier and system levels to support new business models using pay-per-use contracts, performance-based contracts, or buy-and-sell back contracts. Construction, furniture, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) items, and transportation are among the product categories of procurement that have received the most attention from researchers and are being researched for implementation. The public administration industry engages in a variety of operations and tasks. It is acknowledged that the public sector provides a variety of services and infrastructure, including the supply of water, energy, and wastewater. When it comes to the current situation of central PSOs, operations are typically mostly of an administrative character and take place in office buildings. Implementing circularity in PSO operations and circular purchasing is crucial for the public sector of the economy.

According to the findings, it is preferable to consider CE implementation in the public sector from a consumer-oriented perspective that is centered on resource consumption when it comes to R-based practices. Therefore, R-based strategies like refuse, reduce, reuse, repair, and recycle are more important than those focused on the design and production of products and materials for industrial or manufacturing enterprises, which also have policies like remanufacture or refurbish. Their environmental sustainability strategies are mostly focused on reducing waste and carbon emissions through increased efficiency. Although water and energy efficient technologies and

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Received: 04-Jul-2022, Manuscript No. RPAM-22-17666; **Editor assigned:** 07-Jul-2022, PreQC No. RPAM-22-17666 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 21-Jul-2022, QC No. RPAM-22-17666; **Revised:** 28-Jul-2022, Manuscript No. RPAM-22-17666 (R); **Published:** 04-Aug-2022, DOI: 10.35248/2315-7844.22.10.353

Citation: Endo Y (2022) Implementation of Circular Economy Projects in Major Public Sector Organizations. Review Pub Administration Manag. 10:353

infrastructure can have a positive impact on the environment, they still fall under the linear paradigm. PSOs could achieve better degrees of sustainability through the closed-loop management of energy used for water, lighting, and heating. The preservation and management of ancient structures, which could not permit such efficiency modifications, may present an additional issue for the public sector. Practices from the sharing economy provide the public sector a tremendous potential to cut back on consumption, waste, and implement circularity at the organizational and systemic levels. The simultaneous or sequential use of products or equipment, as well as the donation of commodities, can all be categorized as sharing practices under the reduce or reuse categories of R-based practices. By doing this, waste is reduced and product lifespans are extended. Even though sharing has been promoted as a CE practice fit for the public sector, notably through the use of digital platforms to enable renting or peer-to-peer sharing of assets, the literature has found a number of problems that need to be handled. The potential disparities in time availability and resource access across the many PSOs as well as the reliance on the platform and the providers are a few of these difficulties. According to the public sector, CE primarily revolves around material circulation, waste reduction through recycling, and decoupling economic growth from resource extraction and degradation.