Subunit 4.3: Mobilising Resources

Learning goals

- Identify and understand the concept of resources and resources mobilisation.
- Learn how to plan and manage resources thanks to the tools and techniques provided in the present subunit.
- Reflect on how resources management can integrate circular economy principles.

Definition

What do we mean by "resources"?

The Oxford's learner's dictionary proposes the following definition of a resource:

1. "A supply of something that a country, an organisation or a person has and can use, especially to increase their wealth".
2. "Something that can be used to help achieve an aim, especially a book, equipment, etc. that provides information (…)".
3. "Personal qualities such as courage and imagination that help you deal with difficult situations".

When we think about *resource mobilisation*, we refer to the process in which a company can raise and gather resources to carry out its activities and grow. It also includes the negotiation and management of all the needed resources in an efficient way to limit waste and carbon footprint.

Considering the different definitions, we can then ask ourselves **what kind of resources do exist?**

- **Material resources:** they are tangible and physical, and we can split them into two categories: natural resources such as land, water, air, plants, minerals, forest etc. and manufactured resources, which are for example cars, hospitals, roads, furniture, books, computers, clothes, pens etc.
- **Non-material resources**: they are intangible and intellectual, such as time, energy, ideas, safety, quietness, brand perception, patents etc.

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- **Human resources**: labour, skills, knowledge, competences, experience etc.
- **Financial resources**: money, stock options, bank accounts, real estate, treasury bills etc.

What does the resources management consist of?

Resources management is the process of forecasting, planning, scheduling, and optimising all the necessary resources to fulfil a project or/and a previously settled objective. The purpose of resource management is to be the most effective and efficient possible in the use of the resources involved in the process.

Why is it so important?

Resources management and planning have many benefits, some obvious, others less:

- **It allows to optimise profitability:** When resource planning allows us to have more precise forecasts, we can assign costs precisely and it simplifies resource assignment and monitoring. Furthermore, the resources management allows an optimum use of resources, that is, we can visualise if some resources are being under-exploited or, on the contrary, if some resources are being over exploited and it could lead to a counterproductive situation.
- **It avoids waste of resources:** Some resources can be reused, or synergies can be made, and resources planning, and management helps to see where there could be some resources wasted to reduce it, or to transform some processes to make them more efficient.
- **It increases communication:** Resources management entails the design of a resources management plan, with a transparent planning and resources allocation. It is well documented and allows all the employees unique and clear information.
- **It avoids unplanned difficulties:** Drawing a map and resources management plan helps to visualise where some difficulties could arise in the process and anticipates solutions.
- **It brings security:** Resources management allows us to make forecasts and anticipate the needs of every resource for each step of the process. It brings a sense of security as nothing is left to chance.
- **It improves transparency:** Resources management and planning offers the possibility for the stakeholders to have access to the resources and their costs freely. It increases the transparency of the company and thus the trust of the stakeholders.
- **It assesses the efficacy:** Resources management is a tool which serves to evaluate the costs of a project (potential or actual) and calculate the return on investment.

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EntreComp guidelines

EntreComp gives us the following hint:

"Gather and manage the resources you need."

How?

- Get and manage the material, non-material and digital resources needed to turn ideas into action.
- Make the most of limited resources.
- Get and manage the competences needed at any stage, including technical, legal, tax and digital competences.

Competence step by step

1. Manage resources (material and non-material).
2. Use resources responsibly.
3. Make the most of your time.
4. Get support.

Methodologies and tools

When planning an activity, you need to think about all the tasks that it includes. For example, "general management" would include tasks such as invoicing, accountability, taxes payment etc. List all the tasks included in this activity and estimate the resources for each one of them.

Then, you have to think when you will carry out those tasks and reflect it on a planner. The planner can be weekly, monthly, or yearly. Having all the required resources for each task and planning with all the tasks for each activity, you will be able to evaluate the general resources needed for each period of time, even if it includes different activities at the same time.

Circular Economy application

How can we mobilise resources according to the circular economy principles?

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The aim of the circular economy is to make resources stay the longest possible time in the production-consumption circular process. Circular economy wants to achieve more with less resources, reducing, reusing, remanufacturing, repairing, recycling, rethinking, or refurbishing.

Concretely, we can mobilise resources considering:

- That it is better to **reduce** the resources input to produce our goods and/or services. It will have a positive impact on both costs and environment. If we spare resources, we avoid resource extractions, transformation, transportation, and manufacture. For example, it can be the reduction in energy needed to produce goods: we can reduce electricity, fuel, water, gas. We can also reduce the primary resources that compose the product or its packaging, for example reducing and adjusting the package dimensions to the product and use just the necessary quantity of polystyrene, scotch tape, cardboard etc.

- Keeping the same line of reducing resources, we can **recover** or rethink the product and/or the production process so that it implies less resources. This is called **Ecodesign** and it has many advantages that you can investigate by clicking here to see examples.

- **Reusing** resources sometimes needs a bit of creativity. We tend to think that used resources must be discarded, but what if we think about a second use? This is the case, for example, of the water used for the refrigerating or boiling system in the food processing industry, that can be filtered and reused. Another more innovative example is Aquabotanical, an Australian company which produces fruit and vegetables juices concentrates to export. The concentrate is produced by evaporation, and they have found a way to filter and mineralise the evaporated water that was originally discarded to bottle it as a consumption suitable water. It is now served in restaurants as fine water, which is natural, plant based and offers a set of minerals as well as a particular flavour.

- **Refurbishing** is another example of resources mobilisation and management. It is particularly relevant in the industrial sectors of aerospace, automotive, heavy duty and off-road (HDOR) equipment, EEE, machinery and medical equipment, and in other sectors such as office furniture, rail and marine.

- **Repairing** is particularly gaining importance and influence in the domestic appliances and IT sectors as consumers get tired of having to buy new products every few years because the washing machine, coffee machine, laptop, smartphone, or other devices break down and are considered too expensive to repair. This phenomenon of not repairing domestic appliances and IT products is causing a lot of financial and environmental damages. The Right to Repair (R2R) is gaining popularity both institutionally and individually. The European Union has included it in its priorities to make it a reality. In parallel, many NGO's and companies are gathering to propose alternatives and inform people on the places and ways to repair their appliances and devices. This is the case, for example, of repair.eu, which is a coalition

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representing over 100 organisations from 21 European countries to help people to exercise their Right to Repair (R2R). Refurbishing is considered a sort of repairing to extend products lifespan.

- Finally, we can mobilise resources through **recycling.**

Practical activity: **What are my resources?**

Objective: to think of the resources as something to be circularly use, at the different moment of processing the same.

Materials: Computer, paper and pen.

Time: 30-45 minutes.

Methodology:

1. Download the template here and follow the different steps to create your activity and resources plan.

2. Find options to adapt your resource management to the circular economy principles.

3. Tipped questions:

- What resources can I reuse?
- What resources could I recycle?
- Which process could I rethink to reduce the carbon footprint of my activity?
- Is there any resource that I could reduce?
- Is there anything that I could remanufacture?

Food for thoughts:

Think about how your creativity and resourcefulness can drive innovation in the circular economy.

By mobilizing resources effectively, you have the power to transform waste into valuable assets and contribute to a more sustainable future.

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Learning material suggestions

Remanufacturing Market Study:

chromeextension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.remanufacturing.eu/assets/pdfs/remanufacturing-market-study.pdf

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