From Bulky Waste to Creative Value: Gdynia’s Integrated Strategy for a CCSI-Driven Circular Transition

Interreg Baltic Sea Region
Co-funded by the European Union
CIRCULAR ECONOMY
Creative Circular Cities

Context

As part of the Interreg Baltic Sea region Creative Circular Cities (CCC) project, Gdynia has elaborated this strategy for involving Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) into the circular transition at local level.

This strategy is based on observations and experience gained through local stakeholder engagement and the piloting of innovative citizens engagement and circular creative business activities.

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Preface

This strategy builds on Gdynia's experiences and lessons from the CCC project, including creating dialogue in co-creation arenas, implementing circular business support activities for local creatives and involving citizens in bulky waste management and reuse.

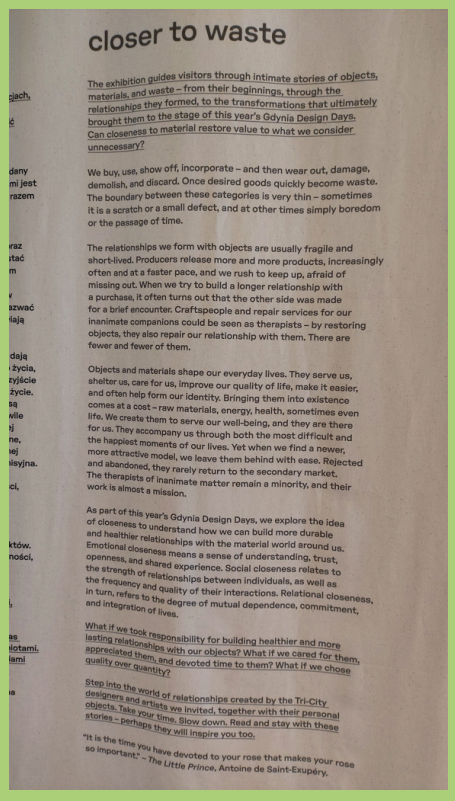
1. Introduction

Gdynia aims to strengthen circular transition by reducing waste generation and increasing the reuse of valuable materials, with a particular focus on bulky household waste. Building on the experience gained through the Creative Circular Cities (CCC) project, the city has demonstrated how culture, creativity and citizen participation can transform bulky waste from a disposal challenge into a resource for local circular value chains.

Through the successful testing of a bulky waste reuse service, Gdynia explored practical ways to extend the life cycle of furniture and other household items, engage residents in circular behaviours, and create new opportunities for cooperation between the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI), municipal stakeholders and circular economy actors.

Pilot activities implemented in the city have confirmed residents' interest in circular solutions for bulky waste, which are not currently available.

This strategy builds on those experiences and outlines how Gdynia can further develop citizen-centred reuse solutions, support circular business innovation and strengthen partnerships that contribute to more sustainable management of bulky waste and resources across the city.



closer to waste

The exhibition guides visitors through intimate stories of objects, materials, and waste – from their beginnings, through the relationships they formed, to the transformations that ultimately brought them to the stage of this year's Gdynia Design Days. Can closeness to material restore value to what we consider unnecessary?

We buy, use, show off, incorporate – and then wear out, damage, demolish, and discard. Once desired goods quickly become waste. The boundary between these categories is very thin – sometimes it is a scratch or a small defect, and at other times simply boredom or the passage of time.

The relationships we form with objects are usually fragile and short-lived. Producers release more and more products, increasingly often and at a faster pace, and we rush to keep up, afraid of missing out. When we try to build a longer relationship with a purchase, it often turns out that the other side was made for a brief encounter. Craftspeople and repair services for our inanimate companions could be seen as therapists – by restoring objects, they also repair our relationship with them. There are fewer and fewer of them.

Objects and materials shape our everyday lives. They serve us, shelter us, care for us, improve our quality of life, make it easier, and often help form our identity. Bringing them into existence comes at a cost – raw materials, energy, health, sometimes even life. We create them to serve our well-being, and they are there for us. They accompany us through both the most difficult and the happiest moments of our lives. Yet when we find a newer, more attractive model, we leave them behind with ease. Rejected and abandoned, they rarely return to the secondary market. The therapists of inanimate matter remain a minority, and their work is almost a mission.

As part of this year's Gdynia Design Days, we explore the idea of closeness to understand how we can build more durable and healthier relationships with the material world around us. Emotional closeness means a sense of understanding, trust, openness, and shared experience. Social closeness relates to the strength of relationships between individuals, as well as the frequency and quality of their interactions. Relational closeness, in turn, refers to the degree of mutual dependence, commitment, and integration of lives.

What if we took responsibility for building healthier and more lasting relationships with our objects? What if we cared for them, appreciated them, and devoted time to them? What if we chose quality over quantity?

Step into the world of relationships created by the Tri-City designers and artists we invited, together with their personal objects. Take your time. Slow down. Read and stay with these stories – perhaps they will inspire you too.

"It is the time you have devoted to your rose that makes your rose so important." – *The Little Prince*, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

2. Stakeholders

Successful implementation of creative circular activities in Gdynia relies on cooperation between different stakeholders. As part of the CCC project, the Association “Pomorksie in the European Union” and the PPNT Gdynia Design Centre involved municipal and regional departments, cultural institutions, creative entrepreneurs, circular economy actors, NGOs, educational institutions and residents in the co-creation and delivery of bulky waste workshops, co-creation arena meetings, exhibition organization and a physical give-and-take bulky waste space.

3. Vision

Gdynia leads the way for circular bulky waste management, where residents, creative actors and local institutions work together to extend the life of furniture and household items through reuse, repair, upcycle, and circular innovation.

4. Strategic Objectives

- Increase the reuse and circulation of household bulky waste.
- Engage residents in circular behaviours and reuse activities.
- Support creative and cultural actors' involvement in developing circular solutions and services.
- Strengthen cooperation between municipal actors, businesses and community stakeholders.

5. Long-Term Strategic Impact

Expected outcomes include reduced waste generation, increased reuse, stronger circular business development, greater citizen participation and stronger integration of cultural and creative actors in the implementation of urban sustainability activities.

6. Measures for supporting more circularity amongst creative businesses in Gdynia

6a. Strengthening Collaboration Between Creative Businesses and Circular Economy Actors

Building on the Co-Creation Arenas organised during the CCC project, Gdynia will continue facilitating dialogue between creative entrepreneurs, municipal stakeholders and circular economy practitioners. Recognizing the importance of exchange and networking opportunities, Gdynia will support the development of new partnerships, the identification of business opportunities and strengthening the role of creatives in the city's circular transition.

6b. Mainstreaming the Bulky Waste Give-and-Take Platform Concept

Gdynia will further develop and promote the Give-and-Take platform concept for bulky household items. The solution will include platform mock-ups, implementation guidelines and operational recommendations that enable municipalities, organisations and entrepreneurs to facilitate the reuse and circulation of furniture and other bulky waste streams.

The platform concept creates opportunities for creative businesses and service providers to engage in circular value chains related to collection, refurbishment, logistics and reuse.

6c. Working with creatives to make circularity visible

Gdynia will continue to work with designers, artists, communicators and cultural organisations to raise awareness of bulky waste reuse and promote circular behaviours. Through creative campaigns, storytelling, exhibitions, workshops and public events, circularity can be made more visible, accessible and attractive. By showcasing the value and potential of reused furniture and household items, creatives can help change perceptions of waste and encourage residents to participate in local reuse initiatives.

7. Measures for Promoting Circular Lifestyles Through Creative and Cultural Actors

7a. Expanding Citizen Engagement in Bulky Waste Reuse

Building on the successful CCC pilot activities, Gdynia aims to continue promoting reuse practices and workshops among residents where possible. Local creative upcycling workshops succeeded in a mind shift in residents with regards to seemingly discarded and useless household items. Creative approaches and storytelling have proven to encourage residents to adopt more circular consumption habits and waste prevention practices.

7b. Using Creative Educational Campaigns to Promote Circular Behaviour

As part of the Gdynia Design Days, two publicly accessible educational exhibitions raise awareness of circular economy principles and demonstrate the potential of reuse and sustainable resource management.

The exhibitions presented practical examples of circular solutions, showcased the outcomes of the CCC project and highlighted opportunities for extending the life cycle of products and materials.

By combining design, storytelling and visual communication, the exhibitions make circularity more understandable and accessible to a broad audience. Building on these experiences, Gdynia will aim to continue to use exhibitions, creative campaigns and public events to promote circular behaviours, encourage the reuse of bulky household items and inspire residents to participate in the city's circular transition.

8. **Further resources**

- https://www.gdyniadesigndays.eu/wystawy/blizej-smieci
- https://gdyniadesigndays.eu/wystawy/luka