



Join the CCRI community of practice on Critical Raw Materials

Europe's green and digital transitions are driving up demand for critical raw materials, such as lithium, cobalt, copper or rare earths, while access remains constrained by global supply risks. Cities and regions face growing challenges in managing complex waste streams and improving material efficiency, yet they also hold key levers for action. Many critical materials are embedded in local infrastructure, goods and procurement. By adopting circular strategies, such as urban mining, reuse, repair and industrial symbiosis, local governments can recover valuable resources, reduce landfill and lower reliance on virgin inputs. These approaches can also help close material loops and support both local sustainability and Europe's broader resource security goals.

This community of practice provides a collaborative platform for cities and regions to share experiences, overcome challenges, exchange insights on circular approaches tailored to local needs and aligned with broader strategic goals.

The community will build on the work and insights of two previous Thematic Working Groups, applying their findings to the specific concept of accessing critical raw materials in an urban environment.

Critical Raw Materials for cities and regions

As Europe accelerates its green and digital transitions, the demand for critical raw materials such as lithium, cobalt, rare earths, copper and aluminium as well as industrial materials such as steel is growing rapidly. These materials are essential components for clean energy, digital infrastructure, electric mobility and construction. Yet access to them is increasingly constrained by geopolitical tensions, fragile supply chains, and concentrated global production.

At local level, many of these materials are embedded in buildings, transport systems, energy infrastructure and goods purchased through public procurement. Cities and regions have significant influence over how materials are reused and recovered, through their roles in waste management. At the same time, as the volume and complexity of waste streams continue to grow, cities and regions face increasing pressure to manage them efficiently and sustainably. **Circular strategies offer a way forward:**

- **Urban mining** enables cities to recover valuable materials from end-of-life products such as batteries, electronics, appliances, solar panels and construction waste, helping **turn waste into a resource**. This not only reduces landfill but also generates economic returns and contributes to both local circularity and Europe's resource security.
- Complementary circular approaches such as reuse, repair, refurbishment, repurposing and remanufacturing (**R-strategies**) can extend product lifespans, keep materials in use for longer and reduce the need for virgin inputs.
- **Industrial symbiosis** can further support these efforts by connecting material flows across sectors, turning one actor's waste into another's input.
- When combined with public procurement, digital tracking tools and new business models, these strategies can help cities and regions close material loops and build more resilient and sustainable local economies.

This community offers a space for cities and regions to explore how **circular strategies** can be applied to **critical raw materials and industrial materials** in local contexts. It will bring together forward-thinking actors to share experiences, address common barriers, identify best practices, formulate recommendations and exchange insights on circular approaches that are grounded in local realities and aligned with regional needs and sustainability goals.

By joining, you'll connect with peers, build practical knowledge and help shape local pathways toward resilient, circular material systems.

What to expect?

As a member, you'll have the opportunity to tailor the community of practice to your needs and interests, co-designing the structure and activities alongside other participants. The following outlines some key aspects:

- **Size:** Each group will consist of 10 to 15 cities and regions, supported by experts.
- **Duration:** Each community of practice will run for 12 months, with the option to extend until December 2026 or beyond, depending on interest.
- **Time Commitment:** Around one day per month, to attend at least five online meetings per year, exchange with peers, and take part in consultations on new materials to support cities and regions.
- **Activities:** The groups will organise online working meetings focused on the ongoing actions and projects of the participants.
- **Outputs:** You will work together to produce concrete, publishable deliverables.
- **Funding:** Participation is voluntary, and no funding is available to cover participation costs. There will be no travel required, as all activities will take place online.

Why join?

- **Learn from your peers:** Gain valuable insights from other cities and regions tackling the same challenges
- **Find better solutions faster:** Collaborate with peers to address your needs more effectively
- **Expand your network:** Connect with an international community of like-minded partners
- **Gain fresh perspectives:** Discover best practices firsthand and bring proven strategies back to your own community.
- **Create real impact:** Work together on outputs such as case studies and policy briefs to support replication, inform policy decisions, and increase your visibility.

Who can apply?

We invite all European local and regional authorities, along with their agencies and publicly owned companies, to apply. This is a unique opportunity to be part of a collaborative network driving impactful change in the circular economy.

Participation will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- **Commitment:** Active engagement is key. As a member, you are expected to actively contribute to discussions, attend meetings, and help shape or review group outputs.
- **Relevant experience:** We are looking for participants who are already working on circular economy initiatives on critical raw materials and can bring valuable insights and experiences to the table.
- **Geographical diversity:** To foster a well-rounded exchange, communities of practice aim to include members from a variety of European regions, ensuring a broad perspective on the challenges and solutions in circular economy practices.

We welcome all applications. To give more cities and regions the opportunity to participate, priority will be given to those not already involved in one or more CCRI [Thematic Working Groups](#) or [Communities of Practice](#).

How to express your interest

Simply complete the short application form online and we'll review your application. If needed, we'll reach out to you for clarifications. If you have any issues accessing or completing the form, please contact info@ccri-communities-of-practice.eu.

[Apply now](#)

Deadline for submission: 03/10/2025, 6:00 PM CET.

Any questions or doubts whether this is right for you?

Reach out to info@ccri-communities-of-practice.eu for more information or join our [online Q&A](#) on 23/09/2025 – 12.00 CET.

There are 3 more communities of practice now open for applications. Discover them all [here](#)

Background

Funded by the EU as part of the Circular Economy Action Plan, the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) aims to bring the circular economy to life in cities and regions across Europe. The initiative supports the development of circular solutions that address different sectors and value chains, engage diverse stakeholders, and tackle a range of challenges, such as creating new business models and navigating regulatory impacts. It also seeks to drive positive change across social, economic, and environmental fields.

About CCRI Communities of Practice

The CCRI Communities of Practice's activities complement those already offered by the CCRI Coordination and Support office, the [CCRI Knowledge Hub](#) and other [CCRI partners](#). They're all about bringing cities and regions together to share experiences, learn from each other, and exchange best practices. By fostering peer learning and networking, they aim to broaden the CCRI's impact to more European cities and regions.

Contacts

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