



Closing the circularity gap in tourism through policy co-design

Taylor, C., Power, S., Magee, B., & McMahon-Beattie, U. (2024). *Closing the circularity gap in tourism through policy co-design*. Poster session presented at Festival of PhD research, Belfast, United Kingdom.

[Link to publication record in Ulster University Research Portal](#)

Publication Status:

Unpublished: 09/05/2024

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via Ulster University's Research Portal is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The Research Portal is Ulster University's institutional repository that provides access to Ulster's research outputs. Every effort has been made to ensure that content in the Research Portal does not infringe any person's rights, or applicable UK laws. If you discover content in the Research Portal that you believe breaches copyright or violates any law, please contact pure-support@ulster.ac.uk.

Closing the circularity gap in tourism through policy co-design

Authors

Ciara Taylor, Dr Susann Power, Dr Bronagh Magee, Professor Una McMahon-Beattie

Background to the research

- Today, we are using **80%** more of the Earth's resources than it can regenerate each year. Meaning, by 2050, we will be using up to 4 Earths (*The World Counts, 2024*)



The Tourism Industry:

Contributes 7.6% of GDP
(Statista, 2022)

Provides 22 million jobs
(WTTC, 2023)

Produces 8-11% of global greenhouse gases
(WTTC, 2022)

Northern Ireland Tourism:

2.8 million tourist in 2021
(Tourism NI, 2022)

£1 billion tourist spend in 2019
(Tourism NI, 2020)

Environmental and wellbeing issues
(DAERA, 2019)

NI is only 7.9% circular, and the tourism industry is one of the culprits *(DfE, 2022)*

Research Aim

To develop a policy framework for a circular economy within the Northern Ireland tourism industry; and thus, contribute to the development of circular economy research within tourism literature.

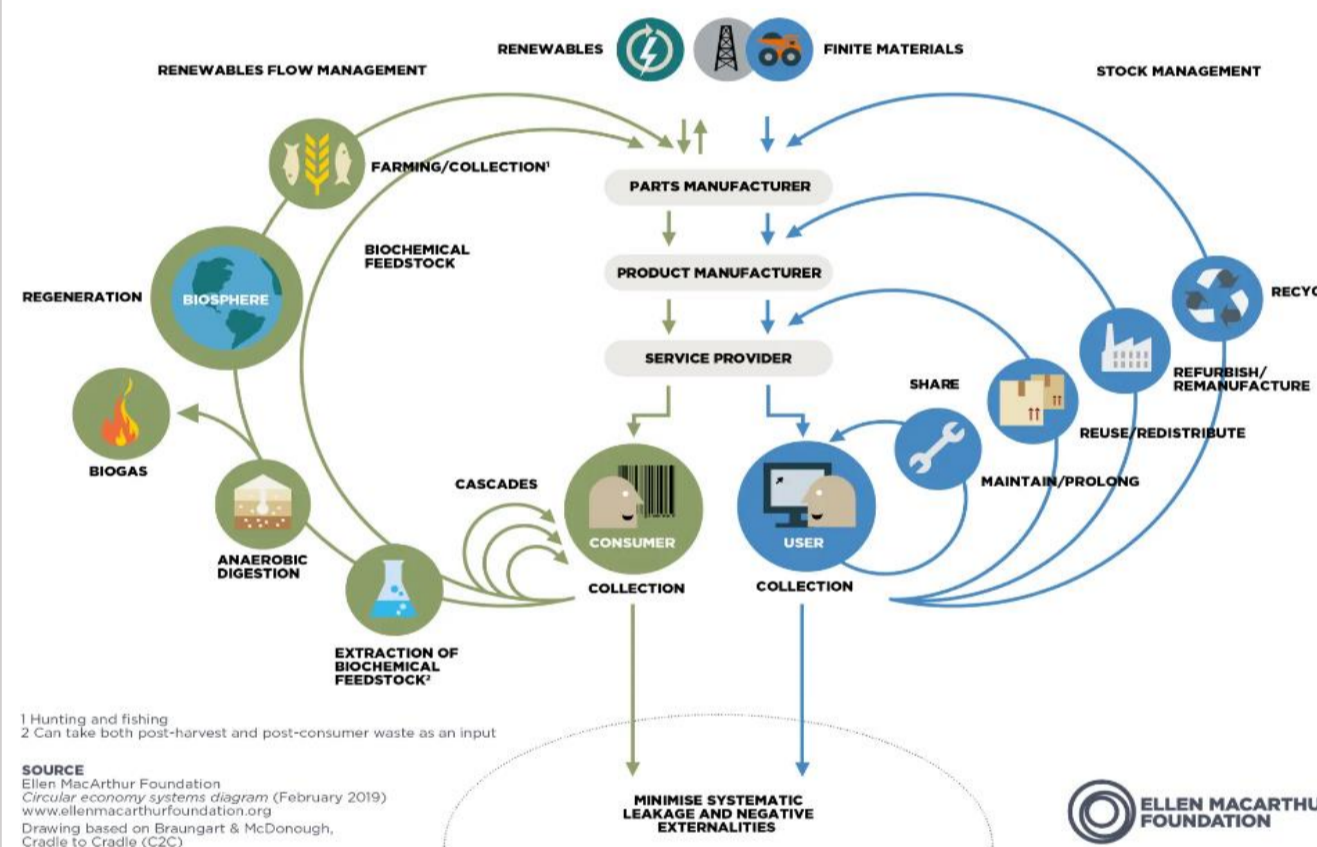
Research Objectives

- To conduct a thematic analysis of Northern Ireland policy documentation relevant to the circular economy and the tourism industry.
- To investigate, using a systems-thinking approach, the structural and systemic factors which act as barriers and enablers for achieving a circular economy within the Northern Ireland tourism industry.
- To co-design, through collaboration with policymakers, strategies and actions for Northern Ireland tourism stakeholders and policymakers to achieve a circular economy.
- To develop a tourism circularity conceptual framework which is applicable to other destinations comparable to Northern Ireland.

Overview of Key Literature

The Circular Economy

"The Circular Economy is an economic model, wherein planning, resourcing, procurement, production and reprocessing are designed and managed, as both process and output, to maximise ecosystem functioning and human well-being." (Murray et al, 2017, p.377)



Circularity in Tourism

- The circular economy is an under-researched area within tourism literature, with a key-word search among popular databases highlighting only **69** research articles relating to circularity in tourism.
- However, some circular economy principles overlap with similar concepts such as sustainability and closed-loop, which produce over **90,600** search results. Academics acknowledge that resource consumption and waste management are extremely topical within the hospitality and tourism industry (Bux and Amicarelli, 2023). Yet there is little reference to the circular economy and how it can benefit the tourism industry.

Methodology

Research Design:

Philosophy	Approach to theory development	Methodological Choice
Pragmatism	Abductive approach	Multi-method qualitative

Data Collection:

NI policy document analysis

Research Triangulation
(Creswell, 2012)

In-depth interviews

Thematic Analysis

Contributions

Academic	Practical	Methodological
This research will contribute to the scarcity of circularity in the tourism literature	The tourism circularity conceptual framework devised will aid policymakers and tourism professionals in NI, and other destinations.	Contributes to co-design and systems-thinking methodology in tourism literature.

References:

- Bux, C. and Amicarelli, V. (2023) Circular economy and sustainable strategies in the hospitality industry: Current trends and empirical implications. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 23 (4), 624-636.
- DAERA (2019) *Northern Ireland's top environmental concerns revealed*. Available from: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/news/northern-irelands-top-environmental-concerns-revealed> [Accessed Dec 19, 2023].
- DfE (2023) *Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland: Public Consultation Response Report*. Northern Ireland: DfE. Available from: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Draft-Circular-Economy-Strategy-NI-Public-Consultation-Response-Report.pdf> [Accessed Sept 29 2023].
- Klassen, A.C., Cresswell, J., Plano Clark, V.L., Smith, K.C. and Meissner, H.I. (2012) Best practices in mixed methods for quality of life research. *Quality of Life Research*, 21 377-380.
- Murray, A., Skene, K. and Haynes, K. (2017) The circular economy: an interdisciplinary exploration of the concept and application in a global context. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 140 369-380.
- The Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2015) *The butterfly diagram: visualising the circular economy*. Available from: <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy-diagram> [Accessed Dec 29, 2023].
- The World Counts (2024) *Watch our World's social and environmental challenges*. Available from: <https://www.theworldcounts.com/> [Accessed Apr 29, 2024].
- Tourism, N.I. (2022) *Republic of Ireland Visitors to NI 2022*. Northern Ireland: Tourism NI. Available from: <https://www.tourismni.com/globalassets/industry-insights/roi-visitors-in-2022/republic-of-ireland-visitors-to-ni-in-2022.pdf> [Accessed 15/10/2023].
- WTTC (2023) *Economic Impact Research*. Available from: <https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact> [Accessed Dec 4, 2023].