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Tallinn's Integrated Strategy for a CCSI-Driven Circular Transition



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Creative Circular Cities

Context



As part of the Interreg Baltic Sea region Creative Circular Cities project, project partners developed strategies to anchor creative and cultural actors as drivers of circular action.

For Tallinn, the expertise and experience gained through local stakeholder engagement and the piloting of innovative citizens engagement and circular creative business activities are embedded in Tallinn's 2035 Circular Economy Development Plan.

Read further to learn about the process and outcome of integrating creative and cultural actors into circular economy planning.

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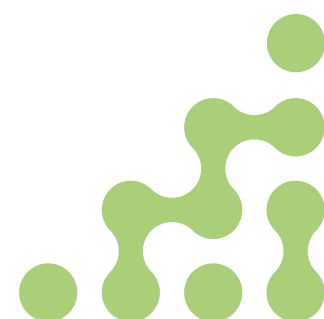
Creative Circular Cities

Background

In 2025, Tallinn developed its 2035 Circular Economy Development Plan, which positions the city as a forward-looking promoter of circular products, services, and business models. The plan supports innovation, circular entrepreneurship, and sustainable public procurement, while fostering a culture of reuse, repair, and sharing. Through business incubators, pilot projects, testing environments, and collaboration with research institutions, Tallinn creates opportunities for innovative and creative businesses to develop and scale circular solutions.

The integration of the creative and cultural sector and industries (CCSI)

As part of the Creative Circular Cities (CCC) project, the local Estonian project partner – Tallinn Business Incubator – was involved in the development process of the 2035 Circular Economy Development Plan throughout 2024 and 2025.

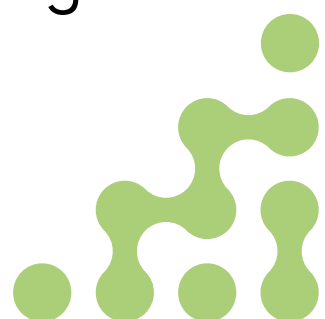


Rather than creating a stand alone strategy on creative-driven circular transitions, the mainstreaming of the creative and cultural voices in the overarching 2035 Circular Economy Development Plan has a potential for a better integration of creative and cultural expertise in other circular economy areas and more successful synergies with stakeholders involved in the delivery of the plan.

The key approach to representing the voice of the creative and cultural actors was through participation in the plan's development workshops. These workshops gathered together various stakeholders, such as the Tallinn Business Incubator, Tallinn City, Tallinn City Enterprise Services, Materjalivoog (Industrial Materials), TLT (Tallinn City Transport), Civitta, Tallinna Jäätmeakeskus (Tallinn Circular Economy Center), Tallinn City Museum and many more.

Specifically for this plan, the Tallinn Business Incubator saw an opportunity for better CCSI integration in several of the plans action programmes, such as:

- Action programme 1: A circular economy-competent and aware city organization and city residents
- Action programme 2: Urban organization implementing green and circular procurement principles



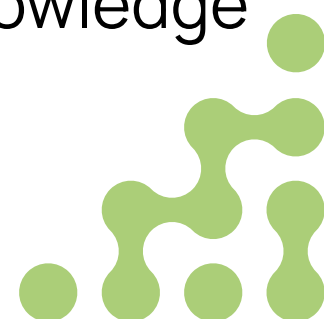
- Action programme 3: A city that consumes and promotes circular products and services
- Action programme 5: Urban space and built environment developed on circular principles

The final product is a plan that integrates creative and cultural perspectives in the planning and implementation of circular action, thus giving a role to creatives in advancing a more circular society.

Please see below the actions that make Tallinn's 2035 Circular Economy Development Plan an excellent example of how to integrate creative and cultural actors into circularity and a few examples from the Tallinn Business Incubator already implementing some of the activities as part of the CCC project.

Action programme 1: A circular economy-competent and aware city organization and city residents

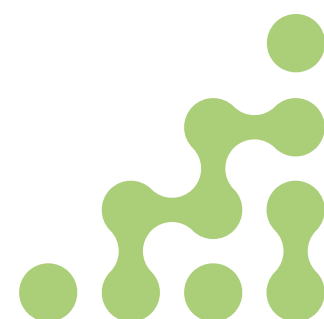
The prerequisite for the transition to a circular economy is the willingness of all participants to contribute to circular activities, including city residents, entrepreneurs, organizations. A key element is therefore strengthening the capacity and knowledge of stakeholders on circular lifestyle choices.



The plan proposes identifying the existing knowledge, skills and attitudes of citizens, entrepreneurs and organisations towards the circular economy. This provides a basis for understanding the barriers and information needs of different groups and for designing more targeted engagement activities.

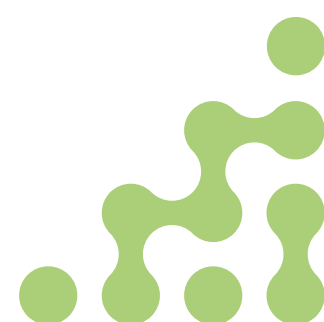
The plan also highlights the importance of accessible information, education and awareness-raising. Tallinn intends to develop information materials, organise educational programmes and provide general information about the circular economy. Guidance materials and training programmes are intended not only for city employees but also to support broader understanding among stakeholders. In this way, citizens can be enabled to understand circular economy principles and translate them into everyday practices, such as more sustainable consumption, reuse, repair, waste prevention and resource-efficient lifestyles.

The Tallinn Business Incubator translated this action into reality by creating a creative circular economy exhibition in Spring 2026.



Developed together with local creatives, the exhibition addresses the knowledge gap around circular economy principles among businesses, consumers and students by using interactive displays, real-life examples, videos and practical demonstrations to make concepts such as sharing, reuse, repair, refurbishment and recycling accessible and engaging. Importantly, it encourages visitors to reflect on their own consumption choices and understand their role in the circularity transition, illustrating how Tallinn can move from simply raising awareness to creating hands-on, participatory learning experiences for citizens and other stakeholders. The exhibition therefore provides a practical example of the awareness-raising, education and community engagement objectives outlined in Tallinn's circular economy development plan.

More information: [The Circular Economy in Practice: Tallinn's Interactive Exhibition – Creative Circular Cities](#)



Action programme 2: Urban organization implementing green and circular procurement principles

One of the activities under this programme focuses on engaging and preparing market participants for circular and green procurement through the organisation of seminars and round tables in selected areas to increase awareness among entrepreneurs about offering environmentally friendly and circular products and services and participating in procurement procedures. This is particularly important for creative and cultural businesses.

Recognizing this, the Tallinn Business Incubator created an incubation programme for creatives which addressed these needs. The incubator created modules on designing sustainable products and services. The trainings focused on the principles of circular product and service design and their application across the entire product lifecycle. Participants learnt to understand the differences between linear and circular systems, design durable and repairable products, assess environmental impact, and connect circular design to practical business decisions. More information: [Tallinn incubation case study – Creative Circular Cities](#)



Action programme 3: A city that consumes and promotes circular products and services

This programme aims to shift Tallinn's consumption model towards avoiding and reducing disposable products, while expanding opportunities for reuse, repair and sharing. The programme combines practical measures—such as expanding circular economy centres, creating reuse, lending and repair opportunities in public institutions, improving information on where items can be reused or repaired, and introducing circular requirements for events and city-owned spaces—with support for circular entrepreneurship and innovation. Tallinn also seeks to create a supportive operating environment for businesses developing circular products and services, including through incubators, testing opportunities, training, applied research, hackathons and recognition schemes.

Creative and cultural actors have a particularly relevant role as both practitioners and enablers of this transition. The CCC activities of the Tallinn Business Incubator align well with this programme, but there are plenty of other ways, this programme reflects the role cultural institutions within measures to reduce disposable products and identifies museums through the promotion of the Green Museum environmental management label.



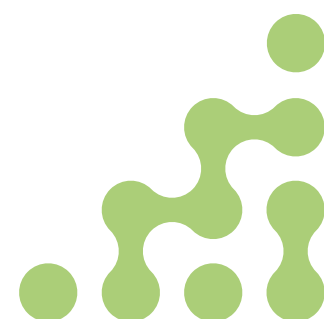
Libraries, youth centres, educational and sports institutions are identified as places where reuse, lending and repair opportunities can be created, with the Culture and Sports Department involved in their implementation. More broadly, cultural venues and events can function as visible spaces for demonstrating circular practices, while creative actors can contribute to new circular products, services, events and business models. This connects Action Programme 3 to Tallinn's wider ambition to be a "Creative world city", where circularity is not only an environmental objective but also a source of innovation, community participation and new economic and cultural practices.

Action programme 5: Urban space and built environment developed on circular principles

This programme promotes the reuse of existing buildings and spaces instead of unnecessary new construction, adaptable and multifunctional buildings, and the use of recycled, reusable and environmentally friendly materials in construction. The programme also includes circular design criteria in planning and procurement, pilot projects, resource-use planning, awareness-raising and training for planners, designers and developers, as well as systems for storing and reusing construction materials and city assets.



For creative and cultural actors, the programme creates an important practical role through the buildings and spaces in which cultural life takes place. Cultural buildings are explicitly identified among the city-owned facilities where circular principles should be applied from the design stage, while the emphasis on adaptability, temporary use, renovation and reuse can support more flexible cultural spaces and new uses for existing buildings. Cultural actors can therefore contribute not only as users of circular infrastructure, but also as partners in developing and testing new spatial solutions and demonstrating how existing urban spaces can be reused creatively. This aligns Action Programme 5 with Tallinn's wider goal of becoming a "Creative world city".



Conclusion

Tallinn's 2035 Circular Economy Development Plan shows that creative and cultural actors can play a part in the delivery of circular actions. Through the participation in stakeholder engagement workshops and reviews of the draft plan, the Tallinn Business Incubator was able to ensure that creativity and culture are mainstreamed in the action programmes of the plan, making it a robust integrated strategy for CCSI-driven circular transition.

The plan, but also the above summaries and translation, can serve as inspiration for other municipalities interested in better integrating the creative and cultural actors into urban circularity.

Further resources:

- Tallinn 2035 Circular Economy Development roadmap: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/aktilisa/4170/6202/5027/Tallinna%20ringmajanduse%20arengukava%2020352.pdf>
- Tallinn 2035 Development Strategy Goal 2: Creative Global City: <https://strateegia.tallinn.ee/en/creative-global-city/>

