



Circular
Cities & Regions
Initiative

The Circular Cities and Regions Initiative

October 2022

Introduction to the initiative

Policy framework

The Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) is an initiative of the European Commission, launched by the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation as part of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan 2020. It contributes to the policy objectives of the EU Green Deal and the EU Bioeconomy Strategy. It is supported by Horizon Europe, the EU's research and innovation funding programme.

Rationale and scope

The CCRI specifically targets EU cities and regions, and supports them in improving circularity in their economic sectors, value chains and services. They are the closest governance level to Europe's citizens and sources of innovation, socio-economic transformation and circular ecosystems. They are thereby well placed to drive change towards a sustainable, regenerative and inclusive circular economy.

Aims and activities

The CCRI aims to support Europe's green transition by boosting circularity at local and regional level. It is a rather unique **multi-stakeholder collaboration and support scheme**.

The CCRI assists stakeholders across Europe's cities and regions, including regional and local authorities, industry representatives, research and technology organisations and civil society. Combining technical and financial support, it provides comprehensive support over the whole life cycle of local and regional circular economy initiatives.

In order to build capacity and drive economic growth, the CCRI works to increase collaboration and knowledge sharing between EU cities and regions. It also aims to boost innovation and upscaling, which are essential for making the circular economy more widespread and mainstream.

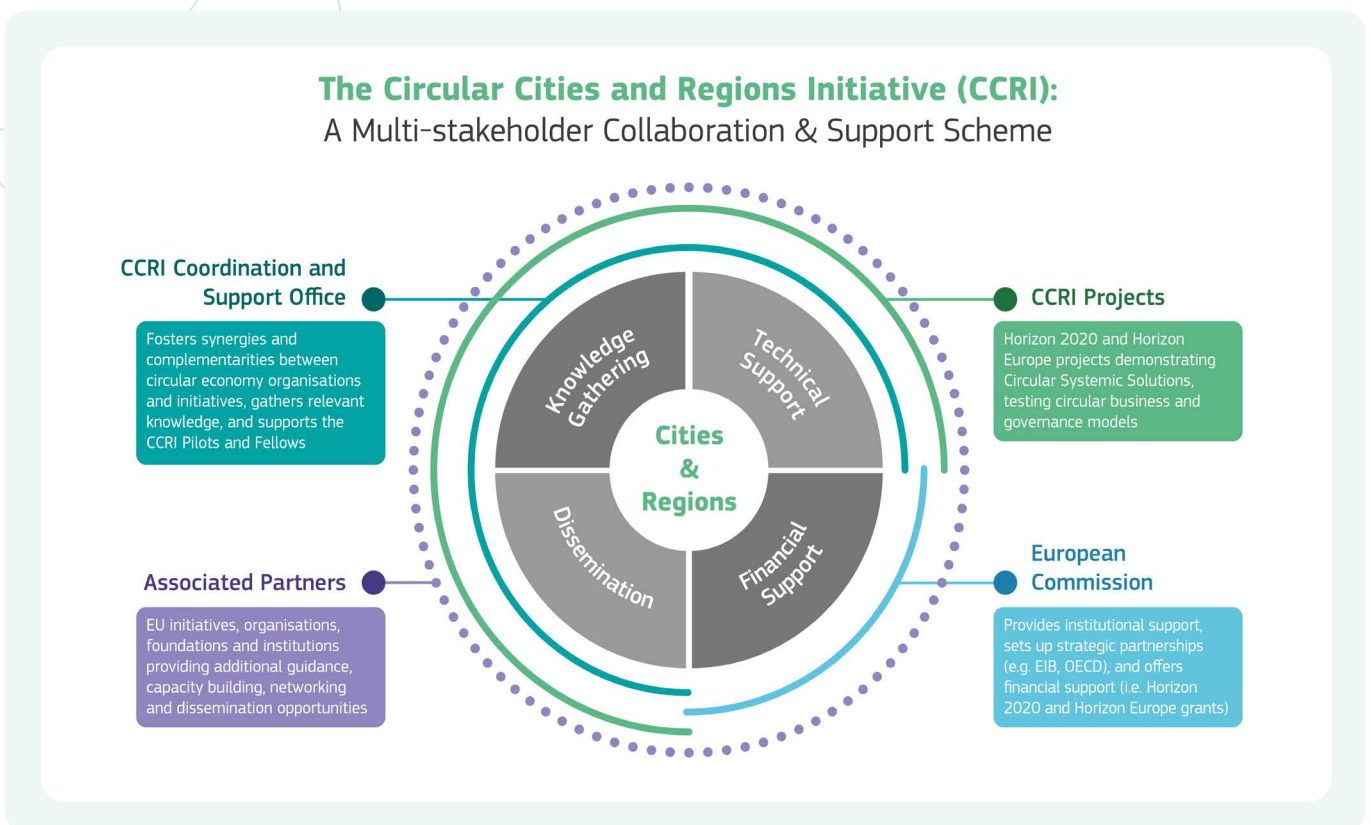
Delivering concrete solutions can prove challenging, given that economic sectors, value chains and services vary greatly across Europe's cities and regions. The CCRI therefore aims to share replicable best practices to help cities and regions find concrete Circular Systemic Solutions (CSS) that suit their own needs.

It also combines this knowledge sharing with financial and technical support, including:

- **financial support to demonstration projects** (through Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe grants: estimated €200 million over six years);
- **financial support for project development assistance (PDA) and technical assistance services** for investments in circular economy at local and regional scale, delivered through PDA grants from Horizon Europe and the future Circular Economy Technical Assistance Facility from the European Investment Bank (EIB) (estimated €40-50 million);
- **cooperation and support** by the CCRI Coordination and Support Office (CCRI-CSO).
- **further assistance (non-financial, e.g. advisory services, support on circular economy governance, promotion of good practices)** from collaborating organisations, such as the EIB Circular City Centre (C3), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 'Programme on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions', as well as the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform and many other CCRI Associated Partners.

The CCRI Support Scheme

The following diagram illustrates the CCRI Support Scheme, including the support provided by the CCRI, the CCRI-CSO and collaborating organisations and initiatives.



The CCRI Coordination and Support Office

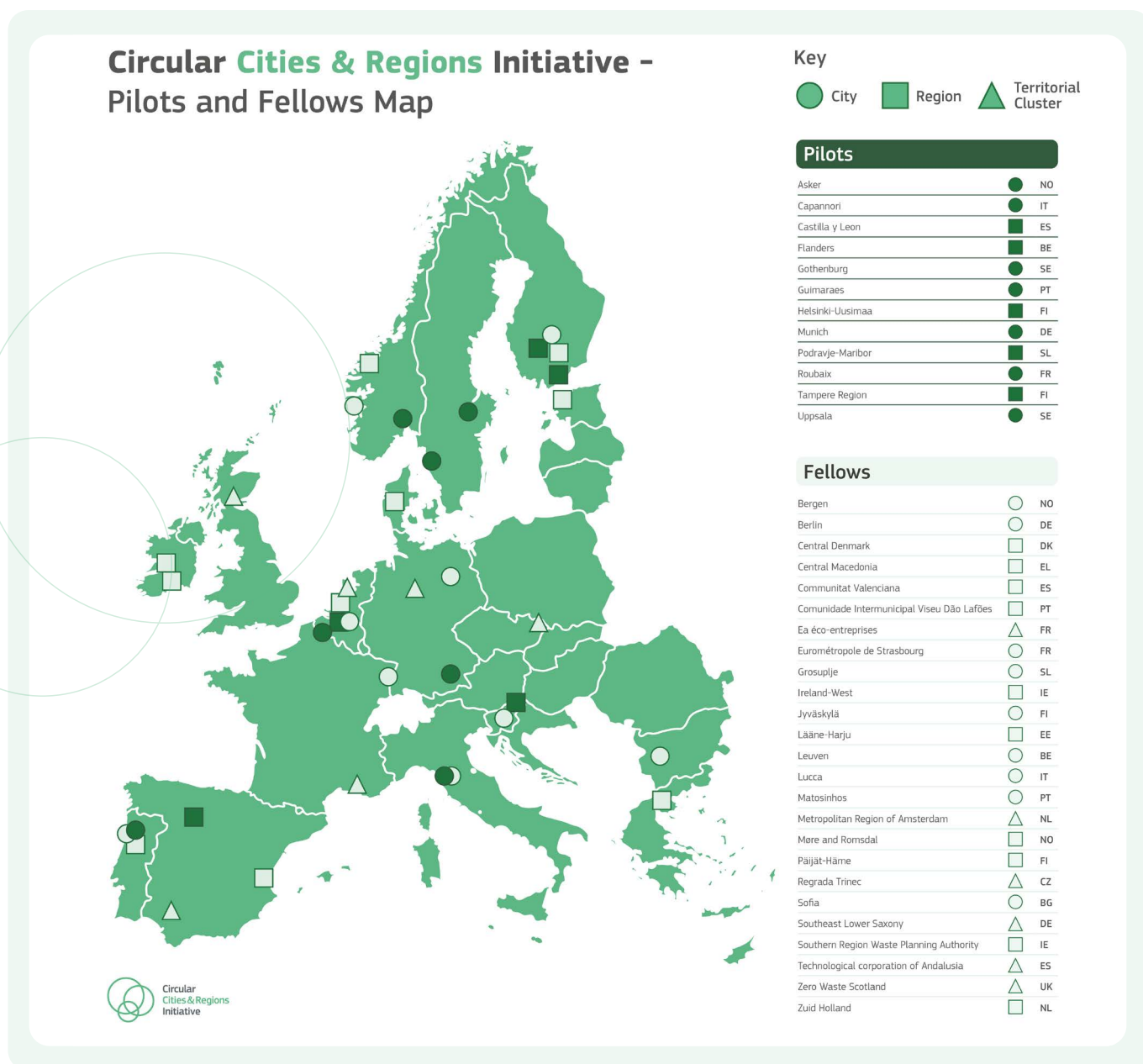
The CCRI-CSO is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the CCRI.

Its international team of circular economy experts offers practical, tailor-made support to speed up circular economy implementation in cities and regions. More specifically, the CCRI-CSO:

- **supporting cooperation, synergies and complementarities** between the CCRI Pilots and Fellows, CCRI Projects, Associated Partners and other relevant stakeholders;
- **assisting the CCRI Pilot cities and regions** with the development of their CSS, as well as **supporting good practice exchange and upscaling**;
- **analysing** the main **research and innovation gaps**, but also the main (policy, technical, regulatory) **barriers and drivers** to circular economy transition at local and regional scale, and providing **policy recommendations** to overcome them;
- **presenting lessons learned** from CCRI-CSO activities for further dissemination, communication and awareness raising activities.

CCRI Pilots and Fellows

In September 2022, a total of **12 Pilots** and **25 Fellows** were selected from **18** countries around Europe – as shown in the map below.



	PILOTS	FELLOWS
Who they are	Cities and regions with high circularity potential	Cities, regions and territorial clusters at different levels of implementation of the circular economy transition , but with a strong interest in sharing and expanding their knowledge
Activities	<p>Tailored support from circular economy experts for the implementation of their CSS</p> <p>Greater collaboration opportunities with the CCRI community</p> <p>First-hand information on relevant knowledge, tools and events</p> <p>Increased visibility for commitments and actions through the CCRI channels</p>	<p>Dedicated capacity-building and peer-learning activities, including thematic working groups and webinars</p>

Associated Partners and Initiatives

The CCRI's Associated Partners include:

- initiatives implemented, supported and/or managed by the European Commission (or other EU institutions);
- organisations, foundations and institutions (different from the EU institutions) implementing projects, services and initiatives.

Their activities are relevant for the implementation of the CCRI's activities, complementing the role of the CCRI-CSO and bringing added value to the CCRI scheme by providing valuable input about circular economy that can be transferred to Pilots and Fellows.

The CCRI-CSO cooperates with the Associated Partners in communicating and spreading relevant knowledge for circular cities and regions. Together, they foster synergies between organisations and various initiatives, especially when supporting Pilots and Fellows. The Associated Partners also provide additional networking channels for the initiative.

CCRI Projects

CCRI Projects are research and innovation projects, funded by Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, which are generating innovative knowledge, creating specific skills and demonstrating systemic solutions that contribute to providing support to cities and regions for implementing their CSS on a local and regional scale. They support knowledge sharing and help link the CCRI to relevant circular economy initiatives and stakeholders.

More specifically, CCRI Projects include **demonstration projects**, which support the demonstration and deployment of innovative CSS at local and regional level, and **PDA services**, which provide project promoters with the technical, economic and legal expertise needed for developing circular economy investments. They also include **cross-cutting projects** that focus on broader themes, such as governance models.

CCRI Projects contribute to Pilots and Fellows' CSS in different ways, for instance by sharing analyses of their research results and demonstrated solutions, as well as through PDA and dissemination of relevant knowledge in this policy area.

What's in it for other cities and regions?

The CCRI is open to any European city, region and territorial cluster interested in learning more about the circular economy at local and regional level.

There are many reasons for cities, regions and territorial clusters to get involved:

- **Facilitated knowledge sharing** with other front-running cities and regions through various events.
- **Easily actionable guidance** for the development and implementation of Circular Economy Action Plans and CSS, including the respective Circular Economy Investment Plans, through the CCRI methodology.
- **Quick access** to relevant resources to address knowledge or capacity gaps, for example case studies and other relevant knowledge categories (via the support materials section of the CCRI website).

- **First-hand information** about upcoming funding opportunities.
- **Facilitated evaluation and monitoring** of the implementation process of a CSS through a dedicated self-assessment tool.
- **Greater opportunities for cooperation with and support from** partner initiatives and organisations.
- **Increased visibility** for commitments and actions.

Interested stakeholders who are not participating as Pilots or Fellows may also be able to participate in CCRI events. Make sure you keep an eye on the CCRI website to stay up to date on opportunities and activities via the CCRI's collaborating partners.

More information

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