CEDaCI

Circular Economy for Data Centre Industry

Working Group Meeting 1
Minutes

Date: 12th November 2019

Address: EBC Amsterdam, Keizersgracht 62, 1015 CS Amsterdam, Netherlands

Working Group Country:

Working Group DE	☐
Working Group FR	☐
Working Group NL	☒
Working Group UK	☐

The list of participants:

No	First Name	Last Name	Organisation
1	Arjen	Workum	Aliter Networks
2	Rolf	Brink	Asperitas
3	Esther	van Bergen	Cenex Nederland
4	Hylke	Faber	CTO Amsterdam office
5	Eric	Barentsen	Dutch Datacenter Association
6	Julie	Chenadec	Green IT Amsterdam region
7	Robbert	Hoeffnagel	Green IT Amsterdam region
8	Ronald	Scherpenisse	influsense
9	Martijn	van der Veer	Sims Recycling Solutions
10	Leonieke	Mevius	SURFsara

Agenda Items:

10:00 Arrival - coffee/water/biscuits

10:10 CEDaCI introductions

10:40 Member Introductions

11:10 Commitment to the rules of cooperation

Election of chairperson

11:20   Present results of the situational analysis

11:40   Pitches of problems/solutions from working group members

            Discussion is free-flow and not limited to any topic for the first meeting

12:45   Future meeting dates

13:00   Meeting close

Action Items:

Minutes

According to RB, data centres do not want to touch the IT part because it is only users putting their equipment in DC, such as hyperscalers. Example like Equinix where they are only facilitators.

JC explained the different scope of the project with the pilots, where in the UK, they will focus on eco-design and OEM, in France with end-of-life and extraction of CRM and in NL, and we will focus on refurbishment and business models.

RB says that reuse and refurbishment is (although viable and important for sustainability) not a part of the circular economy and it is damaging that organisations use this argument to profit on this wave of attention. Refurbishment does not apply in circularity.

Arjen argued that Circular economy is more than just cradle to cradle and closing the loop of resources, but also making the best use of available resources. As energy and resources are needed to create products and to process these back to reusable materials after use, we should also look into maximizing lifecycle.

We did a roundtable and each participants expressed their interests and their aim for participating.

EB was unfamiliar in the project and that the DDA was not involved since the beginning. The interest seems to be mostly that in similar projects the finger pointed at the data centres as being responsible for the electronic waste. EB wants to prevent this and thinks it is important to define what data centre is, create understanding because DC are cautious. EB would like clarification on the goal of the project and to understand what the achievement will be.

RS mentioned that DC is just a building and that heat reuse is too much on the agenda.

RB added that he is concerned about the position of the DDA because actually, heat reuse is a massive opportunity. "More proof than ever"

RH came back on the interest for the participation in the project and stated that the project is a business opportunity, where GITA will focus on the environmental part of the refurbishment, to highlight where the benefices are. It will also analyse everything and bring stakeholders together to have an open discussion and create room for improvement.

RB confirmed that it could lead to a better model to operate in DCI.

EvB emphasized that circular ICT is a network for knowledge sharing, where new knowledge are being try. EvB has been on previous project and she initiated CEDaCI. It is all about innovation and learning.

Request for chair for following meetings (rotating); no volunteers yet but as this is the first meeting we could continue this on next one.

EB were surprised that the project is missing many stakeholders, such as Supermicro, Microsoft, Google or Facebook. In short, large players who can actually make a difference and leverage results.

JC said that we have tried to connect several of these large entities; however, it is hard to have them participate, as they are secretive in policies.

RB asked if the project is focusing only on IT equipment. In addition, if we consider IT by design. Because then, we should cover all ecosystem and not only IT. He mentioned that the reuse of energy and heating in data centres is prevented by for example an organisation that used to provide cooling (hence it was in their interest not to have innovation in this area).

RS strongly agreed on RB's, saying that every equipment need to be taken into account, otherwise we are missing opportunities. As the customers are the facilitator of the IT equipment.

For the majority of the participants, the terminology of the project is incorrect, data centres have nothing to do with IT equipment: should call it IT equipment in that as the data centre industry could or could not be a part of. But also that refurbishment/extend the life are not part of the concept of Circular Economy, well in fact it is because we are delaying the moment of recycling, according to EvB.

AW said that we should analyse common practices in the datacentre industry. For example, we notice that OEM's often dictate when data centres have to upgrade the equipment, even though this is still working and tech is not obsolete yet.

MvdV agreed and said that we are considering all angles and views.

We then had discussion on what the Dutch pilot is going to be: Gemeente Amsterdam, Asperitas and DDA are doubting their added value to the project, as the Dutch part focuses on refurbishing and IT equipment.

EB mentioned that the DDA is interested in urban mining of equipment batteries and equipment.

RB proposed a collaboration in providing lab access to research, not to compare just the equipment power consumption but also the heat management and analysing business models around it.

EvB emphasized that the definition of a business case is still driven by financial aspect. What if we look for beneficial aspects to societal values as well as new generations and rather work for and with companies that consider this.

RB said that Asperitas can support the project in energy reuse or design part of a data centre, as he is already active on other platforms like Shell and OCP so they have to decide if they can allow time to participate in CEDaCI as well.

EvB stated that we should be clear on what scope of the project is, and present in what country the pilots take place on the website. We should narrow down and define the scope of the project.

EB suggested that we should invite all of the stakeholders around datacentres, but this will be impossible (no table big enough) so keep the scope manageable (for example just IT equipment).

Summary of what the pilot could be:

MvdV added that every stakeholder could still have a valuable contribution to make, where we can still learn from each other:

- Amsterdam in providing equipment or participating in a use case of circular acquirement of equipment, as 2nd user
- RB can set up a small DC in a lab environment and analyzing beyond power consumption, like heat generation etc.
- EB can investigate the building structure and consult on where to apply in industry = scalability
- Cenex and Surfsara as experienced partners in previous project, where SURF can provide equipment
- RS is willing to give a design POV

For future potential stakeholders however, their possible focus and contribution should be clearer before the meeting.