



Challenge support cycle 2020 – Beijing E-Town, China

Zero Waste – The lifestyles and public participation aspects of garbage

With 10 billion tons of solid waste produced every year, China is the largest producer of waste worldwide. To face this challenge, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and seventeen other ministerial-level bodies launched in April 2019 the “Pilot Program of Zero Waste Cities”. Beijing E-Town is one of the sixteen cities and districts in China to have been selected to pilot waste-free programs at the local level. Pilot localities must deliver a roadmap to control the increase of industrial solid waste, completely utilize agricultural waste and prohibit illegal dumping of solid waste. The aim is to draw learnings from these experiences to allow replication throughout China. At the local level, the long-term goal of a “Zero Waste City” is to minimize solid waste generation, to use resources at the highest utility and to dispose safely of the remaining waste.

As the only national level economic and technological development zone in the province of Beijing, E-Town is a strategic place to pilot systemic zero-waste programs that encompass diverse resource flows. Such initiatives are already underway in the development area. In addition to a copper recovery facility for e-waste, E-Town also collects and treats 100% of sewage water and reclaimed water currently accounts for 55% of industrial water consumption. Confronted with resource shortages and fast-paced expansion, Beijing E-Town is eager to further these efforts and expand them by involving all relevant actors.

The roadmap will be articulated around four pillars: Governance, urban planning, business engagement and public participation. The public participation pillar is critical for E-Town as the development area wants to ensure public acceptance of future zero-waste measures and support more sustainable lifestyles.

Urban Transitions Alliance Support

The Urban Transitions Alliance will support E-Town in:

- Accessing international best practices from cities that have effectively engaged residents in zero waste programs, such as Essen and Dortmund.
- Embedding public participation within the zero waste strategy, with inspirations from Cincinnati’s and Pittsburgh’s zero waste plans.
- Analyzing the zero waste strategy through the lens of inclusive employment opportunities (e.g. Baltimore’s Waste-to-Wealth initiative).

Key Questions

- How can cities and districts promote lifestyles that are conducive of zero waste? How can they work with different industries and education institutions to accelerate the transition (hotels, restaurants, food & beverage, governments, schools)?
- How can zero waste measures be designed with all residents in mind? What kind of fee models allow to both incentivize waste reduction and ensure social acceptability?
- How can employment opportunities be fostered within local zero waste initiatives?

Expected Outcomes

- Mapping of tools for E-Town to support green living for all residents;
- Development of mechanisms for effective and continuous public participation within the zero waste strategy;
- International positioning of E-Town as zero waste pioneer in China.