

Action plan on

Circular Economy and Citizen Involvement in Mechelen



Project: CECI- Citizen Involvement in Circular Economy implementation (1.8.2019-31.7.2023; PGI05919)

Partner organisation: City of Mechelen

Country: BELGIUM

NUTS2 region: Province of Antwerp

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Circular Economy blooms through Citizen Involvement – the CECI project	5
3. Policy context	6
4. Action plan	9
Action 1: Awareness raising on circular consumption	9
Action 2: Strengthening the circular community	11
Action 3: Promoting shared mobility	13
Action 4: Adding circular principles to the renovation acceleration	15

1. Introduction

This action plan has been made in the framework of the Interreg Europe CECI project, and focuses on involving citizens of Mechelen in the circular economy transition. It is a new action plan that is part of [the overall strategy](#) or roadmap of the city of Mechelen to become a Climate Neutral and Circular City, in which growth is decoupled from resource use and the material footprint is reduced by 30% by 2030. This action plan structurally changes the policy plan of the city of Mechelen for this policy period (BCC 2020-2025), based on the [policy agreement](#) of 2019.

The overall strategy or roadmap to become a circular city has been made thanks to the capacity building of the city staff and board of mayor and elderman in the CECI-project. Thanks to CECI, circular economy has been put as a specific topic on the political agenda in Mechelen – governed by a separate programme, managed by a programme manager at the Strategy and Development Department, besides but in close relation to the Climate Programme. Not only the policy plan 2020-2025 has been structurally changed, but also the [Climate Action plan 2030](#). Within the climate action plan adopted by the municipal council in 2020, circular thinking now constitutes the fifth pillar of actions, thanks to the CECI-project.

The Circular Economy and Citizen Involvement action plan has been drafted on the basis of stakeholder dialogue on a local level, as well as interregional exchange with the project partners and their stakeholders within the CECI project: in thematic studies and workshops, through site visits and the exchange on good practices, or in one on one meetings. Part of our local stakeholder group were (1.) citizen collectives or organisations that run circular initiatives, such as Deelbaar Mechelen, Klimaan, de Keeting who runs the repair cafés, repair Hombeek, cohousing GUMM, Citamine, Ecoso vzw, Ko-Lab, ... (2). the intermunicipal waste company IVAREM (responsible for selective collection and processing of household waste) and Circular Flanders/ OVAM (the public waste agency in the region of Flanders, which also hosts the public-private partnership on Circular economy), and (3). students and researchers from the University College Thomas More.

Thanks to inspiration from, and exchange among, the CECI project partners and their stakeholders, we were able to draft SMART actions on citizen involvement in the circular economy transition in our region, which are in line with the management vision on circular Mechelen formulated in 2020. These actions refine the way in which we may involve citizens in the transition towards a circular economic model, both as producers and consumers within a new economic model. On the one hand citizens are consumers. Hence raising public awareness around circular economy consumption modes (sharing, renting, leasing, buying second hand, ...) is creating a demand for sustainable and circular services and products. That is why our first action of this action plan is focusing on raising awareness on circular consumption among every citizen in Mechelen, through communication campaigns and promotion actions of which we saw many examples both with the Finnish and Spanish partner/stakeholders of this project.

On the other hand, citizens are also producers in the circular and sharing economy of new products and services, as we have seen in the documentation of [good practices](#) within our own city. Some examples are Deelbaar Mechelen, an organisation of Mechelaars which runs the tool library and laptop library on the basis of voluntarism, Klimaan which invests in the energy transition – financing the solar panel revolution with civil capital, or Citamine which aims to turn public spaces and

organic waste streams into bases for local food production. That is why our second action focuses on strengthening the community of circular doers within our city.

The third and fourth action of this action plan is focusing on two thematic spearheads of this policy period, namely the sustainable renovation wave and the transition to sustainable mobility modes – “becoming a cycling city”. These two topics are spearheads within the climate action plan 2030 and city’s policy plan 2020-2025 respectively. The interregional exchange within the CECI project has structurally changed the way in which these focus areas are tackled, integrating a focus on circular principles and future proof buildings within the work on renovation, as well as a focus on shared mobility, including community based shared mobility, within the transition to a sustainable mobility.

Simultaneously, during the project period (2019 – 2022), another action plan which is part of the overall strategy to become a circular city has been made together with the same local stakeholders of the CECI stakeholder group plus the private sector (businesses and business associations + financial institutions). That action plan focuses on how to collect resources in Urban Resource Centers (URCs) in collaboration with the quintuple helix, in order to create sufficient offer of second hand materials within our local economy and keep resources as long as possible in the local economy. That action plan has been drafted within the framework of the Urbact Programme – Action Planning network [Resourceful cities](#). While the Urbact action plan on Urban Resource Centers focuses on production and supply, or creating a circular economy market, this Circular Economy and Citizen Involvement action plan focuses on creating demand for new consumption models. Also the URC action plan has profited enormously from the exchange within the CECI project. For instance, the [Reuse centre Ostrava](#) and [Fajna dilna workshop space and craft incubator](#) as well as examples from Marseille’s [Villa Epopée](#) en [Synchronicity](#) were model to our urban resource center approach.

The follow-up period of the Circular Economy and Citizen Involvement Plan of Mechelen is 1.8.2022 to 31.7.2023. Within this period, the objectives of the action plan are implemented and progress monitored and reported to the Interreg Europe program. The progress will be monitored by the programme manager Circular City on the basis of indicators in the ORBA dashboard (Opvolging Realisatie BeleidsAkkoord), which is a mandatory instrument for all municipalities in Flanders to monitor the realisation of the policy agreement. As circular economy is currently a priority action for the city board, reporting in ORBA needs to be done on a quarterly basis. Also thanks to the CECI-project, the staff costs for the Circular City programme manager (0,5 FTE) is now foreseen as a regular staff costs within our policy plan as from August 2022 which was not the case before. The programme manager will monitor the progress of this action plan in close collaboration with the local stakeholder group, who will continue to meet during the implementation phase.

2. Circular Economy blooms through Citizen Involvement – the CECI project

CECI- Citizen involvement in Circular Economy implementation is an Interreg Europe project with eight partners from 6 European regions (from Belgium, Bulgaria, Spain, Finland, France and the Czech Republic). The first phase of the project started in August 1, 2019 and continued until July 31, 2022. CECI aims at transferring knowledge among regions in view of the formulation of an action plan. CECI desires to:

- Raise awareness on circular economy and highlight the importance of citizen engagement in the transition towards a circular economy, both as a producer and a consumer in a futureproof economy;
- Inspire citizens to adopt sustainable consumption habits and behavior patterns;
- Promote new sustainable services (e.g. sharing economy, lengthening product life cycles through reuse, repair, remanufacturing and refurbishment);
- Further encourage waste reduction, energy savings and circular thinking.

When the current policy agreement has been drafted in 2019, shortly after entering this CECI project, we noticed that Mechelen did not strategically or systematically focus on circular economy and citizen involvement, although the strong involvement of civil society in circular economy was noticed as a capital strength. Despite previous attention to the crucial role of citizen involvement in the circular transition in the [Stroom project](#) (2018-2019: see good practice on the Interreg Europe Policy Platform), the city had no structural plan for or systemic approach to involving citizens in the circular economy transition.

SWOT-analysis made together with the local stakeholder group in 2019:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse population • Manageable city size • Political ambition to have a pioneering role in circular economy • Frontrunner on climate action (e.g. Green Leaf Award Winner 2020) • Expertise in the city regarding circular economy (e.g. Thomas More University College, OVAM/Circular Flanders, ...) • Professional waste collection & high recycling rates • Less residual waste produced per citizen than on average in Flanders: 155 kg/year/inhabitant in 2019 • Engaged civil society running sharing economy initiatives, repair initiatives and showcasing circular consumption and lifestyles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 target for reuse of 7 kg/inhabitant/year is not within reach yet • Lack of shared thinking and action across different city departments and cabinets • Lack of focus in policy making • Different stakeholder groups use their own jargon and do not often intermingle • Lack of data on material streams and resource use • Lack of indicators to monitor progress on circular economy (nationally, regionally and locally)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary experience with community building among entrepreneurs thanks to the Oh! 	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared engagement to develop Urban Resource Centres so as to become a leading circular city in Flanders • Possibility to embed this shared engagement through a memorandum of understanding with local stakeholders • Continuous improvement of city infrastructure • Integration of circular economy in the climate action plan • Possibility to establish links with circular initiatives and partners in other Flemish cities • Establishment of a public-private IoT platform for collecting data on e.g. air quality, mobility and smart water management • Possibility to link diverse demographic groups through circular initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge on circular business models • Lack of awareness on locally available circular products and services • Lack of investment in new circular business models • Change management within companies/city takes time • Not everyone is interested in climate change and sustainability issues • Risk of not including everyone in a common circular economy approach

Therefore, as part of the CECI project, we chose to create an action plan on how the city can support citizens in setting up even more circular initiatives, how to change the mainstream consumption behavior of citizens in Mechelen, and how to co-create the circular future together with the Mechelaars. Because the city already has an engaged civil society running sharing economy and repair initiatives and interesting collaborations with the private sector to realise the circular economy transition, the challenge for the city is rather to support the local fabric in scaling up the initiatives and make a systemic change in the economic model.

When asking the local stakeholder group what they need in order to be able to scale up or reach more citizens, they all mention the need for help in communication (make people aware of their initiatives), the need for active matchmaking with peers, the need for funding and support to make a viable business model, and some of them need more specialized knowledge/ capacity building, as well as some of the stakeholders ask for a location to the city.

3. Policy context

This action plan has become an integral part of the policy plan 2020-2025 of the city, as a priority action to be implemented and monitored within the city’s monitoring system for the realisation of the policy agreement.

Name of the policy instrument addressed: Policy Plan 2020-2025 city of Mechelen – Beleidsplan van de stad Mechelen (BCC)

At the same time, this action plan feeds the **Climate Action Plan (2020)** which added a fifth pillar on circular thinking/ reducing the material foot print as part of the targets regarding scope 2 emissions.

The city policy plan and this action plan is embedded in the regional, national and European policy context. In 2020, the new [European Circular Economy Action Plan](#) was launched, a central part of the European Green Deal. The European circular economy plan includes measures to:

- Make products more circular, by ensuring they last longer, are easier to repair and contain more recycled raw materials
- Give consumers more rights, including a "right to repair"
- Reduce the amount of waste

Mechelen's Circular Economy and Citizen Involvement action plan is linked to the reduction of waste – when citizens are more aware of alternatives regarding circular consumption – and the consumer rights – when citizens have more alternatives to repair or reuse consumer goods instead of buying new ones.

Through the recent [Federal Circular Economy Action Plan \(2022\)](#), the Belgian federal government wants to enable the transition to a circular economy in Belgium via product policy, consumer protection policy, public procurement, fiscal policy and the Belgian post-COVID Plan for Recovery and Resilience. The circular economy is also a top priority at the Flemish level. It is one of the seven transitions in the [Flemish Vision 2050](#). The ambition is to reduce the Flemish materials footprint by 30% by 2030, create jobs and prosperity, combat water scarcity and make optimal use of natural resources by closing cycles and through more conscious use. This circular transition is taking shape within the framework of [Circular Flanders](#), a partnership of governments, businesses, non-profits and the knowledge community that together make a commitment to action. Currently, six thematic public-private working agendas are being developed within Circular Flanders, around circular construction, chemicals and plastics, water cycles, bio economy, food chain and manufacturing industry (textiles, furniture, electronics,...). Furthermore, Circular Flanders recognises the crucial role of cities or local authorities to realize the circular transition. In the medium-term Circular Flanders wants to embed the circular economy in the thinking and actions of all Flemish municipal and urban administrators, citizens and entrepreneurs, and therefore considers the city of Mechelen to be a frontrunner.

In order to know which thematic working agendas and sectors to work on, the city instructed a consultancy desk to make an analysis of the potential of circular economy in the region of Mechelen in 2021. This analysis pointed out that there is most potential in developing the circular economy through a focus on the construction sector, as well as on the refurbishment, resale and reproduction of bikes, furniture, clothes and electronics. The Circular Economy and Citizen Involvement plan hence focuses on these sectors.

	Economic relevance (employment in Mechelen)	Circular potential	Social potential
Construction	9,9% 8,3% production construction materials 1,58% retail and wholesale of construction materials	+	-/+
Voeding	9,8% 2,5% production of food 3% horeca 4,3% retail and wholesale of food	-/+	-/+
Machinery	4% 2% production of machinery 2% retail and wholesale of machinery	-/+	-/+
Textiles	1,7% 1% production of textiles 0,7% retail and wholesale of textiles	+	+
Furniture	1,5% 1,25% retail and wholesale of furniture 0,2% production of furniture	+	+
Bicycles	?	+	+
Electronics (focus: consumer)	0,95% 0,7% retail and wholesale of electronics 0,25% production of electronics	+	-/+

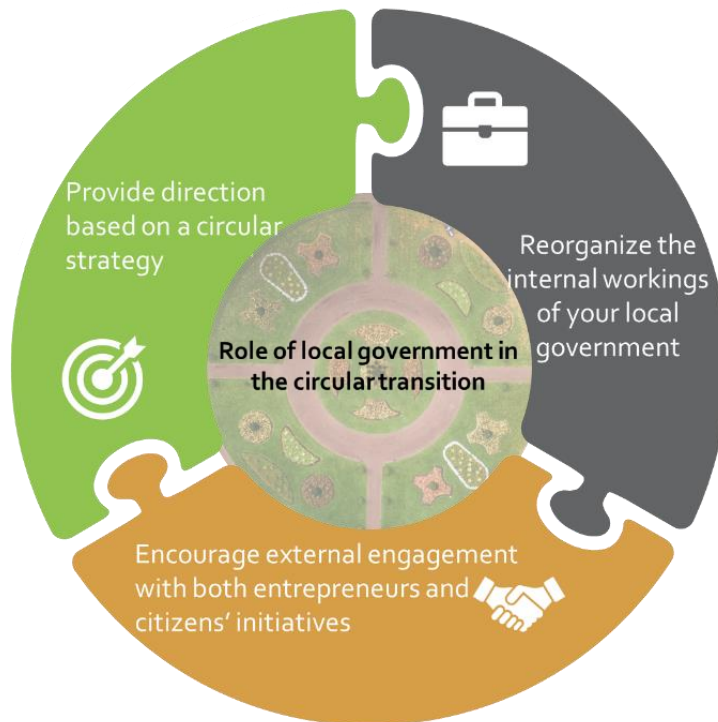
The CECI project structurally changed the Policy Plan of the city, as well as brought actions from the ground that contributed to reach the objectives. The Circular Economy and Citizen Involvement action plan is a type 3 action plan of the Interreg Europe Programme year. It aims to achieve structural changes in the strategy and policy plan of the city, on the basis of lessons learned thanks to interregional cooperation within the CECI project. Mechelen became one of the first three Flemish cities to set a firm circular economy target. Together with Leuven and Ghent, and 23 other European cities, the mayor of Mechelen signed the European [Circular Cities Declaration](#) as one of the founding signatories in October 2020. By 2030, the city wants to reduce its material footprint with 30%. By 2050 Mechelen wants to be a fully circular city.

Upon signing the Circular Cities Declaration, the board of mayor and eldersmen adopted a circular economy management vision for this policy period (2020-2025) with six strategic actions:

1. integrating sustainability and circularity in the city's procurement strategy
2. integrating circular principles in construction/renovation works
3. valorising the city departments' waste streams
4. creating a circular hub at the Potterij

5. underpinning the development of circular business models (both by entrepreneurs and civil society)
6. creating a network of circular doers through events and communication

This was the basis for the roadmap or overall strategy to reduce the material foot print by 30% by 2030, according to three guiding principles: the city wants to



- **Lead by example** by valorising residual and waste streams and by anchoring circular and sustainable procurement (for both goods and renovation works-real estate patrimony of the city) in its internal working of the various city departments;

- **Actively support circular doers** (both entrepreneurs and citizens' initiatives) by communicating, setting up a network of circular doers through events, providing financial support, translating and updating legislation and answering a broad range of questions of the circular doers and creating a circular economy hub;

- **Provide direction** to local

stakeholders by outlining a circular strategy and following it up through a monitoring system and public-private partnership.

4. Action plan

Action 1: Awareness raising on circular consumption

Objectives

We are committed to communicate on circular consumption modes, products and services, towards both citizens and entrepreneurs in order to

- Raise awareness among citizens and entrepreneurs on the urgency and need for a circular economy
- Highlight the diversified offer of circular products and services available in Mechelen
- Increase the visibility of circular initiatives

- Make the core activities of circular initiatives, products and services known in order to make mutual collaborations possible – citizens may test circular solutions, may serve as a sounding board to test readiness for the market, ...
- Spread knowledge on circular economy towards citizens and entrepreneurs

Lessons learned from CECI

The city of Mechelen has been inspired by different examples on how to raise awareness among the broad public, mainly from Zaragoza (Spain) and Lahti (Finland). Both regional actors as well as their stakeholders manage to set up educational campaigns which are accessible to any citizen, and which are advertising the circular message to people who are not per se interested in sustainable consumption. Think about the [environmental awareness campaign in Finnish ice hockey](#) (addressing sport fans), or the educational center from the [Foro de Transparencia y Eschucha Activa](#) which we visited in Zaragoza. Within this center, the need for a circular economy (because of scarcity of resources such as water and minerals) as well as the way to make the circular economy happen (on the basis of water reuse or selective sorting or urban soft mobility modes) is showcased in a very visual and attractive way both to adults and kids. It is important to learn what environmental behaviour constitutes of by specific examples instead of only conveying the negative message or doom scenarios of climate change and its dangers. We furthermore learned that awareness raising not only works on the basis of promotion or passive knowledge transfer, but needs active involvement by the citizens as for example drawing them into [cleaning up the environment](#) themselves as waste pickers like in Lahti, or [learning kids how to avoid food waste at schools](#) like in schools in Zaragoza.

Activities, actors and timeframe

In order to visualize the circular initiatives and consumption modes:

1. The city provides a [map of the city](#) which visually indicates where to find the shops, restaurants and organisations where one can repair, buy second hand, buy zero waste products or contribute to circular consumption in other ways (e.g go to a car wash that reuses 90% of its water or where to find shared cars or bikes). This map has been drafted in partnership with Avansa regio Mechelen, a social organisation for capacity building and education of adults. The map needs to be updated periodically (since late 2019)
2. The city financially supports circular initiatives with the intention to mainstream circular consumption through the [Climate Action Subsidies](#) and helps them in communicating their offer to the citizens of Mechelen eg [Cosh](#) as a platform for sustainable and circular fashion to guide consumers or [Red-use](#) for zero-waste take-away (since 2020)
3. The city integrates a focus on circular consumption modes within existing or new city festivals which draw in people who are not per se interested in sustainability. These festivals may be organised by the city (e.g. M-fair, the energy festival, ...) but also by its stakeholders (e.g. Ottertrotter festival). The dissemination events organised within the CECI project have been a test for this subaction: since 2020 the M-fair (local festival on fair clothing) has been promoting second hand clothing, clothing repair and rental of clothes additionally to fair trade clothing and a worldwide view on the textile industry. Organising fairs in which the citizens or shop owners and restaurants may taste or experience the offer of circular

consumption modes are a good way to make the offer tangible to the public and hence be implemented.

4. The city documents circular activities as stories or testimonies from its initiators on its [website](#) and actively promotes these stories on institutional social media, within the city magazine Nieuwe Maan or in the newsletter from Mechelen Klimaatneutraal (long term communication campaign, since January 2021)
5. The city helps the local stakeholders in showcasing circular products and services through a concept store, expositions, ...within the circular hub Impact Factory (since 2022)

Output indicators

- Number of circular initiatives put on the website
- Number of circular initiatives put on institutional social media
- Number of circular items included in city magazine
- Number of updates of the map on sustainable and circular consumption
- Number of initiatives that promote circular consumption modes supported financially and in communication by the Climate Action subsidies
- Number of events for the broad public on which the circular consumption modes are made tangible and visible, both in Impact Factory and organised by the city

Funding sources

The external editor who writes the stories for the Circular Newsletter and website, the staff from the marketing and communication department, the editor for the city magazine, as well as any other staff involved in organising education and promotional activities foreseen in this action are foreseen in the multi-year planning for the current policy period to implement the policy plan changed by this action plan.

The project coordinator and programme manager who will follow up implementation of the Circular Economy and Citizen Involvement plan in phase 2 is now budgetted in phase for 40% FTE, as a result of the CECI project.

Action 2: Strengthening the circular community

Objectives

In Mechelen, there is a strong commitment from citizen collectives and civil society to work towards a more climate-neutral city. Since 2016, the city has been financially supporting citizen-led sustainable initiatives that contribute to a green and inclusive environmental friendly city, thanks to the Mechelen Climate Neutral Subsidies ([Klimaatactie](#)). Several citizen-led initiatives have been initiated according to the collaborative economy model throughout the last five years, which have been documented as [good practices](#) during the CECI project.

Working further on this strength, we want to reinforce the entrepreneurial citizenship regarding circular activities so new initiatives can arise and the existing ones can reach more citizens. To underpin the circular community, and hence accelerate the development of the circular economy through citizen involvement, we aim to bring the circular doers both virtually and physically, for instance by organising inspirational network events and working tables. The goal is to create a safe environment for knowledge and experience exchange among civil society, entrepreneurs, students

and circular economy experts, and financially support them as long as the circular business models are not viable yet.

Lessons learned from CECI

The thematic workshops as well as the fact that we could take stakeholders along when visiting good practices during the CECI project worked very well in knowledge exchange. We want to continue to do this on the local level.

Furthermore, we have been inspired by the way in which the Silesian-Moravian Innovation Centre in Ostrava underpins the businesses with a circular scan, going to the businesses and trying to see what can help them in taking the next step to develop their circular product or service. This stood model for the creation of our circular helpdesk.

We also looked with great interest to [Creokit](#), an good practice in Ostrava in which waste streams/unused materials from certain businesses are used by creative people to make kits for technical education of kids. This is exactly the type of activity that our civil society organisations working on circular activities are interested in and are seeking for.

We benefited from the workshops with Makesense who spread their knowledge on participatory and cocreation methodologies, which has served the way in which we collaborate with the circular doers. The [city service of borrowing skis](#) out to citizens in Lahti serves as an excellent example on the way in which cities can collaborate with third sector associations to provide service systems in which quality goods can be put in a library system for citizens to use against very low cost.

Activities, actors and timeframe

6. Together with partners from the private sector and from the Thomas More University College, the city organizes a [circular helpdesk](#) which underpins the circular doers with advice, matchmaking, help in communication. Currently, the partners from private sector are the business agency association Unizo Antwerp and Ecoso vzw, a social economy company that runs the second hand shops in Mechelen as well as a bike repair shop and a wasted food distribution platform in collaboration with the city. (Circular helpdesk since September 2021)
7. The city organizes (thematic) calls for proposals to support circular doers either with expertise to develop their circular business models or with financial support thanks to the means foreseen for third sector Climate Action – integration circularity in [Climate Action subsidy scheme](#) since 2020
8. The city, together with its partners, organizes inspirational events, meet-ups and site visits to good practices to build capacity among circular doers and reinforce their activities
9. The city launches a new newsletter for the circular doers (entrepreneurs and civil society organisations), highlighting local circular initiatives and strategies. An analysis of the target groups which we need to reach to convey the circular message, and who are currently reached through existing communication means, highlighted that the circular doers themselves want to be more aware of the circular initiatives of each other. The existing newsletter from Mechelen Climate Neutral reaches the broad public/citizens. Since October 2021, the city launched a new newsletter specifically for organisations, citizen collectives and entrepreneurs active in the circular economy

Output indicators

- Number of circular doers contacting the helpdesk
- Number of participants to the events
- Number of matches made between the members of the circular community
- Number of additional circular initiatives within the region of Mechelen
- Number of readers of the newsletter Circular Mechelen
- Number of circular initiatives reaching out to Climate Action Subsidies

Funding sources

As from January 2022, the city decided to employ a circular economy community manager (1FTE), which is foreseen by the budget of the policy plan at least until the end of this policy period (+200.000 Euros for four years). The role of the circular economy community manager is to strengthen the circular community as described above.

The city also applied for funding from the European Social Fund on the call Circulaire werk(t)! to work together with partners from private sector and social economy on accelerating the transition to the circular economy and creating more diversified jobs in circular economy for people with a distance to the labor market in 2021. 175.000 Euros have been granted to this project called Circular Hub Region of Mechelen, for the period of May 2021 to December 2022. It is in this context that the city started its circular helpdesk, the newsletter for circular doers, and the inspirational site visits or programme for the community of circular doers. The aim is to continue this work also after the project period, that is why the city invests in staff as mentioned above.

In order to financially underpin the organisations and citizen collectives to take circular action, circular action has been integrated in the Climate Neutral subsidy schemes for citizen and civil society action as from 2020. The total budget for that foreseen in the policy plan is 116.000/year for six years (2020-2025). Additionally, the policy plan provides for 75.000 to strengthen the development and rolling out of circular business models specifically in 2022. Upon a positive evaluation on the additional value, we will negotiate with the board to continue this subsidy channel.

Action 3: Promoting shared mobility

Objectives

We want to promote various shared mobility modes - (e-cargo)bikes, cars, e-steps and scooters - because shared mobility means less cars in public space and hence a more pleasant city to walk or bike in with better air quality and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore sharing cars or high end e-cargobikes is more affordable, accelerating the transition to electrification or more sustainable mobility modes.

Lessons learned from CECI

The CECI project has enforced our focus on the need of a diversified offer of shared mobility modes thanks to these good practices' insights and thematic workshop on sustainable mobility. We have been particularly inspired by the ways in which one can give incentives to citizens to convince them to share mobility modes, rewarding environmental behaviour, such as in the case of Lahti's

[personal carbon trading scheme for citizens](#) ways in which one can give incentives to citizens to convince them to share mobility modes, rewarding environmental behaviour, such as in the case of Lahti's [personal carbon trading scheme for citizens](#) and by different examples in which the citizen's life is made easier thanks to apps or mobile applications which make it very easy to use public bikes for instance in the [ridesharing](#) example in Lahti or bicycle sharing in Ostrava thanks to the [Rekola](#) system.

Activities, actors and timeframe

1. The city attracts various shared mobility providers, offering the citizens a broad range of shared mobility modes, from community-based systems to systems which are totally run by the private sector, in order to offer for each citizen what he/she suits best. This is to ensure enough offer to the citizens, because not enough offer and coverage is the most common barrier to use shared mobility according to the stakeholders. The city therefore launches public tenders for car sharing and bike sharing with a certain financial support. For car sharing we install a cashback system, where the city financially supports by pre-financing. The more a car gets used, the more 'cash' the city gets 'back'.
10. The city also starts a pilot with shared e-cargobikes and evaluates whether the pilot can be expanded to a city-wide system. The same goes for e-steps.
11. The city launches a communication campaign on shared mobility with the slogan "sharing is for everyone", through social media, [institutional website](#), information sessions and free test rides. Within this campaign we draw attention to the money saved by using shared mobility, by promoting a calculator tool that provides financial interest for your personal situation
12. The city reserves parking spots for shared cars, bikes and steps in order to keep the public space orderly. For e-scooters (steps), the city publishes a regulation which allows no more than 2 providers and a total of 200 e-scooters/steps
13. The city provides subsidies (2.000 to 3.000 Euros per car) to citizens or organisations and citizen collectives when they buy an electric car on the condition they want to share the car with neighbors or friends
14. The city pays the membership fee or entrance costs for citizens who adhere to a car sharing system (up to 35 euros per person)
2. The city commits to hopping points, which are mobility points where different mobility solutions come together and are made accessible to people with limited mobility. At the hopping points parking space will be foreseen for the less mobile. Bus stops will also be made more accessible with special ramps for wheelchairs.

Important milestones

DATE	ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY
jan/20	Cargoroo	first 2 cargobikes
mrt/20	cambio	start expansion carsharing Cambio
aug/20	Cargoroo	from 2 to 9 cargobikes
sep/20	Dégage	first info session
sep/20	Stad Mechelen	start campaign 'sharing is for everyone'
mrt/21	Hoppy	First 150 e-scooters/steps
okt/21	Hoppy	expansion from 150 to 200 e-scooters/steps
dec/21	Klimaan	First Klimaan shared car (energy cooperative)

Output indicators

- Number of vehicles of the various shared mobility services
- Number of users of the various the shared mobility services
- Number of kilometres driven with shared mobility / type of mobility mode (cars, bikes, e-steps and cargobikes)
- Number of shared mobility providers in the region of Mechelen
- Number of citizens or organisations who applied for the subsidies for shared electric cars
- Number of citizens granted a membership fee for car sharing systems
- Number of Hoppin points

Funding sources

Quite some budget has been foreseen in the policy plan to promote and subsidize shared mobility

description	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
personnel : 1 FTE	€ 90.000,00	€ 90.000,00	€ 90.000,00	€ 90.000,00	€ 90.000,00	€ 90.000,00
communication	€ 5.000,00	€ 4.000,00	€ 4.000,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
communication	€ 0,00	€ 30.000,00	€ 20.000,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
consultancy	€ 0,00	€ 2.034,00	€ 2.069,00	€ 2.105,00	€ 2.141,00	€ 2.178,00
infrastructure	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
infrastructure	€ 70.037,00	€ 57.550,00	€ 41.950,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
subsidies	€ 15.000,00	€ 10.000,00	€ 10.000,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
subsidies	€ 15.000,00	€ 10.000,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
subsidies	€ 65.000,00	€ 40.625,00	€ 32.500,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
carsharing	€ 151.888,00	€ 180.000,00	€ 140.000,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
bikesharing	€ 95.000,00	€ 96.615,00	€ 98.258,00	€ 99.929,00	€ 101.628,00	€ 103.356,00
bikesharing	€ 29.400,00	€ 29.900,00	€ 30.409,00	€ 30.926,00	€ 31.452,00	€ 31.987,00
carsharing	€ 10.000,00	€ 7.000,00	€ 7.000,00	€ 7.000,00	€ 7.000,00	€ 7.000,00

Mechelen is also partner in the Interreg 2SEAS project called Mobimix. With this EU funded project, Mechelen can foresee extra personnel on shared mobility and realise 2 pilot projects : one on cargobike sharing and one on sharing neighbourhoods. The total budget for 2 years (2020-2022) is 357.285 € .

Action 4: Adding circular principles to the renovation acceleration

Objectives

Buildings need to be seen as valuable material banks, and build in a way they can be adapted and renovated in the future so to reduce the material foot print of housing by 30%. The construction sector accounts for 50% of the mined resources and one third of the waste production worldwide. The city of Mechelen has set up a system to convince citizens to invest in energysaving renovations of their houses, through coaching/advice, sensitisation campaigns and subsidies/loans. To reach every citizen of Mechelen, the offer is differentiated according to the target group.

In these actions to stimulate the climate neutral renovation wave, the city broadens the aim from improving the energy performance of buildings to stimulating material efficiency and reducing production related emissions. This is being done by integration of circular strategies like future adaptability, life extension. The city not only perpetuates these strategies in its soft policy actions, but also aims to integrate them into the known urban planning tools, or more enforcing policy actions, like the spatial policy plan, urban planning regulation or building permits.

Lessons learned from CECI

The examples of the municipal rental housing company Lahden Talot as well as the [Askel](#) project in Lahti has fed our strategy to integrate circular principles in our own renovation counseling to citizens in Mechelen. Askel aims to improve SME's capabilities to produce circular and sharing economy-based services in reforming markets, which will help consumers move towards low-carbon housing and sustainable consumption. In a similar way, we think we need to address the construction market (contractors and architects) and provide education and inspiration on circular thinking not only to the renovation coaches working for the city, but also to the sector. Furthermore, the citizens need easy recipes or clear advice and easy accessible second hand construction material to take the right decisions when renovating and access reused materials. To realise the latter, see the Urban Resource Center plan which has an action on realising building material bank(s) for the reuse of construction materials, which goes hand in hand with this action. Also in the example of [Bellastock](#) in France, one can see that the success of more ecological building materials (wood, earth and stone as natural resources instead of concrete) depend on knowledge dissemination and easiness to apply the building materials and techniques, both for SME's and citizens themselves.

Activities, actors and timeframe

15. The city of Mechelen formulates a clear, unified vision on circular and future proof-building among different city departments, which is then translated into the various enforcing urban planning instruments such as the urban planning regulation (start in 2022). This is done in collaboration with a knowledge partner: VUB Architectural Engineering
16. The city of Mechelen, together with its knowledge partner VUB Architectural Engineering, integrates the circular strategies and principles carried out in the urban planning regulation,

- in the citizen- & architect-supporting planning advice and renovation coaching system (start in 2022)
17. The city conducts pilot projects on circular renovation of city real estate in order to align public tender processes and the cities estate strategy with the developed vision on circular and future proof building
 18. The city spreads the message of circular construction in an accessible way among citizens through the renovation mobile, story telling, and fairs like the annual Housing Fair or the Ecobuilders campaign (started in 2021)
 19. The city cooperates with partners in the Flemish region to facilitate trainings for the construction sector regarding circular thinking, including providing training for the city's own renovation coaches (start in 2022)

Output indicators

- A revised and adopted urban planning regulation document – revision according to climate neutral and circular principles
- Number of professionals and citizens who received coaching and/or advice
- Number of public tenders using the guidelines for circular and future proof building
- Number of sensitisation actions and testimonies on the website regarding circular construction for the citizens of Mechelen
- Number of training activities for renovation coaches and the construction sector

Funding sources

The energysaving renovation acceleration strongly depends on both Flemish and European funding. In 2021, the city applied for a seed funding from Circular Flanders upon the call "circular construction", in collaboration with the researchers from VUB Architectural Engineering, in order to research how to facilitate the circular construction transition as a city. This grant (€ 93 142, 56) has enabled us to engage 4/5 FTE for one year and a half (May 2021-December 2022). That person is an architect whose job is to be a circular construction editor and who will ensure the activities listed above, in close collaboration with the team that is working on energysaving household renovations.