

Better Knowledge



Circular City Portal

Action 6 - Prepare a blueprint for a Circular City Portal

The '**Circular City Portal**' is an openly shared **knowledge database**, inspiring and guiding cities in their journey towards a circular economy. Additionally, an integrated and visually developed **governance concept** links all other actions within the Urban Partnership on Circular Economy, and potentially other partnership's related actions.

Scope and Output

While only few frontrunner cities have the experience, many other cities are looking for insights in how they can support circular models within their governance/administration; how they provide service (connecting resources to services); and how they can help and impact citizens and businesses. The partnership therefore worked on demystifying the concept of circular economy and provided gateways to **inspiration for cities** to start the transition.

As an output a cooperation with the Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (joint initiative of the **European Commission** (EC) and the **European Economic and Social Committee** (EESC).) was set up and suggestions for blueprint of a real Circular City Portal were given.

Besides the portal, the partnership also created easy to understand infographics on what the circular economy means for the city; why can it be beneficial (what can cities gain); what areas and steps the city can address; and what are the tools and possibilities that they have at their disposal. This governance aspect also serves as the umbrella for the tools developed by the other actions from this Partnership and potentially also from other Partnerships.

Drivers and barriers

Working towards the circular economy is a creative process, requiring a lot of networking, connecting practices and knowledge. While there is a vast amount of literature dealing with the barriers and obstacles for the circular economy and the possible actions needed to overcome these, only very few sources are focusing on the specific needs of cities. Strategic approaches, individual roadmaps and projects promoted by front-running cities that have initiated the transition to a circular economy are presented on different websites and can inspire other cities, but the information available is often not intended to guide cities that have not yet embarked on such a journey. The observation of the partnership was that there was no **dedicated information-portal** available on **urban circular economy**. The information on the Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform lacked a specific entry for the **urban/local level**, making it difficult for them to find a starting point for transitioning into a circular economy.

The biggest driver to change this was the willingness and a good cooperation with the EC, the EESC and many stakeholders what lead to a **blueprint** for getting the **urban dimension** more visible on this Platform. Up to 50 urban/ local cases have been shared through the Platform already. By doing so we are showcasing the **significance of the local level** as laboratories of change and lead a new target group to the Platform.

Potential impact

Cities want to improve their capacity on the ground by learning from each other. Specific Q&A for pioneer cities or a practical guide with instruction and ideas on possible steps provided through the Circular City Portal will help them. But most interesting of the 'Best practices' is the governance aspect: who initiated the experiment, how was



the internal cooperation within a city or with their citizens and businesses, how was the public-private financing organized.... A lot of experience is already out there but there is a big gap between cities that are aware of the process or are already on the way to circular models, and the cities for which circular economy seems too far reaching and they feel that they might not be up to it, have the resources, or the knowledge. To help those cities our partnership demonstrate those governance aspects and disseminates them via the Platform so the efforts and the money spent on CE will be used more efficient, building on previous experiences

How will this help the new Circular Economy working program of the European Commission?

Our work on this action illustrates how a **bottom up cooperation** – inherent to the urban partnerships - can influence and ameliorate (existing) (policy) tools and instruments of the EC. Our concept of **how to govern** the transition to a circular economy in cities, can inspire the new commission when unrolling the 'Green Deal' and writing the associated **circular economy action plan 2.0**, for example when it comes to the importance of having a long-term, holistic vision and introducing cross-thematic coordination.

Recommendation from the Partnership to the EU Commission

- Take duly into account the contribution of cities for transition to a circular economy in the next Action Plan - Circular economy 2.0 To do this effectively: take into the consideration the listed barriers and opportunities for cities and the innovative circular governance focus, necessary to realise the transition to CE
- Take into account a more **integrated approach** for European urban (circular economy) policy in the next programming period of the **cohesion policy**, e.g. in terms of priority actions (allowing circular topics) and funding (stimulating further sectoral integration), and by integrating existing initiatives like URBACT, Urban Partnerships, Urban Innovative Actions, etc. and think about ways of disseminating the conclusions and/ or findings of finalised cohesion-funded projects on the Platform;
- **Invest (money&time) in a circular city portal** (as part of the Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform), to help cities in a successful transition to the circular economy

The necessary next steps

1. Creation of a dedicated landing or entry page on the Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform so it becomes a real 'circular city portal', with integration of the Circular City Funding Guide. Keep this Platform alive and kicking, by promotion and uploading of more and new cases (including the governance aspects), strategies and knowledge;
2. Create opportunities for people within cities to exchange experiences on circular governance. This will reduce silos and stimulate different departments in a city to work together with the citizens, NGO's and businesses in implementing a circular economy strategy
3. Create a strategic vision on the future of the Urban Partnerships within the Urban Agenda and/ or the European cohesion policy.

Where to find more information

<https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/en>



Connection to the SDGs and contributions to better governance



By disseminating inspiring urban cases on circular economy and how to set-up an appropriate governance scheme, we clearly recognized the importance **of a culture of cooperation** and information exchange. For this specific action the primary focus lies therefore on **SDG17: Partnerships for the goals**. At the same time, we're convinced that circular economy is a key promising strategy to obtain results on different goals and SDG's, more specifically SDGs 11 and 12. Circular city governance could also allow the developing countries to leap-frog in the quality of their sustainable urban development and have positive economic and social benefits.

