BACKGROUND LITERATURE TO THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI) WORKSHOP ON CASE STUDIES OF INNOVATIONS WITH TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACTS IN FINLAND CIRCULAR ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM FOR DEPLOYMENT AND DOMESTICATION IN DEVELOPING MARKETS

Circular economy goes beyond pursuit of waste prevention and waste reduction. Circular economy is based on the restorative and regenerative principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and the materials in use, and regenerating natural systems. According to the report by the World Economic Forum, the transition towards a circular economy is estimated to represent a $4.5 trillion global growth opportunity by 2030. Moreover, Ellen MacArthur Foundation reports that the adoption of Circular economy could unlock €1.8 trillion of value for Europe’s economy by 2030. In addition, Sitra reports that circular economy will have value creation potential of €2.5 billion for Finland’s national economy by 2030. Moreover, circular economy holds promise for achieving multiple SDGs, including SDGs 6 on energy, 8 on economic growth, 11 on sustainable cities, 12 on sustainable consumption and production, 13 on climate change, 14 on oceans, and 15 on life on land. SDG 12 particularly ranked 2nd lowest for the EU Member States.

The Circular Economy Division of The United Nations Technology Innovation Labs (UNTIL) Programme is uniquely positioned because of Finland golden opportunity as a world pioneer in Circular Economy. Moreover, the Finnish road map to a circular economy 2016-2025 was the world’s first national road map to circular economy. In addition, Finland hosted the First ever World Circular Economy Forum organized in 2017 by Sitra. The Pioneer work of Ellen MacArthur Foundation has identified Plastics Economy, Food Economy and Circular Textiles as priority sectors for innovation and investment in circular economy. The European Commission, the Platform for Accelerating Circular Economy hosted by the World Economic Forum and the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform hosted by the European Union has also taken a big leap in the European Circular Economy by identifying electronic wastes and circular electronics, food and bio-economy and circular economy of the textile industry and packaging. However, Finland through SITRA Studies has identified some big pictures on five sectors including manufacture of machinery and equipment, forestry wood-chain, the food chain, construction and private consumption. Based on these extensive desk review of literatures and presentations at the World Circular Economy Forum (2017, 2018 and 2019) and further consultation with the Finnish circular economy ecosystem, the UNTIL Finland circular economy priority sectoral focus will be Circular Electronics, Circular Textiles, Circular Economy of Food Systems, Plastics Bio-economy and Circular Economy of packaging.

It is against this background that the UNTIL Finland Circular Economy is organizing the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Workshop to harvest Case studies of innovations with transformational impacts in Finland Circular Economy Ecosystem. The AI Workshop will create platform to showcase high-impact innovations in Circular Economy in the Finnish Ecosystem. Some African Circular Economy Network Members will physically attend the break-out sessions while some members will be connected virtually to identify opportunities and challenges for deploying these high-impact innovations in Circular Economy in the Finnish Ecosystem to developing markets of Africa.

The AI workshop will be followed up with the identification of challenges in circular economy in developing markets of Africa through Call for proposal to be launched across circular economy innovation value chain for innovations at readiness level 7 to 9 through the African circular economy Alliance, African circular economy
Network, UN Agencies, and Finnish Embassies among others. Proposals will be evaluated and selected by a panel of judges. Five winning projects selected in each innovation value chain category will be provided with tailor-made supports. The winning innovations will be connected to harvested Finnish companies’ innovation with transformational impacts in the Circular Economy Ecosystem. Winning innovation will be accelerated towards bankability and scaling up through Global Tech Accelerators in United States and Europe. Until Finland Circular Economy will work with these winning innovations to become bankable, grow into companies with proof of concepts, reach financial close and become scalable.

The AI workshop will be broken into two parts including the Plenary Session and the Breakout Session. Some of the questions to be addressed during the Plenary Session include the following:

- How can circular economy systems contribute to broader circularity transitions in Africa?
- What are the key factors and conditions that either enable or constrain the advance of Circular economy Innovation in Africa?
- What are key development impacts and outcomes that can be linked to greater access to circular economy innovation in Africa and what are the associated challenges?

Looking ahead, some questions that will be considered by the Finnish companies among others in the five break-out sessions on Circular Electronics, Circular Textiles, Circular Economy of Food Systems, circular pulp and paper and Circular Economy of packaging includes the following:

- Proven solutions and new innovative technologies that can promote circular economy
- SDG Impact creation potential and willingness to consider the African market
- Business model in a nutshell

On the other side, some of the questions to be answered by the African Actors during the break-out session of the AI Workshop include the following among others:

- Opportunities and challenges for the transition to circularity in Africa?
- Resource mobilization for sustaining and scaling up of successful circular economy projects in Africa
- What should be improved in terms of Circular Economy Roadmap and Policies to enhance the circular economy transition in developing economies of Africa?

REFERENCES
- Deloitte (2016): Deloitte sustainability - Circular economy potential for climate change mitigation
- OECD (2018): International trade and the transition to circular economy
- Ellen Macarthur Foundation (2019): Completing the picture – How the Circular Economy tackles climate change