

# *I CYCLE, YOU CYCLE*

*How globalisation leads to the transfer of Circular Economy policies  
from the Netherlands to Turkey*

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# Preface

Dear reader,

I am currently writing this preface while drinking my *çay* in a café in Istanbul. I have a view of the Bosphorus and looking at the water that connects the continents of Europe and Asia, I realize that this is a reflection of my master thesis that I am currently presenting to you, called: "You Cycle, I Cycle: How globalisation leads to the transfer of Circular Economy policies from the Netherlands to Turkey ". This thesis research connects two areas of my personal interest: on the one hand circular economy with sustainable development in a broader sense and on the other hand international cooperation.

Probably like several students who have written their master's thesis during a pandemic, I would also like to mention that it has been an interesting time to write a thesis. Especially because I have spent the last five months abroad in Istanbul, which meant staying home for a large part, due to the lockdowns here. But with support I managed to finish the thesis on time, which brings me to using this section to owe a great debt of gratitude to those who guided me during the process.

From Erasmus University this is my thesis supervisor Dr. Jannes Willems. Your feedback was crucial and I really enjoyed our cooperation. Thanks to your feedback and fresh perspective, I was able to make considerable improvements and add the necessary nuances to my research.

From my internship organization - the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, post Istanbul - I owe a lot of thanks to my internship supervisor Ceren Erten and the consul - General Bart van Bolhuis. Your trust in me to continue my internship from Istanbul during the pandemic has motivated me enormously during this process. In spite of the many days I had to work from home, thanks to your support and guidance I was able to quickly create a bond with the team. Your knowledge and network has also been very useful for my research. And finally, I really appreciate the opportunity you offered me to continue working after my internship.

In addition, I would like to thank all respondents who participated in my research. Thanks to their time, effort and honest opinion, I was able to make interesting findings.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for thinking along and supporting me, but especially for the necessary distractions in between.

Enjoy reading,

Veel plezier met het lezen,

İyi okumalar,

Serife Dikbas

10 August 2020

# Abstract

This thesis investigates the factors that affect the policy transfer regarding circular economy between Turkey and the Netherlands and analyses the role of consular diplomacy within this context.

Many governments nowadays are looking for ways to turn their linear economy into a circular one. The European Commission recently introduced the New Green Deal, to accelerate Europe's transition to a CE. At the same time, the Netherlands has drawn up its own Circular Economy Action Plan to achieve a fully circular economy by 2050. Both plans stress the importance of international cooperation.

Policy transfer is a method used to transfer policy and knowledge from one context to another. In recent years, the increase in globalisation in particular has highlighted the importance of international cooperation for complex problems, such as the transition to a circular economy. This is also emphasised in the Circular Economy Action Plan of the Netherlands, which aims to have a fully circular economy by 2050. Since 2018, the Dutch Consulate

- General in Istanbul has been carrying out activities regarding the transfer of Dutch expertise on circular economy to Turkey. However, this is a process that is uncertain given the differences between the countries. As a result, there is a need for insight into the opportunities and obstacles that arise during this process.

By means of document analysis and 15 in-depth interviews, insight has been gained into the dimensions of the CE-policy transfer process between Turkey and the Netherlands. In each dimension, factors that have an effect on the process were examined. Existing studies on policy transfer provide virtually no insight into how factors affect each other; there is also a lack of insight into the role of consular diplomacy within this process. For example, the research showed that dimensions such as the current environment are not independent but also depend on factors within other dimensions. The research resulted in a framework in which it is indicated how the dimensions: actor motive, current environment, actor relationship and consular diplomacy, affect the degree of adoption, the type of transfer and thus the policy transfer process. To what extent the policy transfer leads to the actual realization of circular economy in Turkey, has yet to be discovered on the basis of a long-term study.

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# 1.0 Introduction

Life is a circle. One species waste is food for the other. Things grow, then die and return to the earth and from there it grows again, forming a perfect cycle. And it works. Yet, as human beings we decided to adopt another approach: we take, we make and we dispose. This linear approach assumes that our resources are unlimited, but unfortunately, there are limits to the capacity of the earth. According to the UN, increasing consumption by a rapidly growing global middle class has tripled the number of raw materials that humans extract from the earth in the last four decades (United Nations, 2018). And if we keep operating business as usual, it is estimated that by 2050 we would need three planet Earths (European Commission, 2020). So, why would we operate business as usual, if the living worlds cyclical model works? This is a question that has received a great deal of attention globally in recent years – partly due to the growing concern for climate change, the critical decline of our natural resources and the growth of sustainability-seeking consumers – and according to many, circular economy (CE) provides an answer to it. Unlike the linear approach of take, make, waste, the circular approach involves the following three principles: (i) design out waste and pollution, (ii) keep products and materials in use and (iii) regenerate natural systems (Ellen MacArthur Foundation., 2015). It is an approach that goes far beyond just recycling products; it is about an integral economic system that gives back to the earth more than it takes (European Commission, 2020).

Hence, many governments nowadays are looking for ways to turn their linear economy into a circular one, some are taking baby steps by trying to minimize their waste only, while others have already set serious goals and have taken steps to transform their economy into a fully circular one. The European Commission (EC), for instance, switched in 2015 from a plan focusing on only waste management to the Circular Economy Action Plan, to accelerate Europe's transition to a CE, boost competitiveness, promote sustainable economic growth and create new jobs (European Commission, 2015). Then, as a continuation of this plan, a new circular action plan was drawn up on March 2020, as one of the building blocks of the New Green Deal. Governments are expected to adopt far-reaching measures and policies to change the sustainability chain from the top, in order to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. In doing so, extra attention is being paid to the importance of multi-level and -disciplinary governance, not only between public, private and civil actors within the EU, but also with trading partners on transnational level. The program states that the transition to a CE is an international challenge, since economies are becoming more and more interconnected. It is therefore necessary that governments cooperate on a transnational level to transform their current linear economy into a circular one (European Commission, 2020).

A method of international cooperation that has received a great deal of attention with tackling global problems is policy transfer, whereby policy is transferred from one context to another (Legrand, 2012; Minkman, van Buuren, & Bekkers, 2018). Given the effect of interconnectivity on CE – value

chains are not solely bound to the Netherlands or Europe – and the growing importance of evidence-based policy making, actors at the national, regional, or local level are frequently seeking to learn from the successful policies, strategies, or solutions implemented abroad to tackle domestic policy shortcomings and to keep up with the economic changes abroad (Dąbrowski, Varjú, & Amenta, 2019). However, the transfer of policy is a process imbued with uncertainty and difficulties. As stated in the literature (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2009; Randma-Liiv & Kruusenberg, 2012; Minkman, van Buuren, & Bekkers, 2018; Dąbrowski et al., 2019) about policy transfer and related concepts, such as transnational knowledge exchange or learning from best practices, policy transfer can involve many obstacles. These uncertainties and difficulties seem to be even more, if that what is being transferred is a relatively new and complex concept, such as CE (Dąbrowski et al., 2019). Especially when it comes to transfers between two contrasting states, where there are different laws and regulations, norms, values and so on (Dąbrowski et al., 2019). Although several authors (Evans; 2009; Minkman, van Buuren, & Bekkers, 2018) have developed a theory on how the process of policy transfer relates to success or failure, there is no further application and operationalization of this theory regarding cooperation on CE between two, non-similar countries. In the light of this, the aim of this research is to complement the existing theory of policy transfer, by analysing the process of policy transfer regarding circular economy between two contrasting (EU and non-EU) states: The Netherlands and Turkey.

### 1.1 Problem analysis

Turkey is an important trade partner for the Netherlands. In 2018 the import volume of Turkish products stood at €3.5 billion and the exports of Dutch goods to Turkey increased by 15% to €5.5 billion between 2013 and 2018 (Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, n.d.). Like most emerging world economies, the country has been through a period of severe urbanization and population growth. Such heavily populated urban areas, together with increasing consumption, generate vast quantities of wastes. The Netherlands is one of the frontrunners in terms of circular economy, and has already developed its own government-wide program to achieve a circular economy by 2050 (European Union, n.d.). In Turkey they are not yet as far in thinking about sustainability as in the Netherlands, but in recent years we have seen that awareness of it is gradually growing; The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization launched the Zero Waste Project<sup>1</sup> in 2017, to use resources efficiently and to reduce, decompose and recycle waste at the source, and there are more and more initiatives from the private sector. And since the concept of CE is also upcoming in Turkey, the Netherlands sees a huge potential for bilateral collaboration. Thus, in September 2019, during a Joint Economic and Trade Commission (JETCO) meeting, both countries indicated that collaboration and the transfer of policies and know-how in the transition to a CE, will bring strategic economic advantages and contribute to a more efficient use of limited natural resources and their commitments to the global sustainability.

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<sup>1</sup> In Turkish: Sıfır Atık

An important catalyst for this cooperation is the Dutch consulate-general in Istanbul (from now on referred as the consulate). The consulate has incorporated CE in their core theme ‘liveable cities’ and is currently organizing a series of projects in order to contribute to the CE in Turkey. The program ‘Co-design’ for example brings together designers, governments, companies and knowledge institutions to exchange information as well as invest in future projects. In addition, other activities are organized, such as local events and visits to Dutch projects in the Netherlands. The consulate states that Dutch expertise can offer a lot to improve the CE of Turkey. However, as mentioned above, the transfer process is rather uncertain, and given the contrast between the countries (EU-factor, economic differences, population, etc.), there is an even greater need to understand the process. In order to find out whether the policy transfer from the Netherlands actually has an impact on the transition to a CE in Turkey, it is first necessary to identify the factors that influence this process of transfer between the two countries. Thus, the purpose of this explanatory research is to increase the understanding of which factors impact the CE-policy transfer between Turkey and the Netherlands, in order to provide the actors involved with a framework for improving the process of transfer, which might ultimately contribute transition toward a CE in Turkey. Furthermore, the role of the consulate during the process will be analysed, in order to carry out the PD-strategy about liveable cities, and thus CE, even further. In order to achieve this goal, the following question has been the main focus of this research:

“Which factors affect the policy transfer with regard to circular economy between the Netherlands and Turkey and how does the Dutch consulate – general in Istanbul contribute to this?”

This research question is systematically answered by answering several sub-questions. A distinction is made between theoretical and empirical sub-questions, of which the theoretical sub-questions are answered in the theoretical framework and the empirical sub-questions in the results.

- Theoretical sub-questions
  1. What is the scientific definition of CE?
  2. According to the literature, which factors have an impact on CE-policy transfer?
  3. According to the literature, what is the role of a consulate within CE-policy transfer?
- Empirical sub-questions
  4. What does the CE-policy transfer process currently involve?
  5. What are the motives to participate in the policy transfer process?
  6. What are the obstacles and opportunities faced by the actors during the policy transfer process?
  7. How does the consulate contribute to the transfer of policy?

A single case study is used to answer the questions. Based on the previous transfer that took place within the consulate, actors that have previously been part of this are selected. Using desk research, the context

of the research is clarified. Subsequently, 15 actors were asked which opportunities and obstacles they had experienced in earlier policy transfer processes and which aspects were determinant for the course of the transfer by means of semi-structured in-depth interviews. In this way, existing information about CE-policy transfer was compared with the underlying motives and experiences of the actors.

### 1.3 Social relevance

The plans to move to a full CE have been made and the transition is imminent. Without action at the international level there is no relevance to steer the transition to a CE, because it is trans-national. In fact, embedding the transition processes in an international context is inevitable in order to not run out of raw materials and to reduce environmental pollution. Particularly in countries where there are strong trade partnerships and where value chains are interlinked, such as Turkey and the Netherlands, it is important to work together to accelerate this transition in both contexts. This research is intended to help practitioners make the policy transfer process for CE effective by developing a framework that requires an understanding of the obstacles and opportunities that exist within a policy transfer process around CE. The research mapped out how factors are related to each other and what the relationship is with consular diplomacy. Based on insight into the key factors and the obstacles or opportunities they create, practitioners can improve the transition process.

### 1.4 Scientific relevance

Current literature on policy transfer mainly provides insight into the dimensions that consist of a process, rather than the factors that can have an effect on the success of a transfer. When attention is paid to factors, the focus is only on the barriers that it entails. This research complements the existing literature on policy transfer because it not only looks at the barriers that may arise during a transfer, but also at the opportunities it provides and how the factors are interrelated. To add to this, international cooperation regarding circular economy is still in its infancy, as a result of which little research has been done about it. This study thus adds to the policy transfer by relating it with CE, but also to study regarding CE. Finally, this research distinguishes itself and complements the current theory on policy transfer and diplomacy by analysing the relationship between consular diplomacy and policy transfer.

### 1.5 Reading guide

Now that the case and the investigation have been initiated, chapter 2 answers the theoretical sub-questions. Chapter 3 three provides the methodological justification. This chapter also explains which choices have been made with regard to the selection of respondents and data collection. Chapter 4 first provides an insight into the context of the study, then in section 4.2 the results of the collected data and their analysis are presented. This leads to answering the empirical sub-questions. Chapter 5 follows the conclusion and gives an answer to the main question. Chapter 6 discusses the limitations of this research and makes recommendations for future research and practice.

## 2.0 Theoretical framework

This chapter describes the most important findings from the scientific literature and gives an answer to the first three sub-questions.

### 2.1 Circular economy

In a search for the definition of CE, it is unlikely not to encounter the definition of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (n.d.): "A CE is a way to make products (including buildings) in a healthy and healing way. CE replaces the linear production system in which a lot of waste is created. This is done by using sustainable energy (such as solar and wind energy), not using harmful chemicals, and not producing waste. This requires the design of excellent materials, products (i.e. buildings), systems and business models" (p.22). Most academic and corporate works on CE are based on this definition. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation's definition is broad and indicates that a CE focuses on both economic value creation (the economic value of materials or products increases), social value creation (minimizing social value destruction in the overall system, such as preventing unhealthy working conditions in raw material extraction and reuse) and environmental value creation (restorative capacity of natural resources). A CE is thus one of the tools for a sustainable society.

However, despite the fact that most of the studies regarding CE are based on this definition, the scientific literature shows divergent perceptions of CE. The reason for this is that CE can be perceived as an umbrella concept that embraces different disciplines with each their own perception on it (Blomsma & Brennan, 2017). Korhoner, Nuur, Feldmann & Birkie (2018) state that "a single universal definition borders the impossible and should not be attempted, because it will always exclude some interests and because it is dynamic and evolving" (p.548). However, they do argue for a conceptualization of the concept.

As far as the conceptualization of CE is concerned, we see a clear distinction in the literature between the practical and the somewhat more philosophical side of CE. The practical dimension is about keeping raw materials as high quality as possible in the cycle. Many authors (Cramer, 2014; Ghisellini, Cialani, & Ulgiati, 2016; Morsetto, 2020; Van Buren, Demmers, van der Heijden, & Witlox, 2016) divide this dimension into nine components, i.e. nine Rs: (1) Refuse: preventing the use of raw materials; (2) Reduce: reducing the use of raw materials; (3) Reuse: product reuse (second-hand, sharing of products); (4) Repair: maintenance and repair; (5) Refurbish: refurbishing a product; (6) Remanufacture: creating new products from (parts of) old products; (7) Repurpose: product reuse for a different purpose; (8) Recycle: processing and reuse of materials; and (9) Recover energy: incineration of residual flows. A literature review by Kirchherr, Reike, & Hekkert (2017), in which 114 definitions of CE economy were analysed, shows that most of the definitions mainly refer to reduction, reuse and recycling. However, those references to one or more "R's" are becoming less and less after 2012. After 2012, more

scientists are beginning to see that CE encompasses more than just the reuse of materials (Korhoner et al., 2018; Kirchherr et al., 2017), it is also about the change of a system as a whole.

This second type of conceptualization focuses on a more systemic change at macro level in which the overall industry structure is discussed. It has a more philosophical component; aspects related to the social construct of CE are discussed, e.g. the overall world-views and visions on CE. Authors (Korhoner et al., 2018; Kirchherr et al., 2017) state that the diversity of actors, interests and preferences makes the governance, management and decision-making efforts around CE very difficult, therefore is important that all stakeholders involved move in the same direction. During the research both definitions will be taken into account, because the relationship with the process of policy transfer and the different definitions will be examined.

## 2.2 Policy transfer

Although the tradition of borrowing foreign ideas already took place in the Classical Antiquity<sup>2</sup> (Randma-Liiv & Kruusenberg, 2012, p. 153), policy transfer studies have only received a remarkable propulsion since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2009; Rose, 2005). The more recent studies are mostly based on the definition used by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000): “Knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system” (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p.10). These authors have incorporated the dimensions of policy transfer into a framework, based on seven questions which examine (i) the actor - motives behind the policy transfer, (ii) the type of actors and their relationship, (iii) what is being transferred, (iv) from where to where is it being transferred, (v) what are the different degrees of transfer, (vi) what constrains or facilitates the transfer process and (vii) what is the interrelationship between the process and the failure or success of policies. Scientific studies (Evans, 2009; Randma-Liiv & Kruusenberg, 2012; Minkman et. al, 2018) on policy transfer build their research on this framework. In this section, the dimensions that are most often discussed by these authors, (i) actor motivations, (ii) actor type and relationship, (iii) the extent of adoption and (iv) the environment of the recipient country, are highlighted and within those dimensions we will take a look at the relationship with CE and what might constrain or facilitate the transfer process.

The first dimension that is often discussed is the motives for policy transfer. The literature (Evans, 2009; Randma-Liiv & Kruusenberg, 2012; Minkman et. al, 2018) focuses on the dichotomy of voluntary and coercive transfer. Voluntary transfer is based on Rose’s (1991) research on ‘lesson-drawing’ and refers to an intentional, action-oriented process in which actors seek for a policy change due to dissatisfaction with current policies (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2009). On the other side

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<sup>2</sup> A quote of Plato (as cited in in Finegold, McFarland & Richardson, 1993, p.25):“...it is always right for one who dwells in a well-ordered State to go forth on a voyage of enquiry by land and sea, if so be that he himself is incorruptible, so as to confirm thereby such of his native laws are rightly enacted, and to amend any that are deficient”

of the continuum, there is the direct-coercive transfer in which leaves the adopting actor with no freedom of choice. This form of policy transfer usually occurs in developing countries, while voluntary transfer generally takes place in developed countries (Evans, 2009; Newmark, 2012). In addition to the study of Rose (1991), Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) underline the importance of paying attention to the bounded rationality of actors, since the process depends on the perception of the actors and the imperfect knowledge of contextual factors. Thus, between these two extremes, the literature also refers to semi-coercive transfers, i.e. 'negotiated' (Evans, 2009, p.245) or 'conditional transfers' (Minkman et. al, 2018), where the adopting actors are being 'compelled' to change current policies in order to benefit from certain advantages, such as investments or membership in an international organization. Minkman et al. (2018) indicate that the degree of coercion can influence the process of transfer. For example, pressure can lead to an inappropriate transfer, which can ultimately result in poor policy in the adopting country.

As far as CE is concerned, the literature generally speaks of a non-coercive, learning approach (Dąbrowski et al., 2019; Lewandowski, 2016). Although the motives have not been applied specifically on CE, the transfer around themes based on environmental prosperity, such as CE, usually have three main drivers (1) technical learning, (2) the desire to conform to external norm and values, and (3) political benchmarking and bandwagoning (Boyd, 2017). These drivers can be linked to both the practical and systemic change side of CE; for example, the technical, benchmarking and bandwagoning approach can be more linked to the practical side, whereas the approach based on norm and values is more likely to be a holistic one. Boyd (2017) states that when environmental-policy transfers are driven by benchmarking and bandwagoning, it is less likely that the transfer will lead to a successful adoption. Benchmarking occurs when actors make comparisons to the ones that are the best in class in order to create opportunities for improvement. This could eventually lead to bandwagoning, where concerns for competitiveness (avoid lagging behind or outperform the competitor) overshadow the willingness to engage in the transfer, leading to cooperation on unstable soil and, delays and failures in policy adoption (Boyd,2017). Stone (2012) also argues that an emphasis on best practices only, leads to less recognition of problems and much less research on unsuccessful and failed policies; the emphasis is mainly on success stories, while knowledge about the process of trial and error can also be valuable. However it is important to note that this approach is based on environmental policy transfers, and although CE embraces environmental prosperity, the current interconnectivity of value chains can ensure that actors participate in the policy transfer process because they cannot afford to be left behind. So it's interesting to see if this motive is an impediment to the CE-policy transfer between Turkey and the Netherlands. In addition, these motives can also be categorized as the type of transfer. For example, benchmarking, as mentioned above, is more a result of the underlying motive of economic prosperity. It is expected that there are underlying motives linked to knowledge sharing or benchmarking, and that the abovementioned motives (knowledge sharing and benchmarking) are more likely to be types of transfer.

The second dimension that gets attention in the literature is the actors participating in the transfer process. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) focus on the various types of actors and have included the following in their framework: elected officials, political parties, bureaucrats/civil servants, pressure groups, policy entrepreneurs and experts, transnational corporations, think tanks, supra-national governmental and nongovernmental institutions and consultants' (Dolowitz & Marsh 2000, p. 10). However, other studies underline the importance of other factors which can be included within this dimension, such as the actors' role within the process, the sources they bring to the process, their interrelationship, political preferences, openness towards foreign policies and decision-making power (Evans, 2009; Minkman et al., 2018; de Morais, 2005). For example, the relationship between actors may have an impact on the transaction costs (e.g. the transaction costs between two EU-actors could be lower than a transaction with a non-EU-actor such as Turkey) or the extent to which an actor has the power to make decisions can also strongly impact the transfer process (Minkman et al., 2018). Furthermore, the existence of a dense network, caused by informal relations and face-to-face interactions, can lead to a successful transfer (Minkman et al., 2018, p.232). The adoption of a CE can be categorized as a complex problem, where emphasis is placed on conflicts of values, highlighted by the clash between environmental protection and economic development priorities (Ali & Vladich, 2016). To steer towards a close relationship and cooperation, can eliminate these conflicts. Complexity theories often refer to the importance of the engagement and inclusion of all relevant actors in order to create a shared understanding and commitment to the process. As such, Ansell & Gash (2008) have created a collaborative governance model. According to the authors, in order to properly shape the collaborative process, it is necessary to include the following core elements in the process: trust-building, face to face dialogue, feedback of intermediate outcomes, shared understanding and commitment to the process. By applying these elements, ownership of the problem, among other things, can be created. According to Evans and Davies (1999) and Stone (2004), policy transfer networks consisting of a wide variety of actors, as opposed to bureaucratic networks, can therefore also facilitate soft aspects (dissemination of norms and ideas, behaviour) of transfer. These aspects, which can be categorised in the system change dimension of CE, play an important role in shaping the behaviour of actors and the path of policy change, while creating room for a better fit with local needs. This research will analyse the presence of these elements during the policy transfer process and the role of the consulate in facilitating these elements.

Third, a distinction is made in the extent to which policy is adopted. Based on Rose's (1993) theory, the literature distinguishes between five different degrees of policy oriented learning: copying, emulation, hybridization, synthesis and inspiration (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2009, de Morais, 2005; Newmark, 2002). Copying is about transferring policy exactly as it is, without any adjustments. Various authors state that it is a manifestation of a poor search for solutions, often leading to the failure of the policy adoption (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2009; Minkman et al., 2018; Randma-Liiv & Kruusenberg, 2012). It has previously been described that policy transfer on competitive advantage motives (benchmarking/bandwagons/best practices) carries risks since it can quickly lead to the one-to-

one adoption of examples that do not fit the local context. The fact that learning lessons or transferring policies from abroad should be done with some caution, given the suitability of foreign solutions for the recipient's context, reiterates the risks that policy transfer on the basis of competitive advantages may entail. Adoption using an already existing policy as a starting point, but with the possibility to make adjustments is called emulation. Such a degree of transfer can also lead to improvements in the original policy (Newmark, 2002). The third and most common form of policy oriented learning is hybridization, in which two components from different places are being combined (Evans, 2009; Newmark, 2002). If merging is done using components from three or more different settings, it is called synthesis. Finally, there is inspiration. This happens when an idea inspires a new way of thinking about a policy problem and helps to facilitate policy change. This research will examine the extent to which the CE policy from the Netherlands is adopted in Turkey. The relationship with the aforementioned drivers of environmental policy transfer (technical learning, the desire to conform to external norm and values, and political benchmarking and bandwagoning) and the degree of adoption will also be investigated.

Finally, the importance of the environment is also emphasized in the policy transfer literature (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2009; Minkman et al., 2018). Although within this dimension Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) refer to the geographical aspects of policy transfer (i.e. national or cross-national transfer), other authors (Evans, 2009; Minkman et al., 2018) refer to the way in which environmental factors can influence the policy transfer process. After all, policies can have a different response within another context. These factors relate to institutional, socio-economic, political and cultural dimensions of the environment to which the policy is being transferred. For example, according to Dabrowski et al., more prosperous regions are able to devote more resources to innovation in circularity. But also the innovative and technical capacity of a state, as the presence of alternative solutions with which the policy can compete, are factors that can influence the process (Evans, 2009; Minkman et al., 2018). Dąbrowski et al. (2019) state that most of the barriers to policy transfer related to CE arise within this block, such as the presence or absence of a recycling culture within the socio-cultural element or the institutional element, where the presence of a certain environmental legislation may make the transition to a CE economy easier or more difficult.

To summarize, the factors included in the case study are actor motives, the actors participating in the process, the extent of adoption and, finally, the environment to which the policy is transferred. Subsequently, we will look at the role of the consulate in relation to these factors.

### 2.3 Consular diplomacy

There is little scientific literature available on the role of consulates (Fernandez & Melissen, 2011; Okano-Heijmans, 2010) not to mention the role of a consulate in relation to policy transfer. However, thanks to some overlapping processes consular affairs gained a new political saliency and this has also led to more attention in the literature on the role of consulates' diplomatic elements. The globalization of the economy and the trans-nationalization of national communities, with the corresponding migration

pressure, as well as large scale natural disasters or international terrorism, have highlighted the strategic role of consular posts. The literature (Fernandez & Melissen, 2011; Okano-Heijmans, 2010) mainly explains how this change originated by describing the historical development of consulates. However, these descriptions do show how current consular activities are related to environmental diplomacy, which can create interfaces with CE.

The importance of consular diplomacy is mainly related to the opportunities it offers in facilitating governance (Fernandez Pasarn, 2016; Okano-Heijmans, 2010; Boyd, 2017). According to Fernandez and Melissen (2011), “consular services have become highly dependent on a good working relationship with a number of domestic non-governmental actors, to the extent that the quality of such collaborative partner-ships has become a necessary condition for success in consular assistance” (p.8). While the classic consular institution has not disappeared, what we are seeing is the rising tendency to innovative methods for collaboration between states and non-state actors, to address the latest developments in international society (Constantinou, Kerr, & Sharp, 2016). Due to their geographical position, knowledge of the domestic conditions (e.g. norms, values and culture) of a country, consulates can more easily network with local parties. This enables them to create synergy between the different values of countries and encourage collective learning, thereby making it easier to address complex and interrelated problems (Haas, 2004).

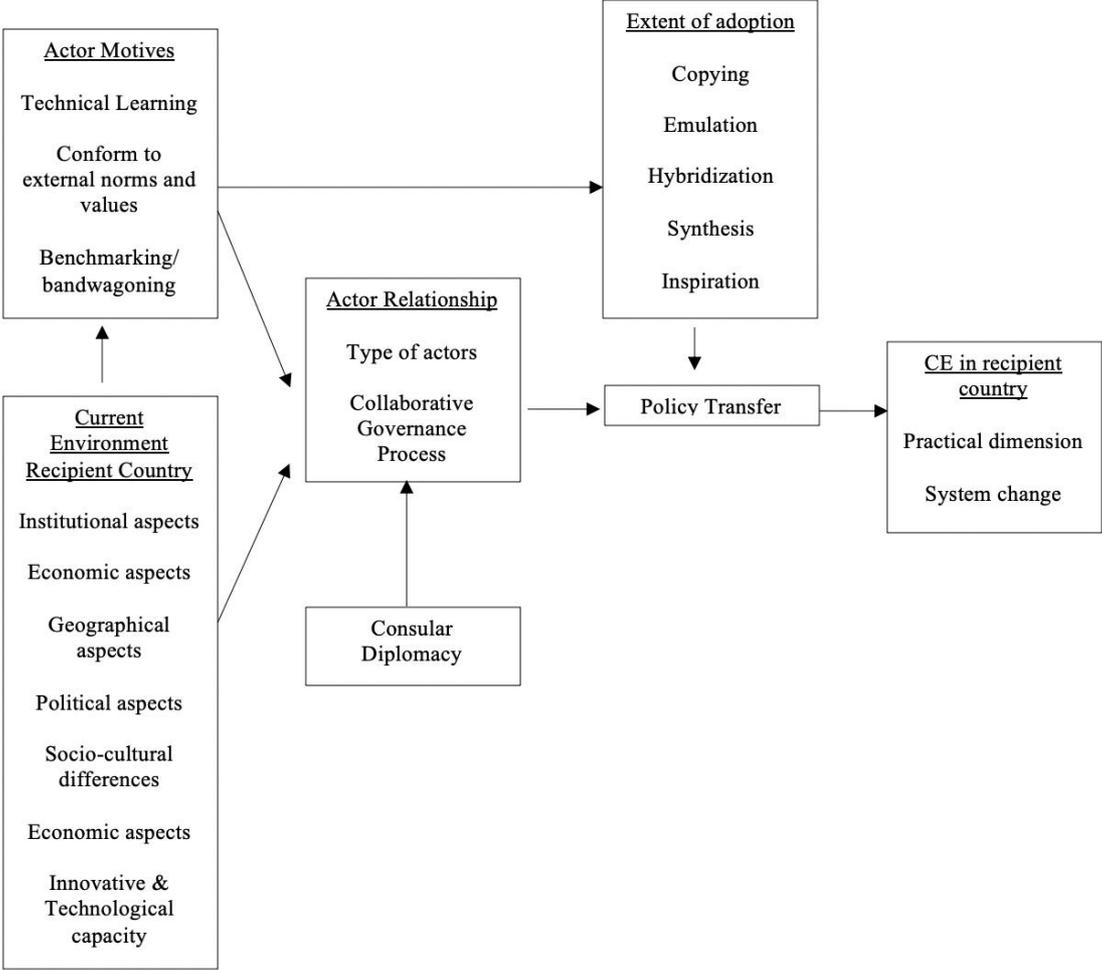
As described earlier, the transition to CE can be categorized as a complex problem, where the diversity of actors, their aim and values makes the governance, management and decision-making efforts around CE difficult. Furthermore, a weak relationship between actors can lead to the failure of the transfer process. Collaborative governance practices might be helpful to eliminate these conflicts and the role of the consulate as a facilitator can steer this collaborative governance process. This case study will investigate how the Dutch consulate-general in Istanbul gives direction to this collaborative process.

## 2.4 Conceptual model

The theoretical concepts and operationalization discussed above lead to the conceptual model on the next page (p.16). The model gives an overview of the factors that influence the policy transfer process, ultimately leading to a CE in the recipient country. The factors also influence each other, only the current environment of the recipient country (i.e. the situation at the beginning of the process) remains independent. For example, the current situation of the environment (e.g. the current political situation in the country that may influence the interrelationships) may influence the actor relationships, it may also determine the actor motives (e.g. the desire for knowledge transfer because of the country's current innovation and technology capacity). Actor motives also influence the actor relationships, a relationship within policy transfer on competitive advantage motives can be different from policy transfer on knowledge transfer motives. Motives can also influence the degree of transfer, as described above, for example benchmarking can lead to a direct adoption of policy or knowledge. In addition to the fact that actor relationships are influenced by the environment and actor motives, they are also affected by how

the consulate steers them; the consulate can act as a bridge builder and enhance the synergy between the actors, leading towards an open and transparent relationship, which is beneficial for the transfer of the policy. Thus, actor relations have a direct effect on the policy transfer, which ultimately leads to CE in the recipient country, and this also consists of two dimensions: practical and systems change. This research will analyse the factors that affect the policy transfer process, the degree of circular economy in the country is not taken into account, as this requires a long-term study

Figure 1. Conceptual model Policy Transfer Process.



## 3. Methodology

This chapter provides the methodological justification of this research. It sheds light on the choices that have been made with regard to the selection of respondents and data collection and it reflects on the validity, reliability and ethical aspects of the research.

### 3.1 Research design

This study has a qualitative approach; a qualitative study offers the opportunity to go into depth (Babbie, 2016). The aim of this research is to understand more about the factors that affect the CE - policy transfer process between Turkey and the Netherlands and the role of the consulate during this process. This is done using a single case study. A case study is a suitable research method when you want to acquire concrete, contextual and in-depth knowledge about a specific subject, or case. With this method it is possible to explore perceptions and motivations of actors, their experiences, which is relevant within this study since we want to

#### 3.1.2 Case selection

The case is the CE-policy transfer between the Netherlands and Turkey. First, the selection for CE was made on the basis of multiple incentives. For example, the EU Green Deal plays an important role in the transition to CE, because (as indicated in the introduction) this deal means that governments will have to make a move to CE within a short period of time and develop policy in this area, the importance of international cooperation is hereby emphasized.

Secondly, the relationship with Turkey is particularly interesting because of the JETCO agreement in 2019, in which the countries agreed bilaterally to promote cooperation for the realization of CE. In the first instance it was planned to demarcate the research to only Istanbul, because the consulate is located in Istanbul. However, during the orientation phase it was found that the circular activities of the consulate are not only limited to Istanbul, but also cover other cities in Turkey. This is because the sectors that receive attention within the CE theme, such as textiles and agriculture, are not only located in Istanbul but throughout the country.

The case is based on the activities of the consulate that have been or are still being carried out since CE came on the agenda. By taking these activities as a starting point, it will be possible to examine the experiences of those involved in the policy transfer process. Desk research was carried out to gain insight into the context of the research. This will be discussed in chapter 4.1.

#### 3.1.3 Respondent selection

Respondents are selected according to criterion and snowball sampling. The aim of this research is to collect high quality content information. This makes it important that the respondents have sufficient knowledge about the transfer process. When selecting the respondents, their functions and relationship

with the research concepts were taken into account. Furthermore, the snowball method is used during the study to recruit several respondents that have been active within the CE- policy transfer process between Turkey and the Netherlands (Creswell, 2013).

The selection of respondents was made by taking the activities of the consulate as a starting point. More information about these activities can be found in chapter 4.1. Actors who had previously worked with the consulate on CE were selected due to the experiences they gained during the collaboration, which are valuable in answering the research question. An important factor here was to create diversity in the selection: respondents from the consulate, respondents from Dutch organisations that participated in the policy transfer such as knowledge institutions such as consultancy firms, local NGOs and think tanks that, like the consulate, facilitate cooperation between the Netherlands and Turkey, respondents from the Turkish private sector and the public sector. Unfortunately, it was not possible to acquire a respondent from the public sector. Several attempts were made to plan an appointment, the snowballing method was also deployed, but unfortunately no response was received to the request for an interview. In addition, due to the covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to visit the municipality to make an attempt to schedule an appointment on location. Table 1, below, provides an overview of the respondent list.

*Table 1. List of respondents.*

Respondent	Title	Organisation
1	Advisor for Innovation, Technology & Science	Netherlands Innovation Network – Consulate General Istanbul
2	Technical Advisor Circular Economy	Business Council for Sustainable Development – Turkey
3	Associate, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – Turkey
4	Advisor for Innovation, Technology & Science	Netherlands Innovation Network – Consulate General Istanbul
5	Sustainability Manager	Business Council for Sustainable Development – Turkey
6	Community Lead & Circular Economy Business Design Trainer	Impact Hub Istanbul
7	Sustainability Consultant & Lecturer	Brika Construction & Sabanci University
8	Circular Economy Business Design (Circo) Trainer	CIRCO
9	Co-Founder	D-Cube Circular Economy Innovation Cooperative
10	Co – founder & Director	Impact Hub Amsterdam
11	Consul – General	Netherlands Consulate - General Istanbul
12	Senior Business Developer & Program Manager   Circular Economy & Environment	Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO13)
13	Head of Product	Circular IQ
14	Senior commercial officer	Consulate General Istanbul
15	Senior Sustainability Communications Specialist	Arçelik Global

### 3.2 Data collection

This study has a qualitative approach; a qualitative study offers the opportunity to go into depth (Babbie, 2016). The aim of this research is to understand more about the factors that affect the policy transfer process between Turkey and the Netherlands and the role of the consulate during this process. Qualitative data collection methods were used to map out detailed perceptions and experiences of the actors involved in the policy transfer between the Netherlands and Turkey (table 1). By doing so, the experiences of those involved can be discussed substantively. This is done through a case study. When carrying out a case study, it is desirable to make use of different data collection methods in order to get an in-depth understanding of the case.

Within this research, document – analyses and five teen in-depth interviews were conducted to gain detailed information about the experiences of the actors participating in the policy transfer process. The indicators described earlier in the theoretical framework were used as guidelines for obtaining policy documents and drawing up interviews.

By means of a document analysis, information has been obtained on Turkey's current situation in the transition to CE. Insight has also been gained into the current activities of the consulate. The consulate's intranet was used to obtain these documents. A report of activities carried out by the consulate as part of their public strategy 'liveable cities' was used. From this a selection was made of activities related to circular economy. For the context, use was made of previous analysis reports drawn up by the consulate. This information, together with the conceptual model, formed the basis for developing the questionnaire for the interviews.

By discussing the perceptions and experiences of the respondents in detail, an attempt is made to uncover determining factors that influence the process of policy transfer. The interviews are semi-structured in nature, with a preliminary topic list consisting of the most important concepts that are later discussed during the interview. In a semi-structured interview, the questions serve as a guideline and there will also be room for further questions. The interviews are recorded with a recording device (mobile voice recorder) and then transcribed. Appendix 1 shows the topic list, including the questions and sub-items as guidelines. This list serves as an interview guide as well as a further operationalization of the concepts, as does the code-tree in Appendix II.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

In this study, data is analysed by means of data analysis spiral. This spiral describes the steps in which data can be analysed (Creswell, 2013). These steps are connected to each other. The first step in this process is data managing, the audio-records were organised within a database. Next, the files were converted into a transcript to start the analysis. The interviews are transcribed by means of the multimedia player VLC. This program makes it possible to listen back to the interviews with a delay, making the transition approachable. The next step in this process is reading and memoing. Notes helped

to explore the database. Followed by effective analysing; In this phase a detailed description is built up. This means that fragments from the transcripts are linked to a code. Next, axial coding is applied. The codes from the open coding phase are categorized within the dimensions of policy transfer and CE, Atlas.ti has been used for this (Creswell, 2013). The codes from the code tree and the transcripts have been added to Atlas.ti. The codes are then categorized into code groups and each document is provided with codes. Finally, for each code group an output has been created of the quotes linked to the codes within that group.

### 3.4 Validity & reliability

The validity of a research refers to how accurately a study measures what is intended to measure. In addition to the validity, an attempt is also made to ensure the reliability of this research. Reliability refers to the replicability of the study (Creswell, 2013). First, the theoretical framework is drawn up on the basis of the concepts from which the dimensions and indicators derive. These indicators are taken into account when preparing the interview questions; they form the base of the code tree. This allows the elaboration of the research concepts to be in line with the literature. Socially desirable answers are have been tried to prevent by asking questions during the in-depth interviews. Risks for socially desirable answers within this study may arise, for example, because the policy-recipients do not want to make bad statements about the transfer process and the cooperation with the Netherlands, in order to prevent them from losing support. The same could happen if the officials of the consulate choose to put the process of policy transfer in a positive light, so that they can continue their projects. Moreover, the interviews are recorded, transcribed and encoded. These steps ensure that it has been closely monitored whether what it is intended to measure corresponds with the literature. This also ensures reliability, because the applied indicators can be repeated in such a study.

Furthermore, internal validity strategies recommended by Creswell (2013) are used. A strategy used to increase validity concerns triangulation. In this research different forms of data collection, such as desk and field research, are used. By applying these research methods, researcher bias can be reduced. This is done by sending the transcripts of the interviews back to the respondents, so that they can check their content.

### 3.4 Ethical aspects

According to Creswell (2013), it is important to anticipate on ethical issues. This research takes into account the anonymity of the respondents and the confidentiality of the data obtained.

During the collection of data, respondents are beforehand given information about the aim of the study and are asked for permission to record audio and use the recordings as research data. The respondents signed an information – and consent form to verify this or (if it would not be possible for them to sign up the pdf document) they verified this by means of a reply on a mail. The information

from the recordings is made confidential by means of anonymization and processed in the research report. The results of the research is treated confidentially during the study.

This research is being carried out in another country. Because of this, part of the interviews were also conducted in another language and values and principles that are important within the Turkish culture had to be taken into account. This did not pose a problem during the research, because the researcher has a good understanding of both the Turkish and Dutch language and norms and values.

The research was also carried out during an internship at the consulate. However, the research was not commissioned by the consulate, but only by Erasmus University. The internship only facilitated access to respondents and information about the context.

## 4.0 Results

This chapter presents the results of the desk research and interviews and provides an answer to the empirical sub-questions mentioned in the introduction. In order to give you an idea of what the CE-policy transfer process in Turkey consists of, this chapter starts with presenting the context of this study, by describing the current situation and the key actors around CE in Turkey, and by describing the activities of the consulate. This information was obtained through desk research. Subsequently, the results of the interviews are discussed in section 4.2, the statements of the respondents regarding the theoretical variables are presented. In the next section the results are analysed by looking at the underlying relationships between the different variables. Finally, in the last paragraph, the findings from the empirical framework are compared with the findings from the theoretical framework.

### 4.1 Context

This section provides an answer for sub-question 4: What does the current policy transfer process consist of? It contains information about the context of this research and gives an overview of the activities of the consulate regarding CE and the key actors in Turkey. This information is mainly obtained through internal documents of the consulate.

#### 4.1.1 Circularity in Turkey

The majority of circular projects in Turkey today are focused on waste utilization. The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization launched the Zero Waste Project<sup>3</sup> in 2017, to use resources efficiently and to reduce, decompose and recycle waste at the source. The policy requires all municipalities, public- and private-sector entities to have a certain amount of waste separation facility per area. According to the plan, public awareness will be ensured in the recycling of solid wastes, zero waste project implementations will be expanded, the separate collection system of wastes will be increased and implemented in 400.000 buildings by 2023, and the recycling rate will be increased to 35 percent. Up until today the plan is still gradually shifting to cover the full economic cycle (TC Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2015).

Also, some actors in the Turkish private sector have adapted circular initiatives over the years. Arçelik for instance, the biggest white good producer of Turkey, gives priority to CE in its operations and introduced some products made out of recycled plastics. The company has been involved in several CE related activities of the consulate over the past years, mainly regarding circular product design in collaboration with Dutch design collective CIRCO. Another example, is when Arçelik approached the consulate in 2019 and asked to link the company with Dutch expertise, in order to develop new circular business models. The aim was to bring the concepts of circularity, in terms of material reuse,

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<sup>3</sup> In Turkish: Sıfır Atık

energy/water savings and other transformations, to their factory. Other companies rely mainly on resource efficiency. Süttaş, one of Turkey's largest dairy producers, for example, uses almost all of its organic waste to manufacture biogas (The ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, 2019).

Besides the government and the private sector there are also important NGOs that are addressing the transition to a CE in Turkey. The Business Council for Sustainable Development - Turkey (BCSD) is currently the leading NGO in the field of CE. Together with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), BCSD launched in 2016 the Turkey Materials Marketplace (TMM), which is an online platform where companies can offer their waste with potential to be used as secondary raw material for sale (The ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, 2019). With the growing need for an environment where everything about CE is explained in detail, BCSD then launched the Turkey Circular Economy Platform in May 2020, in which, in addition to TMM, focus is also given to the provision of data and sources related to CE, the development of measuring instruments, providing grants and technical support, and create opportunities for cooperation. In addition to this, BCSD noticed throughout the years that the platform members have had difficulty converting their business models to a circular one; the companies appear to stick to conventional manufacturing and do not want to take risks by adopting new methods. In order to give the process a boost the EBRD, which also funds the Turkey Circular Economy Platform, decided in 2018 to run a technical assistance program called 'Circular Vouchers'. The aim of the programme is to grant companies and help them in the procurement of consultancy services (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, z.d.).

BCSD and EBRD work closely together with the consulate to establish CE initiatives in Turkey. Accordingly, the consulate and BCSD organized a Circular Design workshop in 2018, provided by the Dutch company CIRCO. During the workshop CIRCO trained Turkish circularity professionals as trainers, to be able to teach their circular design methodology in Turkey even further by local trainers. In addition, the consulate has also ensured that the Netherlands, as a donor of EBRD, will contribute an amount 500,000 Euros for the Circular Vouchers Programme from the Dutch Trust Fund. The main pillars of this fund covers: Circular Vouchers, Platform Setting, Trainings and Capacity Building with study tours to the Netherlands.

Another important NGO in Turkey is Impact Hub Istanbul, which is a part of the Impact Hub Network. Impact Hub is a global network that facilitates in building ecosystems to solve complex societal challenges through entrepreneurial solutions (Impact Hub, 2020). Their focus is in the areas of food, plastics, inclusion and circularity. Thus, they have been cooperating closely with the consulate in bringing together Turkish and Dutch actors to promote CE in Turkey. For instance, together they hosted the workshop Circular City Istanbul in September 2019. During the workshop, global and local experts co-designed tangible, action-oriented project proposals on five local challenges categorized in: Plastics, Food, Water, Urban Mobility, Textiles. At the end of the working session, the project proposals were presented to the Mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem İmamoğlu. The solution on circular food was the winning

proposal. The consulate and Impact Hub have pursued this outcome in their activities and are currently organising a circular food event (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, z.d.).

From the information above, we can conclude that CE is definitely on its way in Turkey. It is not as well established in policy systems as in the Netherlands, which has its own CE action plan, but several actors have included some aspects of the concept in their activities. It is also notable that, at government level, the main focus has been on reducing waste, while the private sector and NGOs are taking it a step further by contributing to the creation of ecosystems and attempts for adapting their business models.

#### 4.1.2. Consular activities

The consulate adopted the PD strategy liveable cities in 2017 and since then it carries out various activities, also within the sub-theme CE. The activities can be divided into the following categories: visits to local key actors, meetings, seminars, network receptions and events, city-trips within Turkey and to the Netherlands, and co-design events. To clarify the latter: the aim of the co-design is to bring relevant Dutch and Turkish actors (i.e. governments, companies, universities and research bodies) together to improve cooperation, forge new partnerships between the Netherlands and Turkey, and increase the visibility of Dutch design and Dutch approach in Turkey (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2018).

In addition, there are also exceptional activities in which the consulate takes a proactive approach. A good example for that is the EBRD funding as mentioned in the previous section. By mobilising its own network, the consulate has ensured that the Dutch Trust Fund is deployed in the Vouchers programme of the EBRD. As mentioned earlier, this voucher system enables Turkish companies to procure expertise to develop circular business models. The consulate hopes that this will also be beneficial for Dutch knowledge institutes, they see a potential in linking Dutch knowledge to Turkish companies. At the same time, this Voucher system also ensures that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), who often face financial barriers, are also included in the transition (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, z.d.).

Appendix III gives an overview of the CE activities carried out by the consulate since September 2018. From this it can be stated that the core focus of the activities is based on bringing together Turkish and Dutch Circular Economy actors in an ecosystem, to identify the key challenges in value chains, combine best practices and different approaches, co-design actionable solutions and develop meaningful partnerships. This focus mainly results in the transfer of knowledge – not only technical as shown in the theoretical framework, but also knowledge regarding the process– the introduction of the theme CE and the linking of Dutch & Turkish companies. However, the underlying motives cannot be extracted from this document. The interviews do shed more light on this.

## 4.2 Interviews

This chapter will describe the main results that came forth from analysing the 15 different interviews. To answer the sub-questions 5, 6 and 7, and to give structure to the chapters, a description of the statements of respondents is given per variable, as shown in the conceptual model (figure 1). To start with, section 4.2.1 will deal with question 5 on the motives of actors to participate in the policy transfer process. Section 4.2.2 will discuss which aspects of the current environment affect the policy transfer within this case. Next, we will take a look at the extent of adoption in chapter 4.2.3. The factors that affect the actor relationship will be discussed in section 4.2.4. These chapters will provide an answer for question 6, the obstacles and opportunities during the process. Finally, question 6 regarding the role of the consulate will be discussed in section 4.2.5.

### 4.2.1 What are the motives to participate in the policy transfer process?

As far as the motives of the actors are concerned, the interviews show that there is a distinction between the motives of Dutch actors, the motives of Turkish actors and an overarching motive that affects both groups. These are the three main motives: (i) interdependency due to connected value chains, (ii) promotion and linking of Dutch expertise within Turkey as a motive for the Netherlands and (iii) acquiring Dutch expertise in order to remain on an equal competitive level.

#### *Interdependency*

All fifteen respondents agree that the main reason for the policy transfer is that the value chains between Turkey and the Netherlands are closely connected. With the circular action plan of the Netherlands and the EU Green Deal, the Netherlands must sell fully circular products by 2050. This also means that the production of these products must become circular. In other words, the manufacturers at the beginning of the supply chain have to be circular as well. According to all respondents, Europe and the Netherlands are an important sales market for Turkey. Mainly in the field of textiles and consumer electronics. As respondent (R) 3 says:

*“Now many value chains have become global, very international. Textiles for example, which is an important sector for Turkey.. If the Netherlands needs to change by 2050, it means that Turkish manufacturers exporting to the Netherlands must change as well, otherwise the Netherlands will never be completely circular or Turkish parties will not be able to sell their products to the Netherlands. Therefore, in order to achieve circularity in general, countries need each other and they need to cooperate.”*

In addition to the pressure from the EU Green Deal and the Dutch CE action plan, most respondents (9) also point to the shift in Dutch consumer behaviour. R1 explains this as such:

*“You have the Dutch fashion industry that has production here in Turkey. The Dutch fashion industry is also being asked by the Dutch environment, such as consumers who are becoming increasingly aware, to make that production chain more sustainable. So, they also have to take Turkish producers with them and Turkey cannot stay behind if they want to sell their products in Europe.”*

#### *Promotion and connection of Dutch expertise*

The second motive advocated by all respondents is the promotion and linking of Dutch expertise in the Netherlands. All respondents position the Netherlands as one of the pioneering countries in the field of CE, not only in Turkey but also in Europe, and that a developing country as Turkey is an opportunity for the Netherlands to promote the Dutch know-how. For example, R1 states:

*“We are looking at whether universities can work together on knowledge building in the field of circular economy, but also whether Dutch knowledge organizations can use their knowledge in Turkey... contract-based research actually. In this way, Dutch organizations earn money and Turkey has knowledge transfer that is useful to them.”*

Likewise, R4 says that the policy transfer makes it possible for the Netherlands to show their leadership in the field of CE. There are also ten respondents who indicate that the transfer of Dutch expertise is an opportunity for Dutch organizations to test their knowledge, innovations and products on a larger scale. R8, for example points towards the industry and the many manufactures in Turkey, and he argues that if the Netherlands succeeds in supporting the Turkish transition towards CE, it will make a significant impact in terms of sustainability. In addition, R4 uses the following words to explain this:

*“It is a living lab for the Netherlands. There is so much to be resolved here, in the circular economy area. That is why the Netherlands is active here...to come and try its own tools, on a larger scale and of course, more problematic arena.”*

#### *Acquiring Dutch expertise in order to remain on an equal competitive level*

The third main motive is on the Turkish side of the story. As mentioned earlier, Europe and the Netherlands are a large export market for Turkey. For this reason, it is not an option for Turkey to lag behind in the field of circularity, since they would otherwise not be able to export to Europe. In addition to this motive, Turkey's competitive advantages over other manufacturing countries such as China and India are also mentioned several times, as an important motive to acquire Dutch expertise. For example, R11 says the following about the policy transfer process:

*“I did not really think things would go so smoothly, but that's because there is also a great Turkish interest in being well ahead of the game in those value chains and distinguishing them from other parties. So a smaller loop means that Turkey has an advantage over China and India and is more mobile within the European frameworks.”*

All Turkish respondents indicate that the reason why they specifically cooperate with the Netherlands is because of the Dutch leading position in circularity. For example, R7 says that when talking about circular economy or circular solutions, she immediately thinks of the Netherlands and Dutch innovations. R3 and R6 point out the Circularity - Gap Report for the Netherlands, which shows that the Netherlands, at 24.5%, is three times better than the global average, which remains at 8.6% (Circularity Gap Reporting Initiative, n.d.).

#### *Type of transfer*

As indicated in the theoretical framework, the type of motivations from the literature are more in the form of the type of transfer, i.e. benchmarking, or technical learning. During the interviews the respondents were therefore also asked how they characterize the type of transfer. All respondents characterize it as a transfer of knowledge, but not only technological knowledge, also knowledge about processes and business models are important, according to them. In addition, attention

#### 4.2.2 What are the obstacles and opportunities faced by the actors during the policy transfer process?

This section gives an answer to sub-question 5 by presenting the obstacles and opportunities regarding the current environment, extent of adoption and the actor relationship.

#### *Current environment*

Respondents were then asked which current local factors, that can be related to the environment, influence the policy transfer. The following factors have come to the fore: the institutional factors (15 respondents), current economic aspects (15 respondents), cultural factors (13 respondents) and geographical factors (8 respondents).

#### **Institutional factors**

The institutional factors can be divided into the following three main factors: Structure of the public administration, legislations and bureaucracy. Respondents who have raised these factors, have linked it all to obstacles that these factors bring along.

#### *Structure of the public administration*

The structure of the public administration, as one of the main factors that affect the CE-policy transfer process, is addressed by ten respondents. According to them, Turkey's current administrative status

delays the transfer process. An important reason for this is that the current public administration is relatively fragmented; administrative organisations have a natural tendency to look only at what is on their own plates, while the transition to CE is an issue that exceeds everyone's limited responsibility and where interactions with others determine the outcome. R3 explains this as follows:

*“Policy-making around circular economy is not proceeding as desired. Turkey has so far only focused on waste. The reason for this is that when we say waste management, it is only under the authority of the Ministry of Environment, but when we say circular economy, other stakeholders are involved. This requires very serious cooperation and coordination at the policy-making stage.”*

R11 notes that the municipalities are gradually making action plans towards CE, but that he would have wished to see more alertness at all levels of government, because right now they have to invest in that relationship first. He then stresses that this has also been the path they have had to go through in Europe and that the experience of this process is also something they share with the Turkish actors.

*“It is also quite a difficult process to take other departments on board. I have also experienced this in the Netherlands. When we started to put it on the agenda in Europe, we also talked to the European Commission about a circular economy action plan. At that time it was primarily put on the agenda of the Environment Council, but it also had to be put on the agenda of the Agriculture Council, the agenda of the Economic Cooperation Council and Transport Council. It should not only be seen as an environmental party, it is much broader than that. So it is quite a difficult process to get that together, because other ministries tell you it is interesting, but they say it is not the issues they pay attention on... So that was quite a complicated process and you notice that now... that is the process Turkey is ready for now and then it just helps if a country like the Netherlands can guide you through this.”*

Another element raised by respondents concerning the structure of public administration is the EU factor. The fact that the Netherlands is an EU member and Turkey is not, influences the policy- and decision-making. Respondents point towards the driving force of the European Union and argue that these do not apply to Turkey. This can also be related to what has been said about the motives to participate in the policy transfer process. The role of the EU also emerged as an important factor, since the private sector wants to comply with European standards, because of their competitive advantages. R12, however, stresses the importance of a stimulating government, despite the fact that the private sector is already involved, and links this to the EU as follows:

*"Looking at the Netherlands and I think also looking at Western Europe, the government has an important role in stimulating sustainability, both in the field of energy transition, adaptation as in the field of materials, transitions and circular economy. I also think that the European Commission wants to give very clear direction to this. Hence the Green Deal that is being set up, so that governments can play a stimulating, guiding, active and positive role. I think that achieving these government goals is particularly crucial. That's because I see that companies only pick up on circular or circular economics to a certain extent. At some point it will start to sand and cost money and then it's going to be difficult."*

In short, the fragmented public administration and the absence of European normative standards lead to a less involved government. This results in a delayed transfer process, because the interaction between the government and other stakeholders determines the transfer. It also has an influence on the development of legislations, which is further elaborated in the section below.

### Legislation

According to the majority of respondents (13), the lack of legislation is an obstacle. Some emphasise the normative role of government in setting standards for what is important for the society and give examples such as subsidies, fines or policies. Legislations are according to them a way to set the tone on the importance of the transition and it is necessary to trigger the society in acknowledging that it is an economic vision, instead of a personal concern of people with "goat wool socks"<sup>4</sup>, as R11 typifies it.

Others also point to regulations that determine the definition of sources, such as waste as commodity. Due to a lack of, or discrepancy between, regulations that define what waste is, many types of raw materials are still regarded as waste. According to the respondents, this interferes with the transition process. For example, barriers arise in the transfer of knowledge and policy on circular textiles, where second-hand cotton is seen as a raw material in one country but as waste in another. R13 uses the following words for this:

*"It's okay to say, we as Turkey don't import waste from Europe. But that's because you look at waste in a very classic way, because the regulations in Turkey are slightly different. So if you would redefine that in a circular way, it is actually that Turkey imports raw materials from Europe. So there is high quality recycling, because then with those raw materials you can offer products and thus create a circular system."*

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<sup>4</sup> Literally translated from the Dutch characterization 'geitenwollensokkendragers', which refers to otherworldly, environmental activists.

### *Bureaucracy*

The third element that is part of institutional factors is bureaucracy. This could also be included under the factor 'structure of public administration', but because bureaucracy is not limited to public administration and also includes other institutions, it has been decided to address this factor separately. The respondents link bureaucracy to the top-down approach within both the government and the private sector, which often means that permission must first be sought from a person in charge of the management. This, in turn, delays the policy transfer process or even prevents it from taking place at all. A good example of this, emerges from an interview with R15, who previously made an attempt to cooperate with a Dutch research institution:

*“We had a great project, which would allow us to analyse our value chains from A to Z and create a fully circular business model. We had a great offer from the Netherlands, but it could not be realized because we did not get approval from the management.”*

Examples are also given of the division of responsibility and procedures, which often makes processes slow or even for asking permission to participate in workshops. According to 8 respondents adaptability and flexibility during the cooperation are key to tackling unexpected obstacles and enhancing the chances of success, however they state that the Turkish public institutions are unfortunately not agile enough due to these top – down structures. Other reasons given by the respondents for the lack of agility is a shortage in terms of budget, which will be discussed in the next section.

### **Economic factors**

Another important factor in the current environment of the recipient country which, according to the respondents, has a significant influence on the policy transfer process is the current economic status of the country. The aspects that emerge can be divided into two elements: (i) budget, which is associated with an obstacle, and (ii) Turkey's production capacity, which (as mentioned in the actor motives section) is associated with opportunities.

### *Budget*

Eleven out of fifteen respondents indicate that the lack of budget for circular investments has a major impact on the transfer process. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, this factor also affects other elements such as the priority given by actors to enter into joint ventures with Dutch companies and (as mentioned in the previous section) it is also seen as one of the reasons why the Turkish government is not agile enough. For example, R1 says that budget ensures that a country can invest in innovations and technologies regardless of the outcome, but unfortunately, due to the lack of budget, Turkey cannot keep

up with global developments quickly enough. According to all eleven respondents, there are still gaps in Turkey's financial capacity to support circular business models. As R8 states:

*“In the Netherlands, the government has a budget available for these trainings and workshop, and in Turkey this is not the case. The private sector has to put it on the market. That makes it a lot more complicated, of course. Companies have to pay a lot of money to follow a training. So, the challenge is bigger, because there is less financial support from the Turkish government.”*

A lack of budget therefore also affects the extent of adoption. Transfer mainly remains as inspiration, because money is required to implement what has been transferred. As indicated in paragraph 4.1, the consulate has tried to cover this gap by providing financial support in cooperation with the EBRD and BCSD. Of course, the underlying motive here was that this would benefit Dutch companies. In addition, it has an impact on Turkey's innovation and technology capacity, which is also one of the factors highlighted in the literature as environmental factors. However, it emerged from the interviews (8 respondents) that although low innovation and technology capacity is an obstacle for the transition to a CE, it is not an obstacle for the policy transfer between the Netherlands and Turkey. On the contrary, it is considered to be a driver for cooperation. As mentioned in chapter 4.2.1, one of the motives for participating in the transfer is because Turkish actors want to acquire Dutch knowledge, due to their own shortage of innovative and technological expertise.

#### *The current market*

According to all respondents, the current market in Turkey is another important factor influencing the policy transfer process. As indicated in section 4.2.1, one of the motives for policy transfer is that the countries are interdependent. The fact that Turkey is a large manufacturing country and has strong trade relations with Europe, as well as with the Netherlands, influences the motives. Ten out of fifteen respondents indicate that this can influence the role of the government and the development of policy and regulations relating to CE in the long term:

*“In terms of potentials for the collaboration I would say, the production potential of Turkey, labour and geographic proximity, the fact that Europe is Turkey's most important export market...But on the other hand, as an obstacle, of course, the lack of regulations, incentives... these are obstacles that slow down the transition towards a circular economy. But as I said the European Union has announced its circular economy action plan and with these strong trade ties, Turkey cannot remain outside this framework any longer. We hope that this will lead towards new policies .”*

So, the country's production capacity is an important factor. What is interesting here is that this factor is seen as a potential, despite the fact that other countries such as China and India also have a high production capacity and, in comparison with Turkey, have lower production costs (Duran & Temiz, 2016). Respondents indicate, however, that the reason that this factor is seen as an opportunity is also related to Turkey's localisation. This is explained in more detail in the next section, geographical factors.

### **Geographical factors**

Geographical factors are, on the contrary to the previous factors, only seen as opportunities. Respondents mainly mention the placement of Turkey within this factor. the location of Turkey brings with it economic advantages, making it attractive for European actors to cooperate with Turkish actors. To give some examples, R11 formulated this as follows: *“Covid is an extra support there, because of this we have learned that the dependence on one or two parties very far away, that that is very risky”* and R2 says: *“I think Turkey is very beneficial. It is relatively close, and also culturally it is much closer to Europe than, for example, Asian production states.”*

Other geographical aspects, such as infrastructure or climate in the recipient country, were mentioned as little or not at all by the respondents. Only R11 indicates that a dysfunction in the infrastructure actually creates opportunities, because linking these problems to the CE and indicating that the transition also offers solutions for the infrastructure, creates opportunities to include actors in the transfer process and link them to Dutch companies.

### **Socio-cultural differences**

Finally, the cultural aspect is also mentioned. According to all Turkish respondents, there are opportunities in linking CE to the older Turkish traditions. They refer to the centuries-old recycling and reuse habits embedded in the Turkish culture, which makes the idea of CE not too foreign to Turkey's traditional lifestyle. At the same time these respondents mention that this tradition has been faded over the years, but see an opportunity in promoting environmental awareness by reminding the society of these values.

However, the existing lack of environmental awareness is still perceived as an obstacle for the policy transfer process, by the majority of the respondents (13). According to them, compared to Dutch consumers, Turkish consumers are less sensitive about the environmental costs of a product and state that price comparison still plays a major role. As a result, actors may be less receptive to certain solutions, because they are not able to sell consumers the story behind it. So, although the private sector does have a stake in the transition for its European consumers, the need for this is not recognised within its own borders. R14 gives the following example: *“Companies like Şişecam, which use recycled glass, do not want to advertise with it, because people would think that it is not hygienic or not clean.”*

In addition, the fact that there is relatively less demand from society also means that certain things get stuck on the adoption side; the absence of demand, reduces the need to form policy and

regulations, and to allocate budget. As indicated earlier, these factors have a significant influence on the extent to which policy can be adopted.

#### *Extent of adoption*

When asked about the extent of adoption, respondents mainly referred to facilitating a new way of thinking, by sharing knowledge about techniques and processes and experiences. However, they also stress that it is difficult to determine the exact degree of adoption after the transfer, as this can differ from one receiving actor to another. It has a lot to do with the starting position of an organization; A company that has been working on CE for years is very different from a company that is hearing it for the first time. Solutions regarding CE are also long-term projects and because this subject has only been underway for two years, it is not yet possible to determine how far the companies are in internalizing what the Netherlands has transferred.

#### *Actor relationship*

A fourth variable resulting from the theoretical framework is the importance of the type of actors participating in the process and their interrelationships. Regarding the actor types, it emerged from the interviews that aspects such as the decision making power of the actors and actor commitment are factors that influence the policy transfer process between Turkey and the Netherlands. For example, 8 respondents argue that it is always important that the people at charge of making changes in their organisation need to absorb what is being transferred. Respondents from the consulate indicate, for example, that during the workshops they often have to deal with actors who take part in events out of their own interest. However, they cannot subsequently turn it into concrete action plans, because the actors do not have the right position of powers to do so. It is therefore important for actors with decision-making powers to recognise the value of CE themselves, in order to subsequently take part in the transfer process. In addition to the commitment of actors brought together by the consulate, both from the Dutch and Turkish parties, reference is also made to the dedication and knowledge of the officials within the consulate who steer the policy transfer process. Respondents (11) are especially noting towards the Consul General's own interest and knowledge (due to his background) regarding CE and they indicate that this is also the one of the reasons for the success of the collaboration. For example R3 says:

*“We have direct access to the consul and as someone who is so experienced and has worked in this field before, the effect of him on the acquisition of this fund from the Netherlands is one hundred percent. Perhaps we wouldn't have gotten that fund if he hadn't been involved”.*

Another element that all respondents notice, is the importance of diversity of actors, that participate in the transfer process. As mentioned earlier the lack of governance between public, private and people delays the transition to a CE, because the transition towards CE is a complex issue concerning different

stakeholders, so interaction between different groups determines the outcome. This triangle cooperation should, according to all respondents, also be reflected in the policy transfer process. R11 explains this as so:

*“So if you say that policy transfer only takes place between two governments, I consider that to be a limited definition. No, the strength here lies precisely in the business community and in those knowledge institutions. Moreover, as a consulate we not only represent the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but we are also there for companies in the Netherlands. So the story becomes much stronger if this policy transfer is a collective policy transfer: public, private and society. Without that triangle of cooperation, this would be a bland story.”*

Finally, attention is also paid to the degree and manner of interaction between the actors. All respondents stress the importance of working together in an informal, active way during the transfer process. According to the actors, this leads to a shared understanding of the problem (10 respondents), trust development (8 respondents) and commitment to the process (13 respondents). R10 explains this with the following words:

*“I think, the fact that the consulate was very open to do something in a participatory way means you go beyond the traditional networking, because what happens is that there's one thing that happens at the surface, which is we have these working groups and talk about topics. But in another human level, people meet each other. They are friendly, become friends, trust each other. You know, what happens is you break down the barriers, the cultural barriers, that kind of agenda barriers, maybe the sector barriers”*

As expected from the theoretical framework, we can state from the above that the consulate plays a role in shaping the actor relationships. In the next part, the role of the consulate within the policy transfer process is explained in more detail.

#### 4.2.3 How does the consulate contribute to the transfer of policy?

It emerged from the interviews that the role of the consulate is seen as far beyond the traditional role. Respondents use words like “broker”, “catalysator”, “facilitator”, “connector”, “bridge builder” to characterize the role. Most of them (10 respondents) indicate that such an involvement of a consulate is quite exceptional and all of the Turkish respondents mention that they are surprised by the commitment. R3 formulates this as follows: *“Of course we also work together with other consulates, but the Netherlands is really an exception, because of their expertise and informal atmosphere.”*

Attention is also paid on how the consulate creates an enabling environment for the transition. Not only because they address the needs from both sides, make the right connections between Dutch organisations and Turkish actors and facilitate cooperation, but also because they try to reduce problems

in the current situation in order to ensure an effective policy transfer. Respondents (8 respondents), for example, point to training courses that they receive or give in order to pitch the vision behind CE to the decision-making people within their organisations. Also some respondents (R1, R2, R3, R5, R11, R14) refer to the creation of more financial capacity through the Voucher System, as described in section 4.1.

In describing the role, further attention is paid to the following aspects: the co-design meetings and the informal approach of the consulate. As mentioned in the previous sections, respondents indicated that the co-design meetings of the consulate create a special bond with the actors involved. Respondents further noted that this form of cooperation, in addition to creating ownership, also leads to the formation of networks. So says R9:

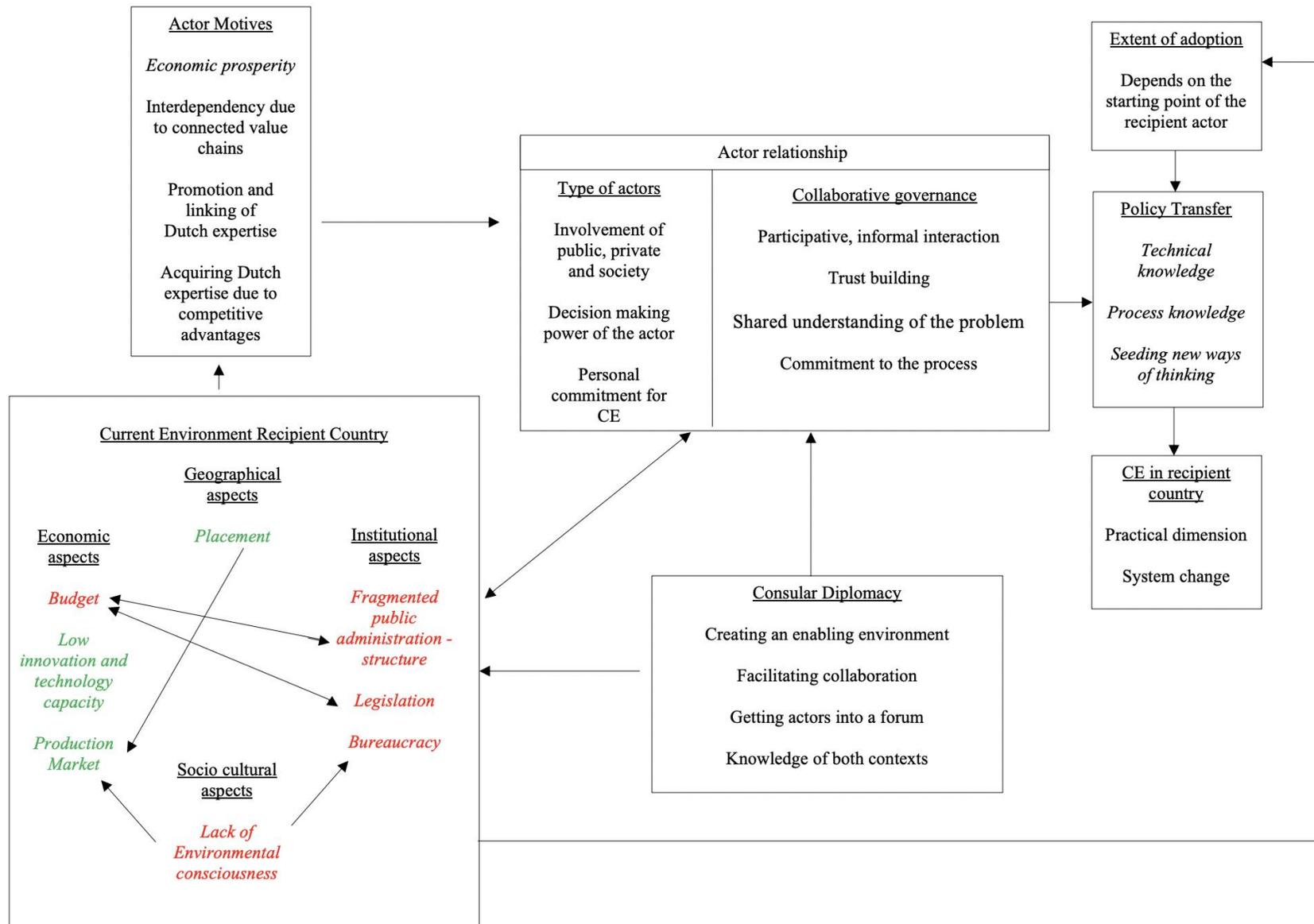
*“Very often after those workshops I was told by people 'what a nice network we have become', old participants also come to the drinks of the new workshops and the participants have indeed created their own network among themselves.”*

Finally, the informal attitude of the consulate and its positive consequences are emphasized by the 9 respondents. The respondents indicate that the informal atmosphere leads to commitment, R4 formulates this as follows:

*“ Generally our environments are not formal, round tables, everyone addresses each other with their name... A very open environment and the attitude of even the consul ensures that people can relax and share more. In Turkey in particular it is very difficult, because usually you go to an event to sit down, be quiet and listen without it being interactive. This participative method of the consulate is really an eye opener and people feel more open to share ideas.”*

The findings are shown visually on figure 2 the next page (p.36) For each dimension it is indicated which factor applies within this case. By means of colours it is shown whether it is an obstacle or an opportunity for the transfer; red coloured factors form an obstacle, while factors in green form an opportunity for the policy transfer between Turkey and the Netherlands. Compared to the model from the theoretical framework, there is a difference in the relationships between the factors. In the section above a brief explanation of how the factors relate to each other has already been given, but in the next section this will be discussed in more detail.

Figure 2. Framework CE – Policy Transfer Process



### 4.3 Analysis

Figure 2.0 shows that the various factors are interrelated. The theoretical framework indicated that the motives for policy transfer are as follows: (1) technical learning, (2) the desire to conform to external norm and values, and (3) political benchmarking and bandaging. The interviews mainly highlighted an underlying motivation, in which economic welfare is an overarching driver. The motivation 'the desire to conform to external norm and values' is in line with the motivation of Turkish actors to develop circular products on the basis of competitive advantages. The motivations of technical learning and political benchmarking and bandaging can rather be categorised as 'type of transfer'. It emerged from the interviews that this mainly concerns the exchange of knowledge and the exchange of the beliefs regarding CE. However, what is missing in the theoretical framework, is the transfer of process knowledge and knowledge for creating own business models.

What is interesting here is the motive of the Turkish actors, who indicate that knowledge from the Netherlands is important for Turkey's competitive advantages over other countries. This motive can in fact be related to Boyd's (2017) theory, which states that competitive advantages can in the longer term lead to bandwagoning and that it may ultimately cause an unstable relationship and misfit of the policy in the recipient country. However, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, this theory is based on environmental diplomacy and although CE does contain environmental prosperity, the concept is based on environmental prosperity by economic interventions. As the empirics show, economic cooperation is a major component of CE because of the growing interdependence and that in order for a state to be fully circular it might mean that another state has to be circular on certain areas as well. It goes without saying that it is crucial to guard against bandwagoning, but if this is managed properly, it can be prevented and the motives for competitive advantages can actually strengthen CE.

With regard to the factors that have emerged in the case of environment, it has been indicated in the theoretical framework that, according to the authors, most obstacles to policy transfer consist of these factors. This is also shown by the empirics. Institutional and financial factors in particular are seen as a barrier. Greater government involvement is crucial for the development of policy and legislation and for budget allocation. These results regarding the lack of government involvement are in line with the document analysis, which shows that over the years the Turkish Ministry of Environment has remained focusing on waste separation only. Cultural aspects currently form a barrier, in the sense that society is less sensitive than Dutch society to the ecological value of a product. However, the geographical factors are regarded as opportunities for cooperation. The country's location (close to Europe) brings opportunities within this case because CE is also concerned with the shorter lines within the loop. Also, the geographical location is related to the sales markets of the private sector (largely in Europe), which is an incentive for the private sector to comply with European standards.

The theoretical framework showed that the environmental factors are independent. However, this research shows that the current environment of the country can also be influenced by other factors. First of all, these factors also influence each other. For example, due to a low level of environmental awareness, there is no consumer demand; this is reflected in the local supply from the private sector, the formation of policy and regulations, and therefore also in the budget made available to meet the demand from society. At the same time, the role of the consulate and the interaction between the actors also influence the current situation of the country, e.g. change in the budget by the Voucher Systems or a shift in the structure of the public administration by the triangular cooperation during the meetings.

As far as the actors and their interrelationships are concerned, the positions of power and the involvement of actors stand out. As an addition to the current literature, this case emphasizes the importance of triangular cooperation between public, private and people. Thus, the presence of actors from different sectors is important for governance.

The empirical evidence show that the degree of adoption cannot be determined in advance. This depends very much on what the receiving party is capable of. However, the respondents do stress the importance of adapting the policy to local conditions. So we can say that the direct copying of what emerges from the literature is no longer relevant in this case.

As far as the role of the consulate is concerned, it appears that the consulate in Istanbul does more than what is described in the theory of consular diplomacy. It describes the modern role of the consulate as an intermediary for both countries, but within this case the Dutch consulate-general in Istanbul is not only an intermediary, but also a catalyst and facilitator of the process. Because of his active involvement, their activities to create an enabling environment, also due to the knowledge and involvement of the consul, makes the consulate an important part of the process.

## 5. Conclusion

This research started with the question: “Which factors affect the policy transfer with regard to circular economy between the Netherlands and Turkey and how does the Dutch consulate – general in Istanbul contribute to this?” This question was answered by means of a document analysis and in-depth interviews with 15 respondents who previously participated in a transfer process. The results showed that the CE-policy transfer process consists of different dimensions, where in each dimension different factors affect the transfer process.

The most important factor for the dimension actor motives is economic prosperity. This results in three motives for actors to participate in the CE-policy transfer between Turkey and the Netherlands: (i) interdependency, (ii) promotion and linking of Dutch expertise as a motive for the Netherlands and (iii) acquiring Dutch expertise in order to remain on an equal competitive level as a motive for Turkey. The factor economic prosperity as a driver for these motives is strongly affected by the current environment of Turkey.

Factors that have the most influence on the process are to be found in the current environment dimension. The factors within this dimension do not only affect the actor motives, but are also related to the other dimensions of the policy transfer process, such as the extent of adoption, the role of the consulate and the actor-relationship and can be subdivided by the obstacles and opportunities they bring for the process. In addition these factors have a significant affect for the current environment as well. The biggest obstacles are caused by institutional factors, in which aspects of the structure of public administration as the presence of legislation have a strong impact on for example the actor-relationship or on socio-cultural aspects (e.g. environmental consciousness). In addition, economic factors also strongly determine the course of the process; the absence of budget has, among other things, strong consequences for the creation of enabling legislation, the will to participate in the process and the extent of adoption. There are also factors related to the economic status that provide opportunities, e.g. Turkey's current production market and low innovation and technology capacity has a positive effect on the will to participate in the transfer process. Turkey's placement as geographical factors have a positive effect on the actor-motives as well.

Factors influencing actor relationships are the type of actors (the diversity of actors, their decision-making power and commitment to CE) and the degree of collaborative governance, consisting of aspects such as interactive, participatory interaction, trust building, shared understanding, commitment to the process.

The degree of collaborative governance is strongly shaped by consular diplomacy which consists of the factors: facilitating collaboration, getting actors into a forum, knowledge of both contexts, creating an enabling environment. All significant factors are listed in table 2, below.

Table 2. Factors effecting the CE - policy transfer process.

<b>Factors</b>	<b>How does it affect the CE-policy transfer process?</b>
Economic prosperity	A desire for economic prosperity results in actors wanting to participate in the CE-policy transfer.
Geographical placement	The location of the recipient country has an impact on trading interests, thus indirectly influencing the commitment to transform the current economy in to a circular one.
Economic status	A low financial capacity of a country could impact the priority of local actors, which can hinder the policy transfer process. But at the same time, a difference in market form and innovation and technology capacity can provide opportunities, because of a bigger need for cooperation.
Institutional	A fragmented public administration, the lack of incentive legislation and high bureaucracy cause obstacles for the transfer of CE – policies.
Socio-cultural	A difference in environmental consciousness (i.e. if the recipient country's society is less sensitive about environmental costs of products and services) will cause obstacles for the transfer, because a lower demand from the society effects, for example, the creation of law and regulations, the allocation of budget.
Actor types	Lack of diversity within actors that participate in the process (government, public and civic cooperation) causes obstacles, because interaction with all stakeholders determines the outcomes. In addition, the decision-making power and personal commitment of the actors are crucial factors for the success of the transfer.
Degree of collaborative governance	A participatory interaction between the actors, paying attention to the trust building, the emergence of a shared understanding of the problem, to which each actor feels committed, can lead to ownership of the process.
Consular diplomacy	The presence of consular diplomacy where the consulate has knowledge of both contexts, facilitates cooperation, brings actors together and creates an accessible environment has a positive impact on the policy transfer process.

## 6. Discussion and recommendations

The results of this research are subject to some limitations. A few of these have already been addressed in the methodology (chapter 3). This section highlights the two most important limitations of this research, as a result, recommendations are made for the practice and further research.

### 6.1 Discussion and the research- limitations

This research can fill the knowledge gap on CE-policy transfer between an EU country and non EU country. As stated earlier there is hardly any research regarding CE-policy transfer, the studies already carried out are aimed at countries within the same constitutional framework, such as the European Union or the United States of America. This study distinguishes by looking at an EU Member State and a non-EU state. In addition, the study complements limited studies on consular diplomacy by providing insight into the role of the consulate in the policy transfer process.

The research provides a framework in which the main dimensions of the process and their interrelationships are presented. It also provides an overview of the most important factors and shows how these factors affect the process. These results can serve as important tools for practitioners to make the CE-policy transfer process effective. Diplomats and consular policy officers can use these results to trigger local actors on the opportunities that arise when participating in the transition process and also on the current obstacles that still need to be removed. In addition, the results provide an overview of how opportunities and issues could be linked to solve problems.

The biggest limitation of this research is that the civil servants from the Turkish government are not represented in study. Interviews with the current respondents revealed that institutional aspects are one of the main obstacles for the transfer of policy. Verification of this information by the government would increase the representativeness of the research results. Unfortunately, it was not possible to schedule an interview with policy officers because there was no response to multiple requests. By increasing the number of interviews with local NGOs and think tanks, who work closely with the government, an attempt has been made to fill this gap.

Another limitation that has to be discussed, is related to socially desirable answers of the respondents. The respondents were or still are all part of a policy transfer between the Netherlands and Turkey. In order to prevent the cooperation relationship from deteriorating or to emphasize the effectiveness of the cooperation, it is possible that stakeholders may have left answers that may have a negative effect on future cooperation behind. An attempt was made to eliminate this limitation by participating during the study in co-designs where policy transfer takes place. Unfortunately, due to the covid-19 pandemic, these co-designs did not take place. So, this limitation is reduced by conducting more interviews and by comparing the results from the interviews with document analysis.

## 6.2 Recommendations

In this last part, recommendations are formulated based on the results, the conclusion and the limitations of this study. A distinction is made between recommendations for future research and recommendations for practice.

### 6.2.1 Recommendations for future research

The first recommendation regarding future research is that, with regard to completeness, this research should be repeated among Turkish public officers. In this way, the findings from this study can be compared with the results from interviews with the public officers. Such a study can lead to a multi-layered understanding of why certain factors (e.g. the fragmentation of the government) apply within Turkey's public administration and how the government intends to remove these obstacles or seizing the opportunities.

The second recommendation is to use build on the framework in figure 2 by using it as a conceptual starting point for a participative research. As mentioned in the previous section, one of the limitations of this research is that no observation could take place during a policy transfer event (e.g. the co-design sessions) because of the pandemic we are in. For this reason, it is recommended to use this framework during the observation of a transfer process. By doing so, the framework can be tested in practice and new insights regarding the relation of the factors and their effect on the process, or further operationalisation of the factors can be obtained.

The third recommendation for future research is to use this framework as a conceptual starting point for other environmental-policy transfers, for instance with sustainability policies, green mobility policies, urban planning and so on. Because CE has a strong influence on economic prosperity, it is valuable to look at whether the same factors apply to ecological policies where economic prosperity is not the main driver.

Finally, it is also recommended to investigate how the policy transfer process leads to the actual realization of circular models (both policy and business models) in Turkey, by conducting a long-term study. The transition to a CE is still a fairly new concept; the EU has only had an integrated action plan since March 2020 and in Turkey the concept is still mainly in its infancy; active policy transfer has only been implemented since the end of 2018. This makes it valuable to investigate how the policy transfer process will take shape in later stages.

### 6.2.2 Recommendations for practice

In addition to recommendations for future research, a number of practical recommendations can also be formulated on the basis of this research.

First of all, it is recommended to facilitate collaboration with Dutch and Turkish actors in developing citizen-participation methods in Turkey to speed up the transition towards a CE. This study shows that various stakeholders – private or public - are important for the transition to CE. The theoretical framework of this research reflects the importance of interaction between all stakeholders and the coordination of different power relations and conflicting interests in order to ensure effective decision-making. The study also shows that the involvement of the society and government regarding the transition towards CE is currently still limited Turkey. A major reason why society is not committed to the CE-transition is because of the low level of environmental awareness. Environmental awareness within society has an effect on the formulation of policy and regulations which can accelerate the transition to CE. As with the Netherlands, the demand for circular products in Turkey may increase if more environmental awareness is created within society.

In the Netherlands, policymakers who are working on the integration of sustainable policy measures, such as the energy transition, are concerned with involving the locals at the earliest possible stage. As a result of these complex problems, policy development from the 'bottom up' by citizens' initiatives is receiving increasing attention. These participation methods can provide opportunities to increase triangular cooperation in Turkey concerning CE. In short, it is recommended to transfer applicable participation methods from the Netherlands and, in cooperation with the local actors who already work closely with the consulate, to look at possibilities to use these participation methods in Turkey to trigger citizens.

Secondly, it is recommended that the framework and the list of factors emerging from the study are used at the JETCO meeting in September. As mentioned in the introduction, a JETCO meeting took place in 2019 between the Turkey's Trade Minister and the Netherlands' Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Minister. A second JETCO meeting will take place in September 2020. During this meeting, attention will be paid to the cooperation between Turkey and the Netherlands regarding CE. It is recommended that the findings of this study are included as agenda items for the agreements concerning CE. In this way, the current obstacles in the policy transfer process can be brought to light and agreements can be formed to solve these problems.

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# Appendix

Appendix I: Interview guide

Appendix II: Code tree

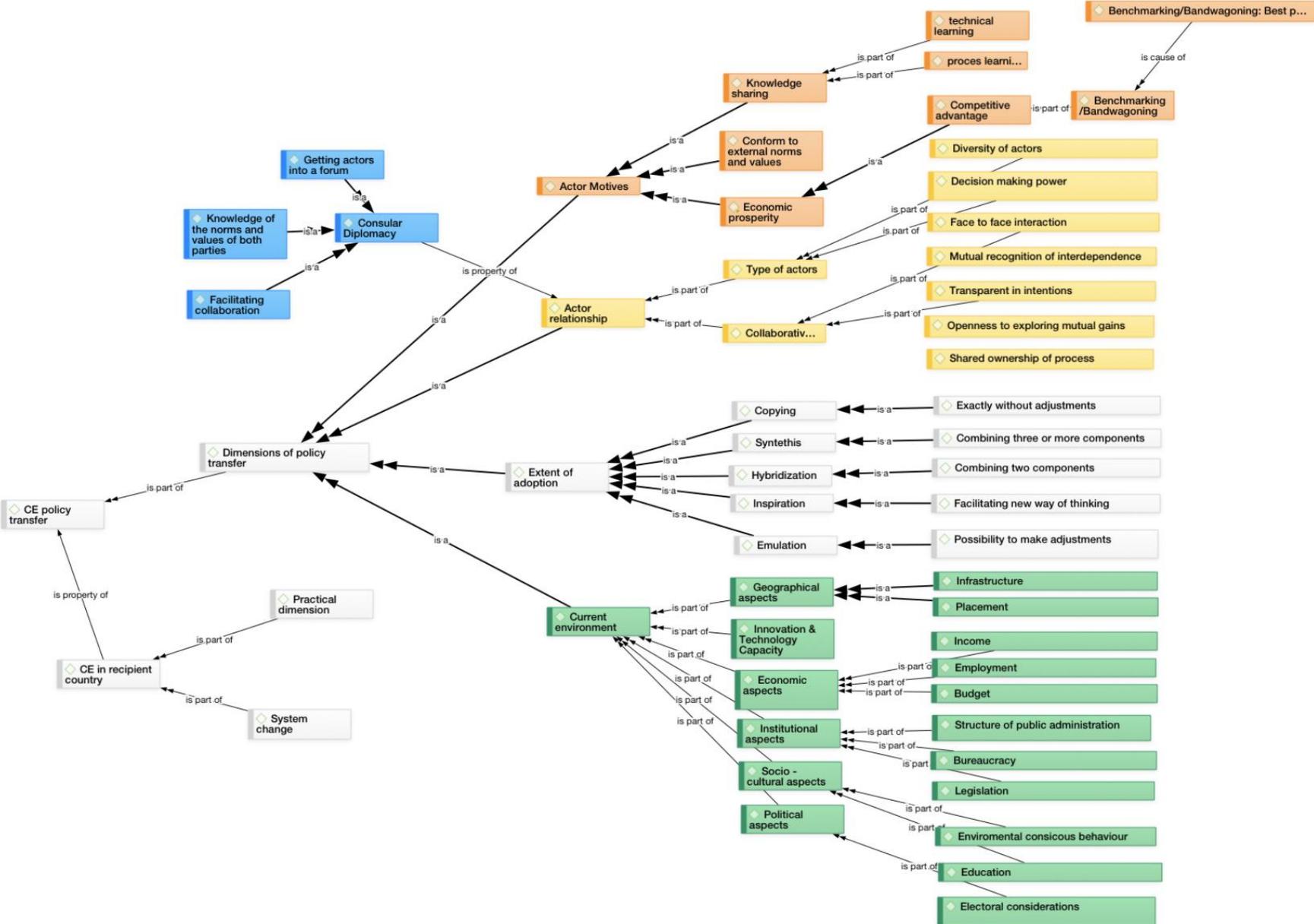
Appendix III: Circular activities consulate - general

## Appendix I: Interview guide

Topics	Question	Operationalisation
Introduction	Purpose of the research, duration of the interview and course of the interview process	n/a
Circular economy	What are your organization's activities regarding circular economy?	Practical; 9R Paradigm; system change
	Which aspects of circular economy do you take into account in your cooperation with the Netherlands/Turkey?	
	How does the cooperation contribute to circular economy?	
Actor motives	What is the reason for your cooperation with the Netherlands/Turkey in terms of circular economy?	Technical learning; knowledge sharing Exchange of values, norms and believes Benchmarking with foreign measures
	What does the cooperation provide?	Economic Prosperity
Environment	What are the differences between Turkey and the Netherlands in terms of policies and vision regarding circular economy?	Institutional: Legislation, Policies Economic: Employment, income and education
	How do differences between the countries affect policy transfer?	Political: Electoral agenda Socio – cultural: Embedded circular handling
	Which local factors affect the policy transfer process?	Geographical: All facilities necessary to enable the movement of people and goods
	What are the obstacles and/or opportunities in transferring the policy from the Netherlands to Turkey?	
Extent of adoption	To what extent is the policy that is transferred internalized by the local parties?	Exactly, without adjustments Flexible, possible to adjust later Combining components Facilitating new way of thinking
Actor relationship	How would you describe the relationship between the stakeholders and the consulate?	Communication by coming together Transparent in intentions
	How does a good or bad relationship between actors influence the policy transfer process?	Mutual recognition of interdependence, shared ownership of process, openness to exploring mutual gains.
	Which factors contribute to a good relationship?	

		Clear mission, common problem definition, identification of common values
Consular diplomacy	How do you think the consulate affects the process and cooperation?	Facilitating collaboration, getting actors into a forum, knowledge of the norms and values of both parties

# Appendix II: Code tree



## Appendix III: Circular activities consulate – general

This information is obtained through the internal report of the Economic & Commercial department of the Consulate – General of the Netherlands in Istanbul

### Meeting with Knitwear B.V

**Date/Location:** 11 January 2019/PdH

**Summary:** Options for a design project between NL and TR on the circular textile topic in relation with Stimuleringsfonds/Creative Fund NL.

### **Grant Programme for Internationalization → Open call 2 phase 1**

The Creative Industries Fund NL is conducting a four-year programme within the policy framework of the International Culture Policy 2017-2020 (objective 2) with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, entitled 'Inclusive Cities & Societies through Design'. Central to the programme is the role and deployment of design and design thinking to question and provide solutions for rapid urbanization and the corresponding social themes.

The Fund is advised by the Dutch Embassy in Ankara and/or the Consulate General in Istanbul concerning the collaboration between Dutch and Turkish parties within the proposed coalition.

### **The Project: Inclusive regenerative fashion in Turkey/ Knitwear Lab, Bersa Triko, 2019**

'Inclusive regenerative fashion in Turkey' focuses on creating more awareness and developing creative solutions for the waste from the large-scale textile and cotton industry in Istanbul.

Knitwear Lab works together with local knitting manufacturer Bersa Triko, the Textile department of Marmara University, yarn developer Espima Tekstil and recycling company in cotton and polyester materials Gama Recycle Elyaf Ve Iplik.

Although in the Netherlands possibilities for recycling used textiles are mainly being explored on the consumer side, Turkey plays a major role in the production within the textile chain. The team sees opportunities to develop new products from this industrial waste. The waste is clean and can be sorted more easily by colour. The initial phase consists of material research to investigate how regenerated fibres can be developed into good quality yarn. Experiments are underway with this new type of yarn and the team expects this to lead to innovative knitting techniques. Prototypes are being developed for a sustainable hat and scarf collection for a broad target group. Knitwear Lab shares the knowledge and experience gained with other Dutch and Turkish designers and relevant courses of study.



### Visit to CEVKO Foundation

**Date/Istanbul:** 22 February 2019/Istanbul

**Summary:** Together with IA Attaché, we visited CEVKO - the Environmental Protection and Packaging Waste Utilization Foundation as part of establishing relevant contacts in Turkey with reference to our circular economy agenda.

**Follow-Up CG:**

- Input for the Circular Economy report
- Invited CEVKO to Circular Economy Stakeholders Meeting

### Visit to Marmara Union of Municipalities & Meeting with Secretary General

**Date/Location:** 26 March 2019/Istanbul

**Summary:** Agreed on the cooperation with the following topics in general and on the occasion of their first time organized Marmara Urban Forum dated 1-3 October, 2019.

**Industry:** Environment, Transportation

**Topic:** Circular Economy, Smart & Green Mobility, Resilient Cities

**Follow-Up CG:**

- Contribution to Marmara Urban Forum by providing speakers from NL
- Introducing MUM to Amsterdam Advanced Metropolitan Solutions, Rotterdam Global Center for Adaptation, VNG International
- To co-finance Play Marmara Game during MARUF

### Visit to Arcelik/Circular Economy

**Date/Location:** 25 June 2019/Istanbul

**Summary:** Arcelik has been involved in several of our activities last year focusing on circularity. Mainly regarding circular product design in collaboration with Dutch design collective CIRCO NL.

Discussed the circular business models that are relevant for Arcelik and to match them with the relevant Dutch expertise in order to assist them in developing new business models and transitioning to new business models. Arcelik asked for help in bringing the concepts of circularity to their factories in terms of material reuse, energy/water savings and other transformations that will bring the company more circular business models. Linked them TNO to check whether TNO could play a role in assisting Arcelik into transitioning to more circularity. TNO's one of the focus sectors is Circularity & the Environment. Their focus is to help organizations with the transition to circularity. Those organizations can be national governments, cities and also companies. Within the transition to circularity, TNO assesses the social, environmental as well as the economic impact of that transition. They do that by using a tool called Next

Generation Impact Assessment, which will give companies insights into the impact of their transition to circularity thereby addressing the three p's (people, planet, profit). They usually start with material flow assessments to see where the highest impact can be made (and to pick the low hanging fruit) and progress from there towards strategic adjustments in various processes.

**Industry:** Consumer Goods, Manufacturing

**Topic:** Circular Economy

#### Meeting with Global Shapers Istanbul

**Date:** 27 August 2019/PdH

**Summary:** Receiving the Management Group of Global Shapers Istanbul in order to discuss the collaboration possibilities on their conference with the specific focus on inclusion, diversity and environment.

#### **Agreed items:**

On the occasion of SHAPE Europe & Eurasia 2019 Conference, Global Shapers Istanbul in close cooperation with Impact Hub Istanbul and our Consulate General, will organize the Welcome Reception of the Conference on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September (CG will host and sponsor the event) and will organize Co-creating Solutions for Istanbul: The Circular City on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 in line with the Netherlands Public Diplomacy Strategy in Turkey.

#### Meeting with EBRD/Arvid Turkner

**Date/Location:** 27 August 2019/Istanbul

**Summary:** Receiving EBRD TR Country Director at the PdH to discuss the collaboration areas between EBRD Turkey and the Netherlands. Points of focus of the CG reiterated on the theme of Livable Cities:

- Climate Resilience: flooding
- Healthy Cities; urban mobility
- Circular Economy
- Diversity/creativity within cities

#### Co-Design Session: Creating Business Through Circular Design

**Date/Location:** 16 November 2018/PdH

**Summary:** Dutch Consulate General organized a mini-workshop in close collaboration with Business Council for Sustainable Development Turkey (BCSD Turkey) for the local manufacturing companies to check if there is a basis for circular business and to validate if the Circo-methodology matches their needs. The mini-workshop was provided by CIRCO NL, which is a project of CLICKNL, the Dutch Creative Industries Knowledge and Innovation Network, and is executed by Reversed Concepts,

Nuovalente, Circle Economy and Partners for Innovation together with the CIRCO Trainers network. Twenty representatives from the biggest Turkish companies and shared their thoughts about circularity in a survey after the workshop. The results showed that most participants had theoretical knowledge about the principles of a circular economy, but did not know enough about the practical approaches for implementation within their own company. Additionally, it became clear that the participants were not connected to the relevant (inter) network in the field of circularity for collaboration. That is why we decided to continue with organizing these CIRCO workshops to help Turkish companies to create business models through circular design.

**Event Type:** Seminar (Co-Design)

**Industry:** Creative Industries, consultancy

**Attendance:** Organizer

#### Circular Economy Networking Reception

**Date/Location:** 16 November 2018/ PdH

**Summary:** On the occasion of the Co-Design session ‘Creating Business Through Circular Design’ and in cooperation with CIRCO and Business Council for Sustainable Development Turkey (BCSD Turkey), Consulate General organized a networking reception on circular economy in order to establish relevant contacts and facilitate circular businesses between Turkish and Dutch parties.

**Event Type:** Networking Event

**Industry:** Creative Industry, Manufacturing

**Attendance:** Organizer

#### Circular Economy Stakeholders Roundtable Meeting

**Date/Location:** 15 May 2019/ PdH

**Summary:** A roundtable meeting organized to discuss the opportunities and challenges for the implementation of a circular economy in Turkey with the participation of Circular Economy stakeholders in Turkey. The consul-general moderated this meeting with the aim to find methods to accelerate the transition towards a circular economy in Turkey. Additionally representatives of CircoNL were present to elaborate on the movement towards a circular economy in the Netherlands. 12 CE stakeholders attended in the meeting.

**Event Type:** Networking Event

**Industry:** Circular Economy

**Attendance:** Organizer/Participant

Circular Design Class: Creating Business Through Circular Design (CIRCO Class Fashion & Textile)

**Date/Location:** 27 May 2019/Palais de Hollande

**Summary:** The consulate organized the Circular Design Class about Fashion and Textile in collaboration with CIRCO NL (facilitated by Siem Haffmans (CIRCO / Partners for Innovation) and Pieter van Os (CIRCO / Reversed Concepts) for the fashion designers and product managers from 9 garment/textile companies who want to apply circular design strategies and business models within their companies.

**Event Type:** Training

**Industry:** Environment (Recycling), Garments/Textile

**Attendance:** Organizer

CIRCO Circular Business Design & Train the Trainers Tracks

**Date/Location:** 28-29 May 2019/ Palais de Hollande

**Summary :** Through CIRCO 3 days Company Trainings + Train the Trainers Programme, 10 leading companies of Turkey were trained, and 6 trainers become CIRCO certified trainers.

At the last day of the Track companies presented their ideas in an elevator pitch style preparing for a meeting with the top management. The pitch session was a great opportunity for financial institutions to participate. It allowed them to observe where the industries are heading, network with relative parties and prepare possible investment solutions.

**Event Type:** Training

**Industry:** Multi **Attendance:** Organizer

Circular Economy Networking Reception @ PdH

**Date/Location:** 28 May 2019/ Palais de Hollande

**Summary:** Consulate General organized a networking reception on the occasion of the CIRCO Circular Business Track and the Train the Trainers programme in order to establish relevant contacts and facilitate circular businesses between Turkish and Dutch parties.

**Event Type:** Networking

**Industry:** Multi

**Attendance:** Organizer

### Co-creating Solutions for Istanbul: The Circular City

**Date/Location:** 29 September 2019/ PdH

**Summary:** In partnership with the Dutch Consulate-General and Impact Hub Istanbul, Global Shapers Istanbul organized Circular City Istanbul workshop. During the workshop, The Circular City Istanbul, 50 Global Shapers designed tangible action-oriented project proposals on being a circular city for Istanbul by tackling the most pressing local challenges of the city by working together with both local and international experts including urban planners, municipalities, academicians, social entrepreneurs and many more.

At the end of the working session, Global Shapers presented their project proposals to the Mayor of Istanbul, Mr. Ekrem İmamoğlu - with the aim of making them alive.

**Event Type:** Seminar

**Industry:** Environment, Transport, Recycling, Textile

**Attendance:** Co-Organizer

### CIRCO Circular Business Design & Train the Trainers Track

**Date/Location:** 16-17 May 2019/Istanbul

**Summary:** On the 16th of May, it was the first day of CIRCO's 3 days Company Trainings Track+ Train the Trainers Track, 10 leading companies of Turkey, and 6 trainers were present. The consul-general delivered an opening speech.

**Event Type:** Training

**Attendance:** Speaker

## Turkey Materials Marketplace Event

**Date/Location:** 19 June 2019

**Summary:** Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSD Turkey) in collaboration with EBRD TR organized the 5th Turkey Materials Marketplace Networking Meeting on the 19th of June in Istanbul. During the meeting, they hosted up to 200 professionals who are the potential change agents in Turkey in circularity businesses.

BSCD TR kindly requested a guest speaker from the Netherlands to participate in the event with a keynote speech for 20-25 minutes. We referred them to invite Mr. Freek van Eijk, Director of Holland Circular Hotspot

There were keynote speeches from the Netherlands at the event. First one was delivered by the consul-general on "The Netherland's Experience on Transition to Circular Economy". Freek van Eijk delivered a speech on "The Business Perspective of a Circular Economy Transition"

At the event we also screened the video clip from the CIRCO delivered (BCSD Turkey) cooperated first CIRCO Circular Business Design & Train the Trainers Track. On the other hand, the same day, prior to the event, we organized a breakfast meeting to introduce Mr. van Eijk to EBRD TR and BCSD Turkey Management.