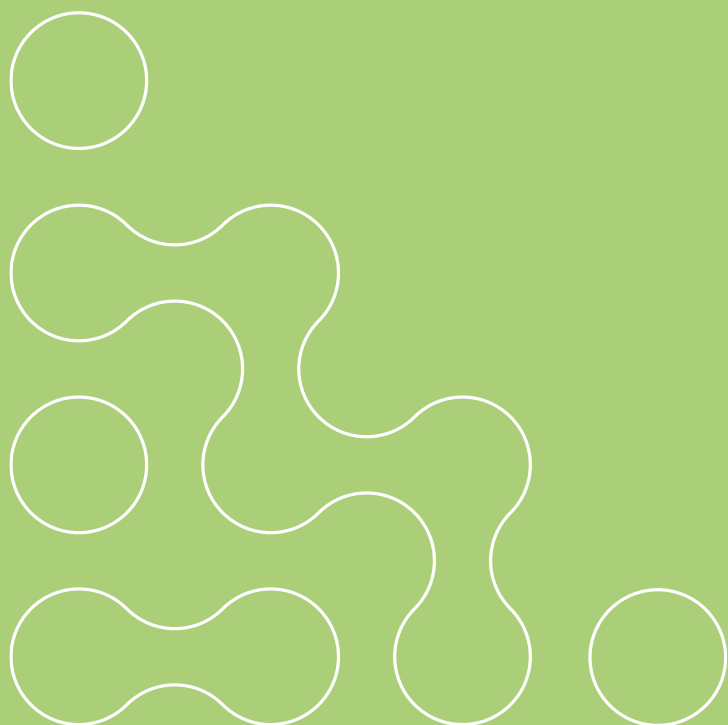# Creative Circular Cities Open Market Consultation report

Pre-Commercial Procurement Preparation – OMC Event of 30 June 2025

Version: 1.0

1. Executive Summary

This report summarizes the Open Market Consultation (OMC) conducted on 30 June 2025 under the Creative Circular Cities (CCC) project. The OMC aimed to validate six city-specific circular economy challenges, engage with stakeholders, and gather market intelligence to inform the preparation of a Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP).

2. Legal & Strategic Context

The OMC was carried out in line with EU public procurement principles of transparency, equal treatment, and innovation promotion. It followed the publication of a Prior Information Notice (PIN) on 7 May 2025. The PIN described the scope of challenges to be addressed by the upcoming PCP.

3. OMC Objectives & Scope

The main objectives of the OMC were to:

- Validate city-specific needs
- Assess market readiness and technical maturity
- Collect feedback to inform PCP tender design

The six city challenges were:

- Turku – Unified circular service discovery platform
- Tallinn – Tool for SMEs to measure/improve circularity
- Riga – Interoperable system to eliminate single-use materials at public events
- Kiel – Refurbishment/reuse of second-hand building/festival components
- Gdynia – Reuse solution for bulky household waste
- Aarhus – Circular-cultural activation of an underused harbour dome in winter

4. Methodology & OMC Format

The OMC was organized as a online session on 30 June 2025, from 13:00 to 15:00 EEST. Preparatory steps included publication of the PIN, outreach to stakeholders, and pre-event questionnaires. The consultation included a presentation, Q&A, and discussions.

5. Event Agenda

The OMC agenda included:

- Welcome and introduction
- Presentation of city challenges
- Market feedback and discussion per city
- Summary of proposed solutions and next steps

6. Summary of Market Feedback

The market feedback showed a strong interest in four CCC city challenges, with many stakeholders already engaged in related initiatives or offering adaptable solutions. Respondents welcomed the clarity and relevance of the challenges, often highlighting barriers such as fragmentation, lack of interoperability, or limited SME capacity, while also proposing practical ways forward. Across all cities, stakeholders stressed the need for solutions that are simple, user-friendly, and scalable, with strong integration into existing systems and compliance with EU sustainability frameworks. There was also consistent emphasis on community engagement, education, and incentives to ensure uptake and prevent misuse. Overall, the feedback indicates that the market is ready to respond, with several actors expressing readiness to contribute concrete solutions or pilot projects.

The Riga challenge attracted considerable market interest, particularly from local providers already piloting reuse systems. Several stakeholders emphasized the importance of interoperability, so that different providers (cups, cutlery, plates, etc.) could contribute to a unified system. Respondents pointed out that such systems should allow fair competition and seamless scaling across cities. The general expectation is for solutions that are practical, inclusive of vulnerable groups, and easy to integrate logistically with municipalities and catering services.

Feedback on the Tallinn challenge was highly positive, with respondents recognizing the issue as a real barrier for SMEs. The main message was that the tool must be simple, low-threshold, and data-driven, ideally using information SMEs already collect, so as not to create extra administrative burdens. Compatibility with EU sustainability frameworks such as CSRD and EUDR was considered crucial, ensuring long-term relevance. Some suggested embedding micro-learning features, so that SMEs gain knowledge while assessing their practices. Recommendations included modular and intuitive self-assessment tools, visual dashboards, and peer-learning elements such as workshops or "circular clinics." Providers also highlighted the value of cloud-based, scalable solutions with sustainable business models, such as subscription or per-use systems. One respondent noted a specific interest in linking the tool to the development of new materials, like mycelium-based products.

The Turku challenge generated the largest volume of feedback, with many respondents already running or planning platforms that could be adapted. The market stressed that

the solution must go beyond mapping actors; it should actively enable usage and become part of daily city life. Integration into existing digital ecosystems—such as mobility apps or municipal service portals—was seen as critical to avoid fragmentation. Respondents suggested clear categorization of services, visual tagging, multilingual support, and incentives such as gamification to boost participation. Several pointed out that starting with a sector-specific pilot (e.g., repair services, tool lending, secondhand furniture) would make the platform more manageable and scalable. Risks identified included market fragmentation, differing levels of digital literacy, the challenge of reaching critical mass, and the risk of greenwashing. Some actors also saw opportunities to connect the platform to material recycling initiatives, such as disassembly lines or local plastic processing.

The Kiel challenge was recognized as highly relevant and directly aligned with ongoing initiatives in Germany, such as second-hand material exchanges. Respondents underlined that different material streams—construction on one hand, and fairs or festivals on the other—require distinct logistics, storage, and quality assurance approaches. A strong need for digital infrastructure was identified, particularly for cataloguing, geo-tagging, and providing CO_2 impact transparency. Respondents emphasized that incentive systems are important, so that event organizers or property owners are motivated to contribute materials. Several also pointed to the importance of storytelling and creative reuse, especially for materials from cultural events, to build interest and acceptance. At the same time, stakeholders warned that without public outreach, the system may fail to achieve widespread adoption. Awareness campaigns were seen as vital to ensure people use the system responsibly, rather than as an excuse to consume more.

7. Cross-Cutting Insights

Across all city challenges, recurring needs included interoperability, affordability, circular business models, and stakeholder collaboration. Several markets indicated readiness at TRL 5–7, suitable for PCP engagement.

8. Tentative Conclusions & Future Directions

The OMC confirmed market interest and provided valuable input for refining the PCP scope. Key recommendations include clarifying evaluation criteria, further engaging SMEs, and considering pilot testing approaches. Next steps involve finalizing PCP specifications and launching the call.