

Keeping the PlastiCity momentum

tips and tricks to set up an Urban Platform

Lessons learned within WP3.1:

The creation of Urban Platforms in the four regions; Gent, Southend,
The Hague and Douai

Partners



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1. Introduction

PlastiCity is the first project in the 2Seas area designed to support the implementation of the EU plastics strategy in the circular economy. The project was designed to develop solutions to significantly improve recycling rates of post-consumer non-household (PC-NH) plastic waste in urban regions. A data exchange mechanism is key to keeping the PlastiCity project momentum going forward beyond the lifespan of the project and is fundamental to implement a sustainable transition to a circular economy in plastic waste management.

A yellow, irregular geometric shape, resembling a stylized diamond or a tilted square, positioned to the left of the text.

2. Tips and tricks to set up an Urban Platform

2.1. Aim and Purpose

The Interreg PlastiCity project document outlines how an Urban Platform (UP) is intended to be a **permanent e-environment to bring regional stakeholders together to exchange ideas, access local and national information and keep on developing new plastic recycling strategies and solutions within and between the regions.** However, not all regions are implementing an UP

Working together with project partner Metabolic, the University of Portsmouth led and facilitated the development of co-creation workshops method and content with each project partner to ensure local contextual requirement was taken into consideration. Project partners arranged collaborative workshops with local stakeholders. Workshop outcomes comprising stakeholder input from three workshops (Southend, Gent, The Hague) were analysed by the University of Portsmouth and a generic UP template comprising six topics, illustrated in figure 1, was developed.

The UP template may be implemented as an e-platform accessible via the PlastiCity website and Local Municipality website or a local/regional circular economy platform with each of the six areas populated with local contextual information.

Figure 1: UP template with six topics

<p><i>PlastiCity project information</i></p>	<p>to maintain collaboration and development conversation momentum going forward, provide a summary of the local PlastiCity project outcomes. Included are locally identified highlights and shortfalls.</p>
<p><i>Regional Partner</i></p>	<p>list local/national/cross province/EU, plastic recycling and strategy policies, schemes, recycling data and how the area targets awareness campaigns by promoting at recycling hubs, on billboards/buses. Maps of recycling hubs, locally identified logistics data may be included.</p>

<i>Network Plastic</i>	identify everyone involved in the circular economy plastic loop, including social economy involvement. It is a space for knowledge exchange about processing methods, logistical opportunities and includes emphasis on producer responsibility.
<i>Campaigns</i>	identify and promote community involvement opportunities. Highlight education opportunities for all, promotion of awareness and engagement, plus marketing focus to bring the message across.
<i>Case Studies</i>	showcase best local practices, includes results from local studies and demonstrate who recycles well. Potentially expand on key areas, for example Plastics Europe.
<i>Connect</i>	illustrate who stakeholders would like to maintain contact with and how.

2.2. Urban Platform

The UP template forms a purpose-built guideline to maintain the momentum of the project going forward. It is a foundation format to facilitate future collaboration between local stakeholders directly or on an e-platform. Outcomes from the workshops demonstrated that stakeholders are keen to keep the momentum of the project going forward as shown in the expanded UP-template proposals for Southend, Gent and the Hague. Key information local actors would like to interact with include access to current plastic legislation and policy, recycling facilities, campaigns and case studies. In addition, there is a desire to see an emphasis on education about plastic recycling across the board starting with schools and extending to businesses and large corporate institutions. Marketing an awareness to trigger pro-environmental behaviour to help set and achieve feasible recycling is another priority.

2.3. Urban Platform Regional Recommendations

The combined input from stakeholders attending the regional workshops and the opportunities and possibilities available in each locality informed what is feasible when setting up an UP. A summary of recommendations of what is planned for the PlastiCity project regions offers an opportunity for other regions and localities to consider and pick an option that fits with their local situation. A list of examples of what has been applied so far and what might be done in future follows.

- A six month programme launched in November '22 invites engagement with schools, churches and businesses to participate in the Southend on Sea City Council [Plasticity Pledge](#) on the Southend Climate Action website. The pledge is also accessible from the [Southend Council PlastiCity Project website](#). A long-term approach in Southend may include a PlastiCity UP embedded in the Climate hub website.
- In Gent a policy advice is being discussed with other city departments that potentially includes supra-localities. Gent may investigate the LinkedIn PlastiCity Group or embed an UP in an existing circular economy platform (like Douai have done). However, Ghent has created a dedicated [website Invest in Ghent](#) and [linkedin Invest in Ghent](#) to support the economic spearheads, which also includes cleantech and circular economy. These digital channels will continue to be used long term to share information and connect on plastics.
- In The Hague it was concluded that it would be best if a link to the UP is demonstrated in the PlastiCity handbook and [PlastiCity website](#). A link to the municipal website was not seen as an option. A forum for meeting will be a LinkedIn group. In terms of the long-term approach the UP will be transferred to one of the PlastiCity Hub entrepreneurs, who will also become the administrator of the LinkedIn group. Currently we are setting up the group based on the PlastiCity Project: The Hague network. This group will be used to inform the local stakeholders about a final event for this project hosted by The Hague in the beginning of 2023.

- At a workshop with stakeholders Douai offered local actors an opportunity to sign up to the [ACTIF platform](#). The platform, created by the Chamber of Commerce in Southwest Toulouse, is an existing circular economy platform for companies to promote recycling and reuse. The site is based on membership and declaration of companies.

2.4. Limitations & Learnings

Unforeseen factors include the Covid19 coronavirus impact. It was difficult to get in touch with stakeholders. Face-to-face co-collaborative interactions within workshop sub-groups are preferable as a richer input is obtained.

It is important that contextual and financial requirements are considered. Therefore, in the case of setting a target to develop a standardised specific transferable UP – this is unrealistic. One size, with one format, does not fit all. Regions may choose to develop and set up a working group to keep the project momentum going forward beyond the lifespan of the project instead. Alternately, another option is to offer stakeholders in the regions an opportunity to sign up directly to an existing circular economy platform as Douai have done.

2.5. Conclusions

Stakeholders attending the workshops provided a reasonable amount of information for project partners to set up a structured UP or ongoing discussion mechanism pathway. The partners can adapt the proposed UP to suit local context and it is potentially nested digitally within an existing local council hub or other selected website. Alternately partners can adapt the six key digital elements as a guideline pathway to maintain collaboration and development conversation momentum going forward in a dedicated working group. Both formats invite opportunities for local stakeholders to connect at regular meetings. In addition these potentially include access to local and national policy updates, design workshops, educational opportunities for all ages and showcasing of locally identified campaigns and case studies of best practice.

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