

## Us Actors as Catalysts of Circular Economy Transitions!

Agency, in its many forms, is identified as a critical factor enabling sustainability transitions. All the while, the role of agency vis-à-vis CE transitions remains poorly recognised. This is why we explored the role of agency as a catalyst in CE transitions.

Taking a closer look, we studied the agency of active individuals and organisations driving circular transitions in Finland. Our research approach builds on the interdisciplinary research team's theoretical and empirical insights in the study of CE agency in 2015–22 via interviews of front-runner companies and consumers and a case-study of a city-led CE ecosystem.

As our main result, we develop a typology of CE actors focused on their activist and relational agency at the individual and organisational levels of analysis, Table 1.

We find that the struggles experienced by active CE actors are embedded in an ongoing negotiation between agency and their surrounding structures. This leads us to view circular transitions as structuration processes set amid an ongoing tension between agency and structure. Where agency is activist and relational, it bears the potential to shift prevailing linear-economy-biased structures toward circularity.

In summary, we argue that all actors have the potential to become CE catalysts, depending on the extent to which they recognise and utilise their CE agency.

	Activist agency		Relational agency
	Private role	Professional role	Professional role
Individuals driving circular transitions	Citizens as prosumers		Professionals' relational agency
	Citizen-consumers	Change agents	
		Top managers	
Organisations driving circular transitions	Companies Cities and regions (*) Government and public institutions (*)		Collaborative inter-organisational agency
Partnerships and ecosystems driving circular transitions (*)	Partnerships (*) Supply-chains (*) Networks (*) Ecosystems (*)		

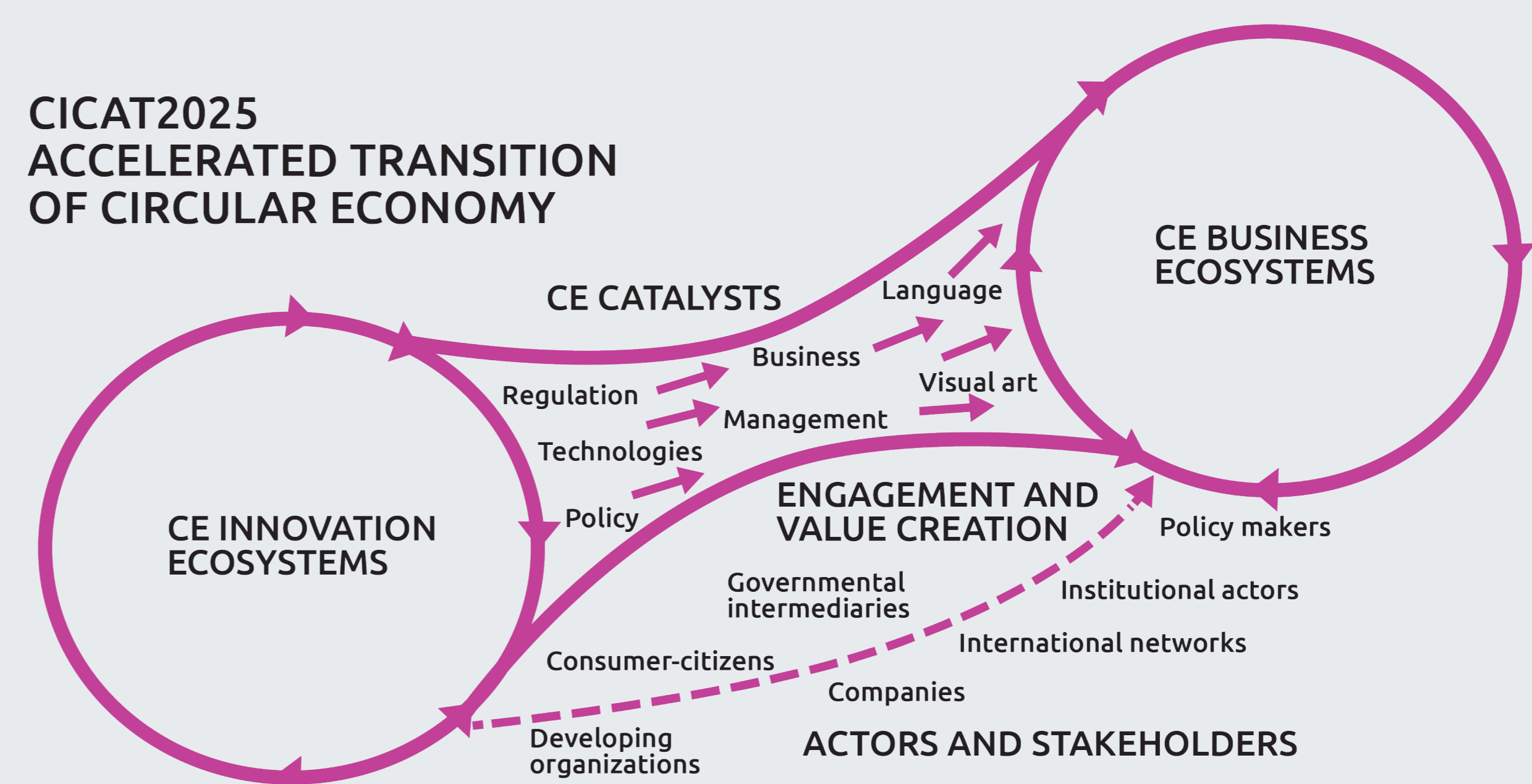
Table 1. Typology of CE agency.

### What is CICAT2025?

Circular Economy Catalysts: From Innovation to Business Ecosystems, CICAT2025 is a joint project of Finnish universities aiming to facilitate the transition from linear to circular economy.

CICAT2025 explores a wide range of circular economy catalysts that have the potential to accelerate the adoption of circular economy principles in society and markets. The project supports Finland's strategic objective to become a global leader in circular economy by 2025.

The consortium consists of:  
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