



Challenge support cycle 2020 – City of Turku, Finland

Inclusive roadmap design - planning a Circular Turku with and for local residents

The City of Turku aims to become carbon neutral by 2029 and climate positive with negative net emissions thereafter. This ambitious goal is supported by deep decarbonization measures, urban planning practices more conducive of sustainability and investments in carbon sinks. These measures were unanimously adopted by the city Council in 2018 as part of the “Turku Climate Plan 2029”. As Finland’s oldest city and a key trade point in Europe, Turku ambitions to pave the way towards sustainable consumption and production patterns and to transition away from extractive industrial practices. The city is working with regional actors to support a circular economy that reduce waste and pollutants and decrease demand for primary resources. These collaborative efforts have already given birth to internationally recognized good practices such as an industrial symbiosis project for chemicals, an innovative textile recycling plant and front-running energy positive wastewater treatment technologies. As part of the “Circular Turku” project, the city is bringing together these efforts to collaboratively design an action plan to achieve zero emission, zero waste and a low ecological footprint by 2040. Turku is working with regional stakeholders to identify opportunities for action and policy interventions that support the transition, ahead of the renewal of the city strategy in 2021.

While the economic and environmental aspects of the circular economy transition are widely acknowledged in the region and nationally, the societal impacts of such projects are less considered. The city is planning residents’ engagement activities as part of the Circular Turku project and is interested in using circular economy projects to strengthen community links and social inclusion.

Urban Transitions Alliance Support

The Urban Transitions Alliance will support the city of Turku in:

- Embedding social equity into the action points identified for the different priority topics included in the Circular Turku roadmap (food, construction, transport, energy and water) and identifying related policy interventions;
- Accessing international best practices on social equity planning and monitoring frameworks from peer Alliance cities;
- Supporting the development of a methodology to ensure community groups are included in the roadmap design.

Key Questions

- What are the implications of circular economy projects on access to specific resources and their affordability? How do such projects impact the local labor markets and what are the related training and education needs?
- How to include social equity indicators into a regional circular economy roadmap?
- How to ensure that the roadmap is co-designed by different actors, including community groups?

Expected Outcomes

- Mapping of tangible interventions to increase social equity for each of the priority topics (food, construction, transport, energy and water) with strong engagement of local communities;
- Development of a replicable equity monitoring framework for circular economy projects based on good practices from peer Alliance cities;
- International positioning of Turku as a front-runner in designing inclusive circular economy projects through Alliance outreach channels.