



CITISYSTEM 3rd Newsletter

Supporting cities in sustainable biobased systemic change

Biowaste is one of the largest material flows in European cities. A central concern is how to utilise bioresources and biomass in a circular way.

According to the waste hierarchy, after prevention; re-use, recycling, and energy use are the preferred options, however, quite a large amount of biobased waste is disposed. Biowaste has a high potential for contributing to circularity, delivering valuable soil-improving materials, fertiliser, and biogas. With a share of 34%, biowaste is the largest single component of municipal waste in the EU. Recycling of biowaste is key to meeting the EU target to recycle 65% of municipal waste by 2035.

Valuable resources for both material, energy and nutrition are lost through under-utilisation of bioresources, e.g., biowaste disposed of in the mixed municipal waste.

The importance of supporting the utilisation and circulation of biobased materials in nutrient and energy loops is more important than ever. Involved project partners share the desire to develop circular bioeconomy on system and stakeholder levels in cities. Systemic solutions include effective and innovative ways to organise the policies to support circular bioeconomy, circulation of bioresources, separate biowaste collection and processing, as well as the most effective utilisation of biowaste.

Lead partner:

LAB University of Applied Sciences

Collaborating with:

- City of Lahti (Finland)
- Technical University of Košice (Slovakia)
- BSC, Business support centre L.t.d., Kranj (Slovenia)
- City of Mechelen (Belgium)
- Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (Greece)
- CERCA Institute-Catalan Research Centres Institute (Spain)

The total budget of the EU Interreg Europe co-funded project is 1 476 343€ out of which 1,18M€ is ERDF.

The project lasts four years (core phase 2023–2026 and follow-up 2026–2027).



Terminology

Supporting cities in sustainable biobased systemic change

- "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."
- Environmental, Economic, Social, Cultural

Source; World Commission on Environment and Development: Brundtland's report, un.org, europa.eu

Biobased products

- are wholly or partly derived from materials of biological/living origin

Source: environment.ec.europa.eu

System level or systemic

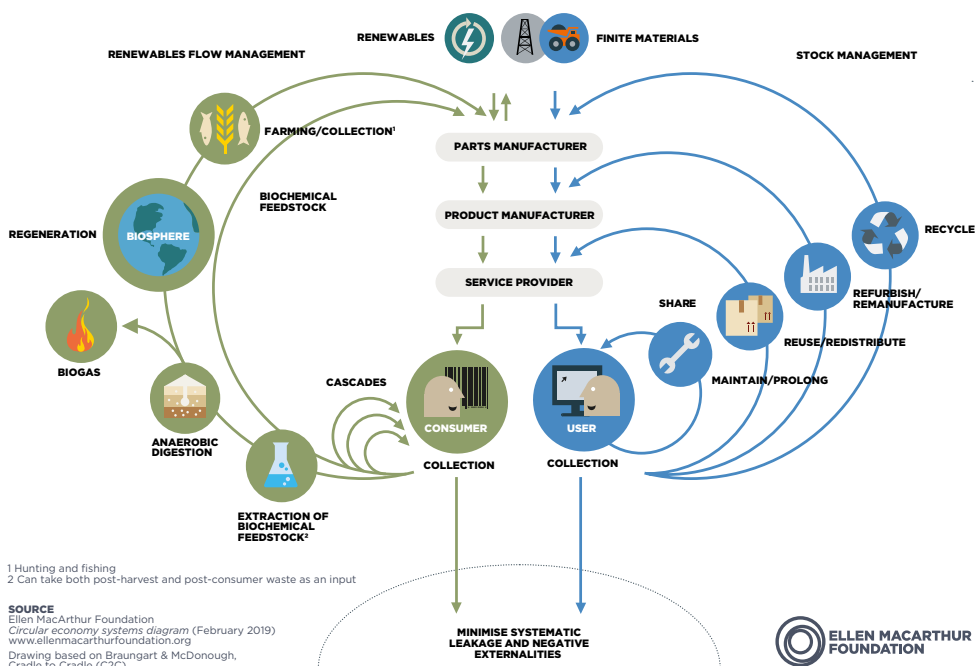
- addressing the root causes, rather than the symptoms
- fundamental, affecting the whole system
- simultaneous change of operating models, structures and their interactions, which creates conditions for future sustainable development

Source: eea.europa.eu, ilo.org, sitra.fi

CITISYSTEM partner map



What do we mean with biobased materials?



CITISYSTEM's 3rd Interregional Meeting in Mechelen, Belgium

Picture: City of Mechelen



On 24.4.24, the CITISYSTEM partners and stakeholders gathered in the renovated library 'Predikheren' for the **3rd Interregional Meeting** in Mechelen. The Alderman of Climate kicked-off the meeting with an inspirational speech about Mechelen at the forefront to be a climate neutral city. Next, the program manager Circular City told us about the history of Mechelen's Circular City Strategy from how it all began to where we are now. Since 2012, Mechelen is part of the Covenant of Mayors signatory and since 2021 a member of the board of Covenant of Mayors. In 2020, Mechelen won the Green Leaf Award and was one of the first signatories of the Circular City Declaration in 2022. In 2020, a Climate Action Plan was launched with high ambitions to reduce 87 kt CO₂ by 2025 and -40% CO₂ by 2030 with the focus on 5 pillars: clean air, cool city, dry feet, strong biodiversity and circular economy.

In 2021, the Circular Hub Region Mechelen was born and give guidance to entrepreneurs, starters and social and collaborative economy actors to set up and scale up viable circular business models with social impact and diversified jobs in social economy through circular activities (<https://www.circulairwerkt.be/en>). Through a large participatory trajectory (30-50 participants from the social pentagon in each workshop) the circular strategy and action plan took shape. The outcome was two action plans: Urban Resource Centres and Citizen Involvement in Circular Economy (www.mechelen.be/circulargoals). One of the actions was closely related to the objectives in the CITISYSTEM project: reduce food waste and recover kitchen waste in view of higher valorisation methods, regenerative agriculture & reusable food containers for the catering industry (circular food system). One of the realisations was the establishment of the regional food distribution centre called Foodsavers, which redistributes surplus food from retail to social organisations in the region and has already saved 1200 tons of food since the beginning in 2020.

Workshop on Evaluation of Good Practices

The 6 CITISYSTEM good practices ([Good practices | Interreg Europe - Sharing solutions for better policy](#)) that have been submitted to the policy learning platform of Interreg Europe were evaluated in an interactive workshop. Good practices were situated on the ladder of value retention and evaluated whether they best aligned with waste prevention, reuse as food, processing into human food, animal food or non-food, recycled into energy or compost or used for incineration as the last option. Also, the scale of the good practices was evaluated from small scale (awareness raising, small group of people affected) to large scale (systemic, large group of people affected). Participants needed to choose which of the good practices they would most likely want to adopt in their own region or country and what was missing in order to achieve this (see results in the graphs below).



Day 2, 25.4.24, the CITISYSTEM partners and stakeholders visited the circular collective in Mechelen '28rond' at Werfheide ([28rond.be](https://www.28rond.be)). The same day, there was a bioeconomy market scheduled called Bio-based City with entrepreneurs from the wider region of Mechelen showcasing their bio-based products. The themes varied from food to building and interior design. The tangibility of the products gave inspiration for what is possible within the circular bioeconomy. Keynotes from Circular Flanders, Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship (VLAIO) and UNIZO province of Antwerp spoke about the Flemish strategic agendas on the bioeconomy and the opportunities and instruments available for entrepreneurs to support and scale up their businesses.

Pictures:
City of Mechelen



Day 3, the CITISYSTEM partners and stakeholders were invited at the **Climate Congress Mechelen 2024**. We joined for the cycling tour 'Closed food loops' and visited a regenerative farm close to Mechelen and the Foodsavers initiative.



"The Meeting of the CITISYSTEM project held in Mechelen (Flanders) was a golden opportunity to meet different people from institutions involved in the project, to get to know the activity in different European regions dealing with circularity (especially the ones from the municipality of Mechelen) and, finally, to contrast and discuss such circularity actions."

Rafaela Cáceres (CERCA)



"The 3rd Interregional meeting of the Project in Mechelen provided partners the opportunity to introduce the policy instruments that will be improved thanks to CITISYSTEM. The presentation of good practices by the project partners and their stakeholders, along with a workshop for exchange of experiences, enabled attendees to share knowledge and techniques, as well as to identify common obstacles and potential solutions."

The study visits highlighted the involvement of businesses, research groups and the citizens of Mechelen in the circular economy, as well as their use of innovative methods to achieve goals in this field.

The meeting was a comprehensive environmentally friendly experience, from using bicycles for participant transportation between points of interest to avoiding disposable materials at the events."

Mrs Chasandra, Region of Central Macedonia



"Mechelen showcases how a proactive and supportive city administration can drive positive change, encouraging a sense of ownership and active participation among its citizens. The synergy between the public, private, and voluntary sectors is a proof of what can be achieved when a community works together towards common goals."

I really liked the visit to the community garden and composting point, as well as the volunteers' enthusiasm for joint efforts for circular economy measures in their neighborhood. It's amazing how well all is organized and works on the site, even though there are no rules, and everything is voluntary."

Johanna Snell, Pääjät-Häme Regional Council

Read more:

Checkout the after movie

CITISYSTEM - Good Practices

During the CITISYSTEM kick-off meeting, the project partners and stakeholders worked together to define what a Good Practice (GP) within the project could be.

We have published 8 Good Practices



Community composting
Community composting is stimulated by the city of Mechelen to recycle household biowaste at the source and to strengthen social cohesion in neighbourhoods.

27 Jun 2024 | By project CITISYSTEM



Screw Sludge Presses: Key for Sustainable Bioeconomy Waste Management and Resource Recovery

The JOCHMAN-NETZSCH screw sludge press is energy-efficient for bioeconomy, offering dewatering and resource recovery for municipal & industrial wastewater.

25 Jun 2024 | By project CITISYSTEM



Sharing Knowledge and Expertise through an Easily Accessible Platform

Exchanging knowledge to encourage and facilitate good waste management practices through an easily and freely accessible online platform.

29 Feb 2024 | By project CITISYSTEM



Innovative biochar-based approaches to soil regeneration and fertilisation

Utilizing circular economy for kitchens, agri, and industrial waste, and transforming it into green energy and regenerative soil substrate.

07 Feb 2024 | By project CITISYSTEM



Development and Monitoring of separate biowaste stream at 38 Municipalities.

foUSA CM undertook to provide the appropriate instruments, materials, methods, and equipment to organize and implement a separate biowaste collection program.

30 Jun 2024 | By project CITISYSTEM



Composting at home

This good practice encourages citizens to sort out their household biowaste at the source and turn it into compost.

22 Dec 2023 | By project CITISYSTEM

Expert approved



Utilization of food waste as food aid

NGOs have organized the food aid work in the City of Lahti and nearby municipalities in a coordinated way

12 Dec 2021 | By project CITISYSTEM

Expert approved



Lahti environmental watch

Digital monitoring service for climate, circular economy and other environmental strategies and action plans in the city of Lahti

10 Nov 2023 | By project CITISYSTEM

Expert approved

In terms of CITISYSTEM, a GP can be:

- practices
- tools & solutions (e.g., technology, digitalization, software)
- cooperation models
- ecosystems
- change in regulations/legislation
- educative actions

Next, we brainstormed on the related Interreg Europe GP features, e.g.:

- an initiative related to regional development policies (e.g., project, process, technique)
- proved to be successful (tangible and measurable results)
- transferable: interesting to other regions
- preferably achieved through public funding,

and we listed also CITISYSTEM specific features to support our selection to be:

- city (or region) level
- promoting sustainability
- related to biobased resources and processes
- systemic ('change of operating models, conditions for future sustainability')

[Click here to explore](#)

Thematic Webinar

3rd Thematic Webinar on enhancing stakeholder cooperation in supporting communities to develop biobased circular economy took place on 21.5.2024, hosted by the City of Mechelen. The webinar gathered experts from various European countries to share their expertise on the topics of separate biowaste collection from households and companies, how to transform food waste into food aid and what is the potential of bio-based side streams in cities. Read more on page 13.

Survey

In 2023/2024, the CITISYSTEM team conducted a comprehensive survey on circular bioeconomy. We have been evaluating the results and creating analysis. Preliminary results were presented to the partners. Some of the results will be published in the form of the expert paper, titled **Strategies Supporting Circular Bioeconomy in Selected EU** and presented at the Smart Cities in Smart Regions conference in Lahti, Finland later in 2024.



Our first CITISYSTEM video is published!

Story of Circular Bioeconomy in Sustainable Cities



FINLAND



Policy situation

In the Lahti area, the Regional Waste Management regulations were updated in June 2023 and the implementation is continuing. The first inspection rounds of composting have started to check that households are using suitable equipment. Checks are carried out for random properties according to their announcement of having a compost. Any deficiencies discovered during the inspection will be primarily corrected with instructions and advice. In addition, obligatory waste collection of biowaste in all properties in densely populated areas starts on 1.7.2024.

As discovered during the city-organized stakeholder meeting in semester 2, there is a potential for the city to take on a stronger role in the development of food aid operations. This would involve collaborating with food producers and grocery stores to effectively utilize food waste. We continue promoting the importance of this topic and finding the best role for the city. Utilization of food waste and food aid activities vary a lot in Finland, and cities have made different decisions regarding their participation in food aid activities. In a social enterprise-lead project, the matter is investigated locally in Lahti. The Finnish government has just decided on long-term support for food aid operators.

A project idea with stakeholders has been discussed about promoting biowaste collection at rental apartments by providing collection bags and targeted information campaign. The discussions continue with possible project partners.

The implementation of Lahti Circular Economy Roadmap is continuing. The city-owned companies choose three measures from Lahti's circular economy roadmap that promote circular economy in their operations. The companies prepare a plan, based on the selected measures, to promote the circular economy. City organizes a meeting with the companies in May to discuss together about the targets and reporting.

We continue using and updating a follow-up tool for the Lahti Circular Economy Roadmap. The measures of the roadmap are at Lahti Environmental Watch Service ([lahdenymparistovahti.fi](https://www.lahdenymparistovahti.fi)). Named contact persons update the measures, timetable, and tasks. Next step is to find and prepare indicators to follow the measures.

National Circular Economy Green Deal will be published in June. Several cities and regions, including City of Lahti and the Regional Council of Päijät-Häme, are involved in the preparation process of this Green Deal. The process is led by the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. The Green Deal has five themes of which one is "Renewable food system" that focuses especially on biobased circular economy, setting up goals and measures for different Finnish actors. Lahti is following the process and starting to prepare for a possible commitment for the Green Deal.

SLOVAKIA

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic is starting to be recognised the National Contact Point for the BIOEAST Initiative, which supports knowledge-based agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry in Central and Eastern Europe. Since the end of 2023, the ministry has been developing a Roadmap for the circular bioeconomy.

In Slovakia, some exciting developments in bioeconomy include Panara company, which creates innovative materials to replace conventional plastics in the gastro sector; project ALFA, focused on producing biogas from livestock farming; and Parkan Crudes, a pilot project for insect farming.

On the policy front, the Ministry of the Environment plans to update several key standards and introduce a new Act on the Environmental Fund. Upcoming changes include adjustments to EIA assessment in February 2024, landfill fees in April, environmental measures in May, waste law obligations for disposable plastic product manufacturers in June, and further EIA assessment updates in September 2024.

Picture: Technical University of Košice



“Legislative changes towards a more responsible and sustainable approach are coming to Slovakia as well. Public awareness is still lower than ideal despite existing initiatives, which, however, lack the “WOW” effect.

This highlights the importance of making bioeconomy topics feel relatable, engaging, and important for everyone. And this is space for our further work.



Deputy mayor of Trebisov

in one of our stakeholder meetings in regards to legislative changes in Slovakia





Picture: Business support centre L.t.d., Kranj

SLOVENIA

Policy situation

Regional development program sets a framework and define priorities, key goals and outline the strategic overview of development of region Gorenjska in the period 2021–2027. Waste prevention is part of the priority environment. So far the biowaste is not specifically addressed. So far policy was not changed. However, the exchange of good practices from other partner regions, stakeholder group meeting, having possibility of regional stakeholders to see up close the good practices in other partner regions gives us a great boost towards better management of waste in the region.

Regional Dissemination Event

The Regional Dissemination Event that took place on 23.03.2024 was part of the Eco week in city community of Kranj. It offered an opportunity for inhabitants to be able to share, exchange info regarding circularity of waste via stand in city centre of Kranj during the Saturday event where different sustainable approaches/organisation were presented. At the stand CITISYSTEM was presented, citizens had a chance to openly discuss the topic of waste and in this discussion with citizens good practices, tasks and goals of CITISYSTEM project were presented. Additionally there was a workshop with stakeholders coming from different institutions from the region (local communities, energy office, comunal companies, office for protection of nature, national Ministry of regional development) with whom we discussed the importality of CITISYSTEM and its importance for changes in the practical and strategical sence, including the possibilities of change in policies.



BELGIUM

Policy situation in Mechelen

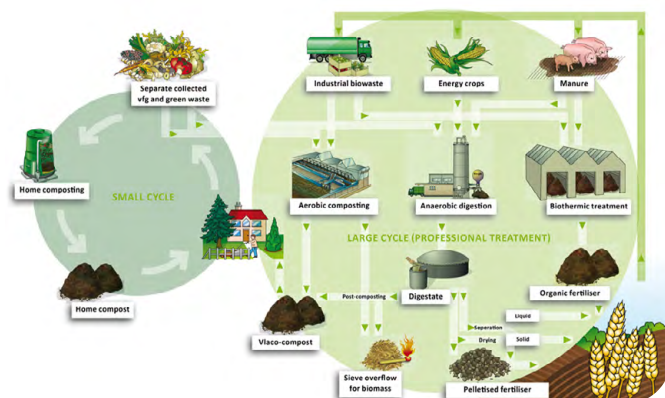
In Mechelen, the overall aim of the CITISYSTEM project is to achieve structural change to the local multi-annual plan 2026-2031 with different actions and budgets to execute these actions. We are yet in the process of formulating priorities, but steps are taken regarding several actions: a physical food hub Mechelen, the selective collection of biowaste from households and companies such as the hospitality sector, and decentralized processing of biowaste in local anaerobic digester and local composting site.

Towards a food hub in Mechelen

The starting point for the food hub is the existing food redistribution centre Foodsavers, which was founded in 2020 and tackles the problems of food waste and poverty at the same time. Since the beginning, Foodsavers has rescued over 1200 tons of food, in equivalent 3.2 tons of CO₂ avoided, or €84 million of value captured. With the creation of the food hub, Mechelen wants to scale up the activities of Foodsavers and save even more food to become waste. Moreover, the food hub will be a central place in Mechelen for all food initiatives. A social restaurant on site will use the surplus food that cannot be distributed any longer but is still useful for human consumption. The kitchen will be shared with startups that are welcome to experiment with the valorization of surplus food into new food products or other bio-based materials. The food hub will be an incubator for design, building and fashion in the circular bioeconomy. Workshops and courses organized at the food hub will result in even more food waste prevention through citizens that learn how cook with kitchen scraps or techniques to preserve food longer. The food hub will also house a short chain distribution platform that will serve as a central hub for the B2B supply and delivery of local farm products from the farms in the suburbs of Mechelen towards retail, restaurants, and companies in the city center. All biowaste streams that are no longer useful for food or other applications will be centralized and recycled into bioenergy and/or compost. The next steps are to find financing through new projects and partners or investors for the purchase of the site and necessary infrastructure.

Selective collection of biowaste from households in Mechelen

No system is yet in place for the separate collection of biowaste from households in Mechelen. The intermunicipal waste company (IVAREM) which is in charge for the management of all waste including biowaste in Mechelen and nine other municipalities foresees the implementation of the separate biowaste collection by the end of 2025. The plan is to organize a two-weekly door-to-door collection in containers and public drop-off points at strategic places in the city. The processing will be centralized outside of Mechelen. At the moment, there is a shortage of processing capacity in Flanders if all municipalities will start with the separate collection of biowaste, which according to legislation needs to be latest by 2026. New locations and infrastructure will need to be build. The organic waste policy in Flanders has a two-fold approach: there is the central processing ('large cycle') or decentralized processing ('small cycle'). The large cycle refers to the selective collection and processing of biowaste towards industrial treatment plants. The small cycle on the other hand focusses on decentral or local processing of organic waste. Sensitizing, preventing, and educating the citizens how to do it themselves, is important in this small cycle.



Picture: City of Mechelen

The small cycle is some sort of prevention. Waste that is not taken with the door-to-door collection or given to the recycling parks is not seen as waste. That is the interpretation in Flanders to the waste directives. That is also the reason why we often call it organic remains or organic residues, instead of organic waste. In this respect, the city of Mechelen has been promoting home and community level composting for over decades and will remain doing so with granting subsidies for compost bins to citizens and the support of community gardens in and around the city. Schools are also encouraged to recycle their own biowaste and workshops are organized to teach the children how to compost and why it is important. According to VLACO (the Flemish compost and biogas organization) 41% of the people in Flanders are composting at home. Converted into weight this adds up to 23.9% (±290.000 tons) of the biowaste in Flanders that is composted at home. The other 55.3% (±675.000 tons) is collected through selective collection and centralized treatment, and 21.8% (±248.000 tons) still ends up in the residual waste collection and goes to incineration.

Innovative pilot for the selective collection and decentralized processing of biowaste from the hospitality sector in Mechelen

For the collection of biowaste from the hospitality sector a subsidy of €30.000 was granted to a consortium that will collect the biowaste from the restaurants in the city centre with cargo bikes and process it in a modular scalable anaerobic digester. The energy that will be produced from the biowaste will be used to heat the local hospital and the residual digestate will be used as a fertilizer for the plants in the city. The water that comes out of the digester will be separated and filtered to rainwater quality and used to flush the toilets from the hospital. This innovative idea that offers a full self-sustaining local solution to biowaste comes from the startup Green City Systems powered by Mezzo Energy

Published here

Stakeholder meeting

The 3rd stakeholder meeting in March 2024 gathered experts from the Public Waste Agency (OVAM), the Association of Flemish cities and municipalities (VMSG) and the intermunicipal waste company IVAREM. Updates on legislation, upcoming events, and good practices in the circular bioeconomy in Flanders were shared. The bottlenecks and opportunities for the local actions were discussed thoroughly.



GREECE



Picture: Region of Central Macedonia



Policy Situation

The Greek biowaste policy, adapted to the EU framework, focuses on the development of separate collection streams and construction of composting or anaerobic digestion facilities. By 31.12.2022, biowaste must either be sorted and recycled at source or collected separately and not mixed with other types of waste, in order to be recycled (including composting and anaerobic digestion). Municipalities are the key actors to deliver biowaste policy. In the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM), the Regional Association of Solid Waste Management Agencies of Central Macedonia (FoDSA CM) undertook all the necessary and the legal procedures to provide simultaneously to all Municipalities of Central Macedonia all the appropriate instruments, materials, methods, and equipment to organize and implement a separate biowaste collection program.

FoDSA CM, in order to optimize the separate biowaste collection system in the Municipalities and to ensure the integrated organization of the system on a common basis for all the Municipalities with the characteristics of a single and solid guidance for its effective and efficient outcome, proceeded to the creation of a Roadmap for the development of separate biowaste collection networks for each Municipality of RCM.

The roadmap was actually a manual for each Municipality (37 in total) on how to implement the separate biowaste collection program. The implementation was divided in two phases. Phase A included the development of the biowaste network at large producers (Food markets, hotels, kindergartens, large scale catering establishments, restaurants, canteens, and other similar food service operations).

Phase B included the implementation of a pilot Separate Biowaste Collection at Source Program in municipal households and the gradual expansion of the pilot throughout each Municipality. So far, some of the Municipalities or the Region of Central Macedonia have already taken significant steps and turned their biowaste into compost. Great example is the Municipality of Veria, where all biowaste is separated in a plant and converted into soil improvers. Other Municipalities following the successful story are the Municipalities of Thermi and Nea Proponitida.

Also, the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (RD-FCM) supports the Region of Central Macedonia, as a member of Circular Cities Forum, which is a voluntary cooperation agreement for waste management as resources in Greece. The voluntary cooperation agreement was signed in February 2024.

3rd Regional Stakeholders Group Meeting – RDFCM, Thessaloniki 19.06.2024

The Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (RDF-CM) organized the 3rd Regional Stakeholders Group Meeting of the CITISYSTEM project, in Thessaloniki, on Wednesday 19 June 2024. The event, was attended by representatives of the Stakeholders, such as the Region of Central Macedonia (APA), the Regional Association of Solid Waste Management Agencies of Central Macedonia and more. In total, 10 people had participated in Thessaloniki Concert Hall.

At the beginning of the Meeting, RDFCM team made an overview of the progress of the CITISYSTEM project during the third semester, transferring the experiences from the 3rd Interregional Meeting in Mechelen and the 3rd Thematic Seminar. On this occasion, the members of the Regional Stakeholders Group were invited to the upcoming 4th Thematic Seminar of the CITISYSTEM project and were encouraged to play a more active role. Then, an interesting discussion followed between the participants as far as the good practices that take place and the current situation and next steps regarding the separate collection of biowaste in the Region of Central Macedonia.



Picture: Region of Central Macedonia



SPAIN

Picture: CERCA



Policy Situation

In the last few months, the Catalan policy situation hasn't changed; however, within the scope of the policy instruments we've addressed in CITISYSTEM, and also in other areas of the Catalan system, there have been initiatives developed with the potential to bring change about.

Both BioHubCat and BioBoost are examples of hubs where institutions collaborate and work together to help transform the bioeconomy landscape in the region. To help promote and implement bioeconomy projects, BioHubCat connects existing public and private infrastructures and facilities with agents of change, and BioBoost offers them advice and collaborates with the economy sector to tackle systemic barriers to investing in bioeconomy.

The LIFE INFUSION project is another example of a successful pilot that is likely to result in a change in policies. The Barcelona Metropolitan Area, along with agents like the Ecoparc 2 and IRTA, are involved in treating the liquid fraction of digestate that results from the treatment of biowaste in plants from the Barcelona area to turn it into useful sustainable water through the removal of ammonium.

The policy instruments we've addressed in CITISYSTEM have also had progress in the last few months.

RIS3CAT published a shared agenda focused on Lleida, a province that accounts for half the agricultural production and cattle industry in Catalonia, to promote the shared development of a circular bioeconomy model that takes into account agricultural waste and takes the opportunity to diversify the local economy.

On the other hand, within the EBC2030 framework the Catalan Waste Agency is drafting a new waste management law to tackle waste prevention and management - especially the organic fraction of municipal waste -, with a special focus on implementing more efficient separate collection systems in large cities and densely populated municipalities.



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Acció Climàtica,
Alimentació i Agenda Rural



CITISYSTEM Events

We plan to have every semester a thematic webinar.

The 1st CITISYSTEM webinar was organized on 16.6.2023 by LAB.

[Read the summary](#)

The 2nd CITISYSTEM webinar was organized on 23.1.2024 by CERCA.

[Read the summary](#)

CITISYSTEM Core Phase Semester Periods:

Semester 1: 3–8/2023 FINLAND

Semester 2: 9/2023–2/2024 SPAIN

» Semester 3: 3–8/2024 BELGIUM

Semester 4: 9/2024–2/2025 SLOVENIA

Semester 5: 3–8/2025 SLOVAKIA

Semester 6: 9/2025–2/2026 GREECE

Semester 3: 3rd Thematic webinar

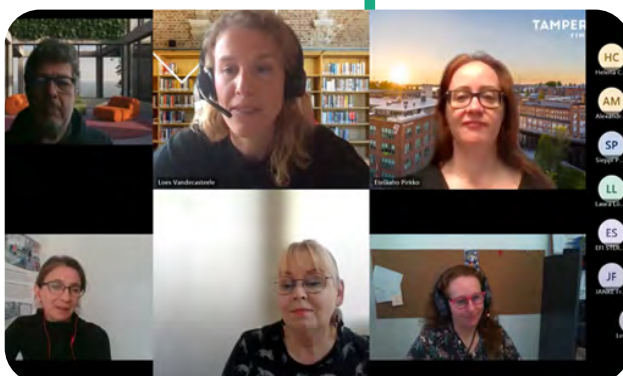
“Enhancing stakeholder cooperation in supporting communities to develop biobased circular economy”

21.5.2024 9.00 – 12.00, CET time

The 3rd thematic webinar on enhancing stakeholder cooperation in supporting communities to develop biobased circular economy took place on 21.5.2024, hosted by the City of Mechelen. The webinar gathered experts from various European countries to share their expertise on the topics of separate biowaste collection from households and companies, how to transform food waste into food aid and what is the potential of bio-based side streams in cities.

From the presentations we learned that **there are a lot of existing good practices and with some effort we can adopt those in other regions across Europe**. In order to do so, legislation is necessary, but it is not sufficient. Communication and awareness campaigns and the sharing of information in participative trajectories are as important. Economic incentives and disincentives can also help, but most of the success is achieved when stakeholders are working together. From regional government agencies, cities and municipalities, waste agencies, NGO's, citizens to students and minority groups. The circular bioeconomy needs to be there for everyone and can't leave anyone behind. Listening and bi-directional communication is key in order to make it work.

[the recording and presentations of the webinar](#)



Picture: City of Mechelen



Dissemination events:

Dissemination event in Mechelen - KNAL Energy Festival



Spring has started with a BANG!!!

On the 23rd of March, Mechelen's citizens had the chance to refresh their composting skills at the KNAL Energy Festival in Mechelen. Composting experts showed them how to make compost from food scraps and how to use the compost to nourish the trees and plants in the garden. Once you know how, composting is relatively easy, fun and most of all it's free! Why run to the store to buy fertilizer when you can make your own compost!

Moreover, compost makes the soil healthy, and it helps to improve water retention, a good thing if you think of the increasingly hot summers.

Regional Dissemination Event in Slovenia

The Regional Dissemination Event was held as part of Eco Week in the Kranj city community. This event provided an opportunity for 1200 residents to share and exchange information about waste circularity. It took place at a stand in the city center of Kranj on Saturday 23.03.2024, where various sustainable approaches and organizations were showcased.

At our stand, we presented CITISYSTEM, giving residents the chance to engage in open discussions about waste management. We shared best practices, tasks, and goals of CITISYSTEM with the community.

Additionally, we conducted a workshop with stakeholders from various regional institutions, including local communities, the energy office, communal companies, the Office for Nature Protection, and the National Ministry of Regional Development. During the workshop, we discussed the importance of CITISYSTEM and its impact on both practical and strategic levels, including the potential for policy changes.



Upcoming in Semester 4:



4th Interregional meeting

in November 2024

Hosted by
BSC, Business support centre L.t.d.,
in Kranj, Slovenia.



4th Webinar

The 4th Webinar on **systematic approach to circular bioeconomy** will be held in

January/February 2025

Stay tuned for the exact day & book your calendar!



Project partners and stakeholders at the Kick-off meeting. Picture: Oona Rouhiainen.

Have a nice summer!

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