

TERMS & CONDITIONS

CALL FOR EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS - RECOVERY OF URBAN WASTE

General context

As one of the founding members of the Regional Circular Economy Plan (named PREC in French and GPCE in Dutch), adopted in March 2016, Innoviris, the Brussels Institute for Research and Innovation, has been supporting the transition to the circular economy in the Brussels-Capital Region for several years. A major component of this transition is the reduction and recovery of waste, with an aim to reduce the ecological footprint of urban lifestyles and consumption.

At present, the equivalent of nearly 1.3 tons of waste per inhabitant of the Brussels Region, all types combined, are generated annually, nearly half of which is not collected selectively¹. Innoviris therefore wishes to encourage innovation and experimentation projects in the Brussels Region, with a goal to help reduce these colossal figures. Indeed, although this waste, seen through the prism of the circular economy, constitutes as many deposits to be recovered, the exploitation of these urban deposits nevertheless faces many challenges, both in terms of the technical feasibility of their transformation, as well as the economic, legal, and even organisational feasibility of their exploitation. Moreover, these often complex deposits may require innovative approaches to extract a viable economic activity from them. This call therefore aims to offer Brussels entrepreneurs the opportunity to test the feasibility and viability of an innovative economic activity based on the exploitation of urban deposits.

This call is therefore in line with the philosophy of the Resource and Waste Management Plan (named PGRD in French and HABP in Dutch) and axis 1 of the Go4Brussels strategy, but also with the thematic strategic innovation area "Optimal use of resources" of the new Regional Innovation Plan.

Objective and philosophy of the call for projects

This funding programme aims to offer Brussels entrepreneurs the opportunity **to test the feasibility** of their project before developing a new activity, or to reorient an existing, **innovative activity based on the recovery of urban waste**. This call covers both products resulting from innovative recycling activities and requalification, a term that designates all activities related to a different use of the material that makes up the waste, including repair, dismantling, transformation, upcycling and remanufacturing.

The concept of **urban deposits** covers all the material flows produced and rejected by the city's actors or transiting on its territory (household waste, waste, industrial scraps and by-products, construction waste, waste from tertiary sector activities, etc.)².

As Innoviris is the institute in charge of research and innovation, it is necessary that the activities developed within the framework of the project are **new and innovative**, involving **sufficiently important unknowns and sources of risk to justify public intervention**. In addition, the project must be part of an **experimental approach**, identifying the unknowns to be explored and describing the tasks that will be carried out to this end.

¹ Resource and Waste Management Plan (FR: PGRD/NL: HABP), November 2018, https://environnement.brussels/sites/default/files/user_files/pgrd_181122_fr.pdf

² Any commercial production or transformation activity carried out on the territory of the Brussels Region requires prior obtaining of environmental permits, just as the marketing of products generated from waste requires obtaining [an authorisation for the end of waste status](#). Compliance with the regulations in force is the responsibility of the applicants and is in no way guaranteed by the receipt of funding from Innoviris.

This call therefore aims to support the development of innovative solutions which, by exploiting urban deposits, meet local needs.

Note - End of waste status

The obligation to comply with the regulations in force is the responsibility of the candidate.

Tasks accepted in the framework of the application for funding

The project tasks may address any or all of the following three aspects

- Exploring the supply/sourcing of materials and its quality and sustainability
- Testing the feasibility of a new activity or improvements to an existing activity
- Validating the economic viability of the activity studied, its relevance, and the local demand for the activity developed

Thus, at the end of the project, the company should be able to make an informed decision either to launch a new economically viable activity based on the valorisation of urban deposits, or to pivot or even abandon the pursuit of the new activity. It is therefore essential that pivot and risk mitigation strategies are explored during the project.

Note - Positioning in relation to the BeCircular call

The BeCircular call for projects is primarily aimed at the market launch stage, although a maximum 6-month pre-launch experimentation period may be accepted. This funding programme is therefore positioned upstream of the activities covered by the BeCircular programme, and thus offers beneficiaries the opportunity to test both the feasibility and viability of their project before it is brought to market.

Amount of funding

This financial support is awarded in the form of a non-refundable grant and covers 50% (for large enterprises), 60% (for medium-sized enterprises) or 70% (for small enterprises) of the expenses related to the demonstration of the feasibility and viability of an innovative urban waste recovery activity³.

The eligible costs are the following:

- **Personnel costs:** costs related to personnel (salaried or self-employed) insofar as they are employed for the project. Salaries must comply with the practices and scales (if any) of the sector of activity concerned.
- **Investment costs:** costs of instruments and equipment used in the project (purchase cost/depreciation period*use in the project*use rate).
- **Subcontracting costs:** this refers mainly to subcontracting in the broad sense. The company may, if necessary, call on relevant external expertise (such as services provided by a Fablab).
- **Operating costs:** in particular the costs of materials, supplies and products necessary for the successful completion of the project.

³ In application of the ordinance of 27 July 2017 aimed at promoting research, development, and innovation by granting aid for economic purposes to companies, the Region may, under certain conditions, grant financial aid, in the form of subsidies, aimed at encouraging scientific research and innovation in the Brussels-Capital Region. This call for projects falls within this framework. **It is therefore not 'de minimis' funding.**

A more detailed description of eligible costs is available in the [Innoviris accounting guidelines](#).

Note - Availability of own funds

In addition to being able to secure its share of the project, it is important to note that any applicant organisation must be financially prepared to advance the costs of the project, as there may be a time lag between the start of the project and the receipt of the first instalment of the grant. In addition, the payment of part of the grant is always made after the project has been completed.

Duration of projects

As the projects targeted in this call will involve large-scale unknowns requiring experimental activities, a **minimum duration of 6 months** is required. The project duration chosen by applicants will obviously depend on the complexity and intrinsic constraints of the tasks to be carried out.

The **starting date of the projects** can be set at the earliest on **the first of the month following the month of submission** of the application. Of course, if this start date precedes the government's decision to approve funding, the applicant company should commit its own funds and risk.

Eligibility criteria

In order to benefit from the financial intervention of the Brussels-Capital Region within the framework of this programme, each applicant must

- **Be a company:** any company with a legal personality of any form (PLC, NPO, LLC, etc.) on the closing date of the call is eligible.
- **Have at least one operating headquarters in the BCR.**
- **Not be in financial difficulty:** see point 20 of the Guidelines on State aid for rescuing and restructuring firms in difficulty other than financial institutions. This aspect only concerns companies that have been in existence for more than three years.
- Have **submitted the application by 15/06/2022 at 2pm at the latest.**
- **Propose a project that corresponds to the scope of the action:** the project must meet the objectives of the programme.
- **Have fulfilled any obligations towards the Region in the context of previous aid.**
- **Demonstrate the incentive effect of the aid:** the applicant company must demonstrate that the project could not be carried out, or would have to be significantly less ambitious, without the intervention of Innoviris.
- **Not already benefit from public support for the tasks included in the project** (prohibition of double financing).

Note - Collaborative project

Within the framework of this call for projects, collaborations between companies are possible, provided that each partner not only performs experimental tasks, but also carries out an innovative activity involving sufficiently important unknowns and sources of risk to justify public intervention.

In this case, a single application for funding should be submitted, duplicating the sections relating to the presentation of the applicant company and the valorisation of the project. The division of tasks

between the different partners should also be described in the work programme.

Selection/evaluation of applications

The collection of funding applications is followed by a verification of the eligibility of the applicants and a first pre-selection of the projects. The selected applicants will then be invited to defend their project at an appraisal meeting.

At this appraisal meeting, applicants will have the opportunity to present their project, followed by a question-and-answer session, at the end of which a decision on funding will be taken.

As the decision on whether or not to recommend for funding is taken at the end of the appraisal meeting, it is crucial that the information provided in the form is complete, detailed and substantiated. It is important to note that the following aspects will be assessed:

- **Innovation, relevance and clarity of the project activity and project objectives:** the urban resource to be exploited must be well identified and realistic, the project activity must be disruptive to current practice and its implementation must present significant challenges for which feasibility validation activities are necessary and appropriate in view of the unknowns identified.
- **Feasibility and implementation:** the work programme must be relevant and realistic in terms of tasks, budget, expertise, and resources.
- **Strategic and economic impact:** the project activity must demonstrate a real potential for value creation. The underlying assumptions are translated into figures in a financial plan and demonstrate the economic sustainability of the activity studied. The project must be in line with the organisation's overall strategy and reflect a viable business model.
- **Societal impact:** the project activity must demonstrate a social, environmental and/or Brussels ecosystem impact.

Illustrative examples of challenges facing the Brussels Region

Textiles: There are currently actors in the field specialising in the recovery and reuse of clothing (second-hand). Nevertheless, and despite the enormous amount of work done, the quantity of textiles thrown away in the BCR is such that it currently represents 10% of the weight of "white bins". Textiles are therefore an important resource in the BCR that can be mobilised in the framework of this call for projects.

Soft mobility: As an indirect consequence of the health crisis, the use of soft modes of transport (bicycles, cargo bikes) has become very popular in the Brussels Region. On the other hand, the (globalised) supply chains for spare parts are no longer able to meet local demand. At the same time, discarded or abandoned bicycles constitute a source that could feed an innovative local value chain of spare parts or even production that addresses, for example, the specificities of electric bicycles.

Construction materials: The renovation and thermal insulation of buildings is a priority in the fight against climate change. Recovering materials or elements from existing buildings would make it possible to reduce the extraction of natural resources necessary for these activities. Similarly, at present, excavated soil from Brussels construction sites represents approximately 2 million tons/year, which is dumped in landfills or partly used in the construction of roads and other infrastructures. They are currently considered as waste but could be recovered into innovative, local, and circular construction materials with higher added value. Finally, the production of new building materials can also be designed from waste streams from several sectors, such as the production of thermal insulation from mycelium grown on coffee grounds waste combined with sawdust from logging activities in the Forêt de Soignes.

Resources available in the Region

As the transition to the circular economy has been a priority for the Brussels-Capital Region for several

years, it has many resources available on its territory. For information and inspiration, a non-exhaustive overview of these is listed below⁴.

Studies

Within the framework of the Chair in Circular Economy hosted by ULB, several studies have been carried out and are available on the website library.metabolismofcities.org. Various co-create projects, financed by Innoviris, also deal with waste-related issues ([Phosphore](#), [Wim](#), etc.). In addition, the Region has a centre for university research on the subject of Brussels: bsi.brussels/ressources.

Various studies have also been carried out by Brussels Environment, including [an in-depth study of the urban metabolism of the region](#). These documents are referenced in the [resources and waste management plan](#), the guiding document for Brussels' waste policies.

Finally, the website www.circulareconomy.brussels/category/secteurs/ressources-dechets contains presentations of inspiring projects as well as guides and newsletters on regional initiatives on the subject of waste and resources.

Places of experimentation

Recy-K, founded by the Brussels Cleanliness Agency, is a circular economy and social economy platform, specialising in the reuse, repair, re-use and recycling of waste/resources as well as in training and socio-professional reintegration. It also has premises that can accommodate experimental projects: www.arp-gan.be/fr/Recy-K.html.

The network of Brussels Fablabs, spread throughout the region and open to all, whatever their level of knowledge, offers access to equipment, both modern (3D printers, digital cutters or milling machines, etc.) and traditional (carpentry machines, sewing machines, welding machines, etc.), as well as to the knowledge needed to use them properly: www.cityfab1.brussels, www.cityfab2.brussels, www.cityfab3.brussels, fablab.hylas.be, fablab-ulb.be, www.imal.org/en/fablab.

Greenbizz, the Brussels-Capital Region's sustainable economy incubator, offers accommodation (production workshops and private offices, meeting rooms, etc.) as well as support services and experimentation spaces (fablab). In one place, a whole ecosystem is brought together, specially designed and dedicated to innovation in the sustainable economy: www.greenbizz.brussels.

The Micro Factory is a shared fabrication workshop based on participation and mutualisation. There are spaces and equipment for working with wood, metal, electronics, digital, printing, ceramics, textiles and many other things put in common: microfactory.be

The result of the transformation of more than 20,000 m² of industrial space belonging to D'Ieteren Immo, Circularium is a centre for local innovation and circular production dedicated to the city. It is a place dedicated to the short circuit, to the actors of cultural and neighbourhood life: www.circularium.be.

Note: If relevant to the successful completion of the project, the cost of services provided by Fablabs or others may be included in the project's subcontracting costs. The financial contribution for the use of the premises can also, in some cases, be included in the operating costs.

Support

The Region has several actors offering support programmes and services dealing with various themes related to the circular economy. The website www.circulareconomy.brussels/offre-de-soutien-a-leconomie-circulaire lists all types of support. Below is a fraction of this potentially relevant offer for the candidates of this call for projects, either before their submission, or with the aim of carrying it out within the experimentation project submitted in the framework of this call:

- [Circlemade](#) (free of charge): Brussels cluster of circular economy pioneers, [Circlemade](#) is also the entry point for any circular actor wishing to call upon the support services offered by hub.brussels, such as assistance in structuring a circular economy project, designing an economic model, reviewing a business plan and putting them in contact with local or international partners.
- [Irisphère](#) (free of charge): Individual support for the detection of inter-company economic opportunities at a local level allowing the development of sustainable partnerships in areas such

⁴ Most of these resources are only available in the BCR's local languages: French or Dutch

as the valorisation of materials, the pooling of equipment and the sharing of resources and services.

- [Facilitateur biodéchets](#) (free of charge): advisory service offered by Brussels Environment on bio-waste management for professional actors, advice on practical and legal considerations as well as on applicable standards.
- [Facilitateur permis](#) (free of charge): Advisory service offered by Brussels Environment in permit management for the circular economy sector. The facilitator's mission is to guide companies or project leaders active in the circular economy of waste in order to comply with environmental legislation and to complete the related administrative procedures. For example, the facilitator can guide you in: applying for environmental permits, approvals or registrations, applying for the end of waste status or how to maintain a quality management system (QMS).
- [Build circular](#) (free of charge): Experts in circular construction are available to offer companies a diagnosis of their activities, analyse their needs and suggest tailor-made advice adapted to their situation. Various support formulas are offered: remote, in the office, on site, analysis of the company's project from a circular perspective, waste management, alternative materials, etc.
- [CSTC](#) (free of charge): Support service dedicated to all Brussels actors in the construction sector who want to put this sector on the path to a more sustainable, more efficient, faster and greener industry.
- [Sirris](#) (co-financing): As the collective centre of the technology industry, Sirris offers not only technological expertise and a high-tech infrastructure, but also support in exploiting secondary material flows as resources. Sirris can accelerate the process by applying its expertise in manufacturing processes, materials and their treatment, and the collection of secondary flows to support these new players.
- [MAD](#) (co-financing): To ensure the success of a brand or project, MAD gives creators the key to unlocking their creativity and business potential. MAD helps creators and entrepreneurs define a sustainable business model from the early stages of their activity, offering solutions in financing, product development, manufacturing, sales, digital awareness, and future brand creation.
- [Circular Academy](#) (fee-based): a toolkit for collective or individual support of circular economy projects. The tool focuses on the value proposition delivered by the developing company, from raising awareness to monitoring the actions implemented.
- [Metamorphosis](#) (fee-based): sustainable business models, participatory and agile functioning of organisations, disruptive innovation, and support for "just" transformations/changes are among the areas of intervention of Metamorphosis, whether in the support of collectives and individuals, in the implementation of training courses or in the design of events for the co-creation / co-production of solutions and prototypes
- [Ecores](#) (fee-based): At the crossroads between consulting, project management and research and innovation, EcoRes has been assisting companies, territories, and public authorities for over 10 years in their systemic transition towards sustainable development.
- [21Solutions](#) (fee-based): With more than 15 years of experience in the field and a multidisciplinary team, the consultancy 21 Solutions has had the opportunity to develop, test and refine numerous tools to support companies, local authorities, and citizens in their environmental transition.
- [Recyclo](#) (fee-based): RECYCLO strives to emulate and operate, in a collaborative manner, entrepreneurial, viable and impactful solutions, leading to a resource-efficient urban metabolism. To this end, Recyclo identifies problems, proposes solutions, and helps to implement them. Its main objectives are to contribute to raising awareness of the urban waste issue, to promote waste reduction and support the 'Zero Waste' approach, to enable better collection and recovery of urban waste, to collaborate with all waste recovery companies by sharing logistical capacities and to contribute to the emergence of an economic activity for the recovery of waste flows.
- [Comase](#) (fee-based): For over 25 years, Comase has been supporting the creation and development of sustainable business projects. Convinced that the circular economy can redefine economic balances, increase the resilience of the socio-economic system and sustainably benefit businesses, the Circul'R by COMASE team offers various services.

Finally, with its many universities and colleges, the Region has a wide range of cutting-edge academic expertise. The [Research2B portal](#) allows entrepreneurs to express their needs and to be redirected to the most relevant laboratories.