



ACR+



ACR+ WORK PROGRAMME 2023

The network of cities and regions
accelerating the circular economy
transition in their territories and beyond

ACR+ believes that

cities and regions are a game changer

to speed up the transition towards a circular and sustainable society.

We support them in raising their profile and playing fully their bridging role through:



ACR+ is working to address the

main needs and priorities

of cities and regions especially in the following strategic working themes:



Built Environment



Sustainable Food Systems



Circular Lifestyles



Policy and Governance



Waste and Material Flows

Zoom on our strategic working themes



Built Environment

The built environment consumes almost half of the world's materials every year and is responsible for 30% of Europe's total waste (EEA). Strategies and plans to speed up the needed transformation of this sector – for instance the Renovation Wave for Europe – position even more local and regional authorities as a key stakeholder. Their crucial role in the construction life cycle spans not only stimulating innovation and facilitating cooperation between local actors but also diverse missions such as urban planning, construction and demolition permits, waste management and planning. To fully play their role, local and regional authorities must know how to navigate through a sustainable built environment, understand what it means, determine how to encourage it, and ultimately take practical steps to build strategies.

Several European legislations and strategies, like the Waste Framework Directive and the Farm to Fork strategy, address food, food losses and food waste in an attempt to make food systems fairer, healthier, and carbon-neutral. Food production, consumption, and waste are strongly connected with environmental challenges like soil, air and water quality, biodiversity loss, resources scarcity and climate change. How can public authorities protect biodiversity, comply with EU targets on food waste reduction, and with the sorting obligation? How can they reduce the use of fertilizer while converting agricultural land to organic farming? With the right support, cities and regions can embrace circularity through organic waste management and nutrients recycling, and address the negative climate impact of food waste generation in the rural and urban spheres.



Sustainable Food Systems



Circular Lifestyles

Local and regional authorities are connecting the dots of circularity on their territory by making citizens and consumers care and be involved to boost a local sustainable consumption. From tourism to sports events or the organisation of trainings, they have the potential to support stakeholders and instigate new models based on maximising the potential of resources and designing out of waste. Public authorities need to define their role as a game changer to speed up the transformation while maintaining a holistic approach balancing economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.



As a bridging actor, public authorities directly influence elements of the socio-ecological system. They have powerful tools in their hands for that, such as legal and economic instruments or tools to support policy making, that enable them to encourage more sustainable behaviour from private and public sectors as well as from citizens/consumers and producers. Although the local situation is always the first to be considered, local and regional authorities should be aware of the global framework, to know what is being done at national and European levels, determine the regulatory instruments most suited to fulfill their obligations and reach effective results.



Policy and Governance



Waste and Material Flows

Integrating the waste hierarchy in a waste management strategy is a minimum and first step. How to move on then? How to measure waste prevention (potential targets, quantitative results, indicators, impact) and improve waste data on selective collection and recycling? For different waste and material flows, the European (and national) law and political decisions set obligations and guidance in order to achieve a high level of performance. Translating them at the regional or local level is not always an easy task. A relevant monitoring of performances and sharing experiences and best practices with peers is instrumental to find a concrete and effective implementation of these laws and decisions.

Objectives for 2023

2022, and especially the summer, has been marked by a series of crises: the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme heat waves and drought caused by climate change, wars, food shortages and an energy crisis. It is thus essential to turn things around to avoid even more dramatic episodes in the future. As the European Environment Agency argues, solving these crises will only come from "strong political commitment and sustained investments to build resilience in our societies." This is the path that ACR+ wants to take in 2023 proposing concrete solutions of action at three levels:

Global level



- Push for a collective answer to the current multi-crisis situation based on a dialogue between all actors
- Integrate the socio-cultural aspect in the circular transition insisting on sobriety and inclusiveness and questioning our needs and consumption patterns
- Reinforce Euro-Med cooperation on local action plans and local policy design

Main activities:

- Ensuring an even more successful European Week for Waste Reduction for its 15th edition and throughout the year reinforcing messages on sustainable consumption (and prevention)
- Supporting the Mediterranean region in its circular transformation thanks to the different activities of the COMMUNITY FOR INNOVATION project
- Organising several working groups on governance on topics such as bioeconomy (the BIOTRANSFORM project) or waste-based fertilisers matching production and local demand (the Fer-Play project)
- Helping local and regional authorities to reinforce their strategies and targets by reaching out, collaborating and building joint initiatives with various industries, processes or activities happening on their territories such as tourism, culture, sports and more

European level

- Anticipate upcoming EU obligations for public authorities (e.g. biowaste separation, textile collection) facilitating their understanding and suggesting possible tools and solutions adapted to local contexts
- Build a strong advocacy action on waste prevention targets

Main activities:

- Final results of the third cohort of the More Circularity, Less Carbon campaign
- Guidelines for public authorities to embed circular textiles into Circular Economy Action Plans through the CISUTAC project
- Building and sharing know-how on financing schemes for circular economy initiatives within local and regional public authorities through the DECISO and HOOP projects
- Leading working groups on current challenges, opportunities, and best practices on biowaste collection with the Life-Biobest and FOLLOU projects (including interactions with frontrunners)
- Developing the HOOP Network of Cities and Regions to give access and direct contact with other territories and HOOP experts on biowaste management and innovative recycling routes, to invite to webinars and study visits, to offer direct support

ACR+ level

- Strengthen knowledge exchange and support members on sustainable energy and material resources integrated policies
- Adapt to a growing network (members, team, topics, data) and need for expertise



Main activities:

- Annual General Assembly
- Improvement of ACR+ communication tools
- Launch of a strategic partnership with Energy Cities

What to expect in 2023?

New technical reports

Solutions to improve municipal waste sorting performances

Textile waste management from the point of view of local and regional authorities

Update of ACR+ report on deposit-refund systems

General Assembly 2023

ACR+ members will convene on in Dublin on 31 May – 01 June, for two days full of exchanges and learning under the theme of sobriety. Members will have the amazing opportunity to join sessions of the Circular Economy Hotspot 2023, happening at the same time.

Strategic partnership with Energy Cities

Because we are convinced that circular economy and energy transition go hand in hand, ACR+ and Energy Cities entered into a partnership. In addition to initiatives and actions organised in common, we mutualise resources and expertise to support public authorities even further in their ambition to reinvent their territory's prosperity within planet boundaries.

Long life the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

Following the announcement at the end of 2022 that the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP) is reconducted until 2025, we are ready to continue our active role in the coordination group. It will start already in February with the ECESP annual conference which will focus on the role of the circular economy in driving sustainable recovery, open strategic autonomy and resilience.

Presence at major events

Be sure that you will be seeing, hearing and maybe even meeting us at major European and international events such as the EU Green Week, the European Week of Regions and Cities, the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative's first annual conference, or Ecomondo.

Follow-up of pivotal EU policy files

We will monitor and update our members about EU policy development and implications for local and regional authorities, in particular regarding four important files: the Revision of the Waste Framework, the proposed Regulation for Packaging and Packaging Waste, the Proposal for a Regulation on Batteries and an upcoming legislative proposal on sustainable food systems. Circular textiles, deposit-refund systems, the waste shipment regulation, and plastics will also be on our radar. For all these items of the EU agenda we will make sure we share the voice of public authorities.

Activities and projects

Get ready for these new projects

- BIOBEST will identify current best practices for biowaste management focusing on the production of quality compost/digestate, to provide support for the implementation of the EU sorting obligation by the end of 2023.
- COMMUNITY FOR INNOVATION will strengthen innovative sustainable economy in the Mediterranean region by developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities for the uptake of technologies in order to support the transition to a circular economy and consolidate a competitive innovation ecosystem.
- E-VOICE reflects on the impact of the COVID-19 and targets young people, CSOs, educational authorities, local governments and families to involve young people in the process of building democratic and resilient societies.
- FOLOU will set up the necessary mechanisms to measure, monitor, report, and assess the magnitude and impact of food loss.
- INERTWASTE will focus on the valorisation of inert waste from industrial and construction processes with the aim of extending the life cycle of these resources, reducing the extraction of raw materials, and avoiding environmental impacts.
- MINEV aims at being an accelerator for regional and local administrations to address and develop waste minimization in large events through their policies for circular economy, waste management and climate neutrality.
- SOILL will set up and run a one-stop-shop structure to coordinate and support the network of 100 Living Labs and Lighthouses to be created by the Soil Mission to accelerate the transition to healthy soils by 2030.

Keep an eye for the following projects ending this year, not to miss their final conferences and a summary of their key outputs



Projects in the spotlight



Gearing for its fourth year, the More Circularity, Less Carbon campaign will identify more clearly and highlight different indicators, such as a CO2 indicator, to refine and go beyond collection and target measurements made in simple percentages. The goal is to offer concrete actions to reduce the carbon impact linked to municipal waste. For this, the results already obtained by the first two cohorts will be completed by at least a third cohort to follow 7 participants.



The European Week for Waste Reduction will be launching its 15th edition from 18 to 26 November. Will it do better than the 16,129 actions organised in 2022? Lights will be shed on 16 of these actions during the Awards Ceremony on 01 June in Dublin.



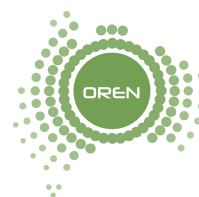
The EPR Club will continue hosting its popular Lunch Debates focusing on key aspects of EPR with several topics in sight such as batteries and the link to the issue of long-lasting products and frozen fees, plastic and recycled content, harmonization of EPR schemes, EPR and biodiversity, and textiles.

“What does it take to become circular at local and regional level? How can we accelerate the transition by building on already existing initiatives? How can we support cities and regions to implement systemic solutions?” are the questions guiding the work of CCRI-CSO. ACR+ will play a central role in coordinating various activities of this ambitious initiative throughout 2023, including a general conference to be held in the second half of 2023 and regular webinars throughout the year to explore the pathways to circular economy.



Circular Cities & Regions Initiative

But also...



The network

In 2022, ACR+ represented 100 members in 21 countries.

Although we are a network dedicated primarily to local and regional authorities, ACR+ welcomes all stakeholders having a role to play in the transition to circular economy. From decentralised authorities and city networks to NGOs, academics, private partners and consultancies.

Different membership types – effective, partner, invited, or supportive member – are available depending on the local context and specific needs. New members can join throughout the year.

a weekly newsletter

a virtual library

support to events or projects

increased visibility

exchange of experiences

are part some of our recurring and nonetheless essential daily activities and services to members



Our partnerships

ACR+ is involved in different partnerships and cooperation initiatives to represent the voice of decentralised authorities, share the experience gathered within the network, and contribute to advance towards circular economy at global and European level.





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We are thankful to the ACR+ Supportive Members who, through their additional support, are making some activities of this Work Programme possible.

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