



RELEASE:

Turku to plan circular economy with and for local residents

The city is designing an action plan based on collaboration and social equity

Turku, Finland 09.11.2020. The City of Turku, Finland, is aiming to become resource-wise - which means achieving a zero-emission and zero-waste future, as well as a low ecological footprint - by 2040 while strengthening social equity and community links.

Additionally, Turku has been selected as one of five global cities to explore social equity in their sustainability planning as part of the [Urban Transitions Alliance](#), a city network and knowledge-exchange platform that supports current and former industrial hubs from across the globe to identify common challenges, share knowledge and develop solutions tailored to their individual transitions to a sustainable future.

The city is already working to support a circular economy that reduces waste and pollutants and decreases demand for primary resources in five priority sectors: food, transport and logistics, water, buildings and construction and energy. For each of these topics, the city is planning for policy and business innovation support that will support the transition and wants to ensure these efforts benefit Turku residents.

“While the economic and environmental aspects of the circular economy transition are widely acknowledged regionally and nationally, the societal impacts of such projects are usually less considered. In Turku, we want to include residents in the planning as much as possible and are incorporating resident activities and campaigns as part of the Circular Turku project. We are determined to use circular economy projects to strengthen community links and social inclusion,” said Liisa Lahti, Project Manager, Circular Turku.

“We are thrilled to be working with Turku on embedding social equity criteria into the Circular Turku roadmap. Best examples from Alliance cities offer practice-oriented learnings to help cities plan for circular economy projects that benefit all residents,” said Marion Guénard, Circular Development Officer at ICLEI World Secretariat. “Baltimore’s inclusive employment incentives, as part of the Waste to Wealth Initiative, and Buffalo’s participatory planning processes for stormwater infrastructures are excellent examples of these practices at work. We are eager to build on these learnings to identify specific interventions across the five priority sectors, creating tangible benefits for communities in Turku.”



As Finland's oldest city and a key trade point in Europe, Turku is pushing the envelope towards consumption and production patterns that are as sustainable as possible, transitioning away from extractive industrial practices. At the same time, the city wants to ensure all residents can become actors of this transition and help drive community-driven circular economy initiatives. |

Turku kicked off its ambitious environmental efforts in the 1960s with the restoration of the then heavily polluted Aura River, and has consistently been at the forefront of environment and climate action ever since.

In 2018, the City Council approved the Turku Climate Plan 2029, committing the city to carbon neutrality by 2029 through deep decarbonization measures, sustainable urban planning and investments in carbon sinks.

Turku's ambition is supported by the [Circular Turku](#) project - which builds on successful [multi-stakeholder collaboration](#) and internationally recognized good practices such as an [industrial symbiosis project focused on chemistry](#) and front-running [energy-positive wastewater treatment](#) infrastructures.

The Urban Transitions Alliance is an initiative led by [ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability](#), a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development, and supported by the [Stiftung Mercator](#), a German foundation committed to solidarity and equal opportunities.

You can find Turku's full Urban Transitions Alliance 2020 challenge [here](#).

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About ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 100+ countries, ICLEI influences sustainability policy and drives local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. ICLEI's Members and team of experts work together through peer



exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

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