

To consult this press release online, please click here

Press Release

To be released immediately

15 May 2023

Workshop: Financing local circular economy initiatives

On 10 May, the two European projects HOOP and DECISO co-organised a workshop on ‘Financing local circular economy initiatives’ in cooperation with the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP). The workshop featured presentations from experts on different aspects of financing CE, namely access to public funds, public procurement strategies and private investment possibilities. Furthermore, 9 project partners presented their project in an elevator pitch to the audience. Based on this input during the morning, participants engaged in informal networking in the afternoon and further discussed challenges and opportunities.

Brussels, Belgium – High upfront investment costs are a recurring challenge for many circular economy initiatives. The two Horizon Europe projects [DECISO](#) and [HOOP](#) address this issue by developing financing solutions and business plans for local circular economy initiatives unlocking further public and private investments.

HOOP and DECISO are part of the [Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#) (CCRI), launched by the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation as part of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan 2020. Within the CCRI, the two projects receive funding for Project Development Assistance (PDA).

The two projects joined forces to organise a workshop with the following objectives:

- Inform project promoters on how to strategically gain access to public funding or private; investment and how to manage and spend a budget for their initiatives;
- Initiate contacts between experts on financing CE, investors and project promoters;
- Establish basis for further exchange and support of the pilot projects;
- Showcase good practices.

The morning session was divided into three thematic sessions:

- Session 1: Securing funding for circular initiatives
- Session 2: Attracting circular solutions – the power of public procurement
- Session 3: Bridging financing gaps in cities and regions with private investments

Sessions began with presentations of keynote speakers, namely Pia Nieminen from EIB, and Guy de Sevaux from Invest-NL. This was followed by interventions of other panelists, moderated by a chair, and answering questions from the audience.

Participants received guidance on where to find further information on funding opportunities for different business scenarios and different types of initiatives. Speakers also mentioned a few good practice examples.

Before the lunchbreak, project partners presented their projects in 3-minute presentations. There were overall 9 pitches, 4 from public entities and 5 from companies. Projects covered different sectors, but many are initiatives to reduce or upcycle waste in the agri-food sector.

The discussions in the afternoon began by identifying different approaches to starting a CE initiative. There are considerable differences between start-ups that begin with a possible solution for a certain need or problem and investigating who else could be interested in such a solution; established companies that want to conduct R&D and tailor their activities to funding requirements or interests of potential investors; public entities that focus on how to manage available funds and develop solutions for stakeholders in their territory.

Participants mentioned that an important barrier was the gap between legislation and actual needs of companies or start-ups in the circular economy. Depending on the sector and product, complying with legal requirements, such as certification, can take a very long time and stall initiatives. Therefore, more exchange between stakeholders and policymakers is crucial.

DECISO and HOOP at a glance

The project '**DEvelopers of Circular SOLUTIONS**' (DECISO) will support European cities and regions to develop financing schemes for circular economy initiatives. DECISO partners will set up four pilot projects covering different sectors – waste, water, energy and agrifood. Integrating input from stakeholders along the value chain will allow developing robust business plans.

The **HOOP project** supports cities and regions in developing large-scale urban circular bioeconomy initiatives that focus on making bio-based products from urban biowaste and wastewater. HOOP provides technical, business, financial and legal Project Development Assistance to 8 municipalities and regions across Europe. The HOOP project has established a Board of Investors (impact investors, venture capitals, bioeconomy funds, banks, regional development agencies, etc.) that advises HOOP on the development of financial engineering tools and on requirements for investments.

- - ENDS - -

Contact:

ACR+ Secretariat – Gaëlle Colas

E-mail: gc@acrplus.org

Tel: +32 2 234 65 00

The Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management (ACR+) is an international network of cities and regions sharing the aim of promoting sustainable resource management and accelerating the transition towards a circular economy on their territories and beyond. The network, gathering around 100 members, is open to other key players in the field of material resource management such as NGOs, academic institutions, consultancies or private organisations. Members' needs and priorities define the network's activities, which include facilitating the exchange of experiences between members, sharing technical and policy information and livening up the network. To strengthen the knowledge and capacities of the network and push for innovation in the field of material resource management, ACR+ is also involved in several projects at European level and in the Mediterranean region, in cooperation with its members.

For more information visit our website: www.acrplus.org or follow us on Twitter: [@ACRplus](https://twitter.com/ACRplus)