

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

for the 19th AESOP Young Academics Conference 2025

Circular Cities and Regions

Planning for Sustainable Social and Inclusive Communities

17th – 21st March 2025 in Hanover

organised by
Faculty of Architecture and Landscape Sciences
Leibniz University Hannover

Local Organising Committee (LOC):

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the „Circular Cities and Regions: Planning for Sustainable Social and Inclusive Communities“ AESOP YA Conference. We are thrilled to have you join us for this transformative exploration into the future of urban and regional planning, with a dedicated focus on fostering sustainable and inclusive communities.

In the face of unprecedented urbanisation and environmental challenges, the demand for innovative and sustainable approaches to urban and regional development and design has reached a critical juncture. This is the starting point to further examine and elaborate the concept of circularity. The 12th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) called “Sustainable Consumption and Production” makes it evident that consumption and production must adhere to the ecological limits of the planet, which makes a change in our way of life and economy unavoidable. Furthermore, the 11th SDG called “Sustainable cities and communities“ refers to circular cities and human settlements to make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. This conference serves as a convergence point for visionary thought academics, leaders, and practitioners across disciplines, all united by the common goal of investigating circularity within urban and regional contexts. The aim is to consider the topic of circularity in planning and architecture at various levels and to analyse existing approaches and strategies from different angles. Circular cities and regions are more than just seeking economic solutions for transformation towards climate neutrality. On different levels like the region, the city, a district or a neighbourhood, circularity can be a key factor to ensure a sustainable future. Including resilience, inclusion and communities as well as many other topics into circularity, it gets clear that it offers new alternatives in the “throwaway world“ (<https://www.circular-city-challenge.com>).

Our objectives encompass integrating circular principles into the very fabric of cities and regions, seeking to minimise waste, maximise resource efficiency, and cultivate sustainable innovation and development. This ensures that solutions are intricately tailored to the unique needs of each region, addressing issues of equity, accessibility, social innovation and cohesion. The discussions will delve into evaluating existing policy frameworks and proposing novel strategies facilitating the transition to circular urban and regional planning, emphasising regulatory incentives and governance structures. Therefore, we will invite representatives from different disciplines (e.g. science, politics, associations, etc.) as keynotes to discuss and exchange various opinions, circumstances and options (see Tracks).

Join us in discussions and presentations that will shape the future of our cities and regions. Together, we strive to develop actionable strategies that promote sustainability and foster innovative, inclusive communities. Your active participation and contributions are pivotal to this essential dialogue on building “Circular Cities and Regions” for a better, more sustainable and inclusive future.

CONFERENCE TRACKS

(1) Space: Built Environment and Urban Design

For a long time, the disciplines of planning and architecture were predominantly understood as linear processes. Planning was associated with growth, building and designing spaces. This goes hand in hand with resource consumption, land use and sealing. In Germany, settlement and transport areas increased by an average of 52 hectares between 2016 and 2019 (DeStatis 2021). This corresponds to the sealing of 52 football pitches per day. Similar trends can also be seen in the EU: between 2000 and 2018, “eleven times more land was newly developed than re-cultivated within the EU” (Marquard et al 2020). As part of the Sustainable Development Strategy, e.g. the German government aims to reduce the average daily increase to 30 hectares by 2030 (DeStatis 2021). By 2050, the goal is to achieve no net additional land use for settlement and transport purposes (ibid.). Therefore, we focus in Track 1 on the **built environment and the construction sector**, which is highly connected to the extraction of raw materials, transport and the production of building materials. Resources such as sand, gravel and cement, for example, are required for the production of concrete, an important building material for the construction industry. In 2021, the German construction industry caused greenhouse gases amounting to around 4.2 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalents (Statista 2024). Climate change, extreme weather situations, such as floods or hot summers, emphasise the need for a shift towards sustainable and resource-saving planning. Given the challenges we face due to climate change, new ways must be found to ensure responsible consumption and production in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; here Goal 12: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal12>). **Circular design and planning** is one approach that addresses this issue. Such approaches are already finding favour in practice. Pioneering and niche projects in the construction sector are being developed to enable a shift from linear to circular planning in construction and design (<https://www.circular-city-challenge.com>). On a larger scale and in practice, based on an initial study the city of Amsterdam has already developed an "Implementation Agenda for a Circular Amsterdam 2023-2026". In recent decades, the planning discourse has shifted from top-down planning to co-production. Planning is still seen as a linear process with a starting point and an end point that represents the final result, e.g. a building, a park or a public space. On the other hand, strategies and visions can already include long-term and circular aspects. Structural changes such as the coal exit or the demographic change associated with shrinking cities or, on the contrary, the need for redensification show that regions, cities and thus also the built environment must constantly adapt and retrofit to new circumstances. Therefore, **planners' awareness and planning paradigms** must change in order to support new approaches towards a circular city.

(2) Links: Mobility, Economy and Energy

Regions and cities are logistic and mobility hubs (of the future). They need to bundle various (infrastructure) services and integrate circular solutions to offer and expand existing structures (<https://www.circular-city-challenge.com>). In this Track 2 we refer to **circular mobility** systems that are accessible, affordable, effective, flexible and clean. They reduce air pollution and congestion in cities and regions, e.g. through multi-modal mobility structures that combine shared, on-demand,

electric powered and automated solutions in public transport. Furthermore, they can help to convert excessive road infrastructure into attractive spaces for citizens, e.g. green space (<https://www.circularcityfundingguide.eu/circular-sector/mobility/>). Therefore, it is important to develop collaborations not only with economic but also with social actors. In addition, the (local) offers and producers need to work together on synergies and solutions to develop **circular economy**, e.g. through sustainable waste management or the use of local resources. But, other actors like municipalities can play a big role as well. They can promote the reduction of vacancies and land sealing as well as better use of existing capacities – including vertical capacities, residuals and resources. Especially, the local level can be important to include local knowledge in transformation processes. There is an increasing citizens' awareness of CO₂ reduction through **circular energy** concepts. With the help of incentives sustainable energy production and conservation measures can be developed in cooperation and implemented, e.g. renewable power solutions, green facades and roofs, PV systems, etc. (<https://www.circular-city-challenge.com>).

(3) Communities: Societies, Culture and Participation

This track serves as a focal point for a nuanced exploration of the intersection between circularity and the vital components of vibrant societies – their communities. Delve into the societal transformations catalysed by circular urban planning and design, in line with the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; here target 12). This segment explores the profound impacts circular initiatives exert on lifestyles, social structures, and the overall well-being of communities.

Witness the harmonious **integration of cultural elements** within circularity frameworks as the session delves into the symbiotic relationship between cultural diversity and the development of circular cities and regions, ensuring authenticity and resonance with the unique identities of the communities they serve. Highlighting the pivotal role of **community engagement and participation** in the co-creation of circular initiatives, the session invites exploration of successful models where citizens, businesses, and local communities actively contribute to the planning and implementation of circular strategies, fostering a sense of shared ownership and inclusivity. Engage in discussions about strategies to ensure that circular practices actively contribute to building **socially inclusive and innovative communities**. Address challenges related to equity, accessibility, and social cohesion, tailoring approaches to meet the diverse needs and wishes of communities across different scales. Immerse yourself in real-world case studies and exemplary practices where communities have been catalysts for driving circular initiatives. Learn from the lessons derived and identify replicable models adaptable to diverse urban and regional contexts.

This session provides an enriching platform for scholars, practitioners, and community leaders to engage in thought-provoking discussions, share insights, and collaboratively shape the future of circular cities and regions with a specific lens on communities. Active participation, the exchange of expertise, and involvement in this essential dialogue are invited to contribute to the building of sustainable, socially inclusive, innovative and circular communities.

(4) Recycling: Waste Management, Nutrition and Food

Within the scope of the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; here target 12) the European Union (EU) aims to halving food waste by 2030. To implement this global goal and also the National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction, technological innovations are necessary to improve existing waste management systems. But in order to achieve these goals it must be clear that circular systems are more than improved waste management technologies. At least as important as new technologies, is the integration of and cooperation between various actors and at various levels to promote circular models of production and consumption (SCALIBUR Project 2022). In Track 4 we focus on ideas and strategies to create and implement **circular waste management systems**; for example, the six identified intervention types to reduce consumer food waste by the European Consumer Food Waste Forum (ECFWF) - a pilot project involving experts from diverse backgrounds (Candea et al. 2023). These strategies now have to be disseminated among and supported by all relevant actors, such as industry, economy and society as well as local initiatives and citizens. The three Rs of reducing, reusing and recycling have to become integral part of their everyday life (Wilts 2016: 6). Sustainable sourcing and regional sales channels benefit the environment and society equally. Apart from these ecological and social benefits, there are availability and economic benefits resulting from circular waste management and food systems. Some topics in this field can be: consumption of regional food to reduce long transport distances, **healthy and regional eating** in public facilities and canteens, **shared consumption** ideas, use of repair services, exchange points for citizens, uniform reusable strategies in gastronomy on a local level, etc. (<https://www.circular-city-challenge.com>).

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Submit your abstract via email to AESOPYAConference2025@umwelt.uni-hannover.de by **October 15, 2024** (23:59 CET), according to the following guidelines.

Abstract Guidelines

- Expected abstract contributions should be limited to 200 words and 3-5 keywords.
- The official language of the conference is English.
- Multiple-authored abstracts are eligible, but only one author can participate and present at the conference.
- Abstracts co-authored by a PhD/postdoc student and their supervisor will not be accepted.
- PhD and postdoc students can send abstracts. Recently graduated PhD students (within five years from graduation) can also send abstracts.
- Please indicate which track you wish to submit your abstract to.
- Please provide brief information on how you will finance your participation in the conference (for ex. privately, through an institute/work, through a bursary, etc.).
- Authors will be notified about the abstract acceptance or rejection by **December 13, 2024**.
- Please indicate whether you wish to submit your contribution for the Best Paper Prize. If you submit for the Best Paper Prize, you must submit a full paper by **January 31, 2025**.
- Accepted authors are asked to confirm their participation in the conference within one week. Otherwise, their spot will be offered to the members on the waiting list.
- Accepted abstracts will be published open access in the book of abstracts with an e-ISBN number by AESOP.

BEST PAPER PRIZE AND FULL PAPER GUIDELINES

Track chairs and co-chairs will jointly decide to award a Best Paper Prize among all contributions that have applied for it. The awarded paper, along with runner-up papers, has the chance to be published at the [European Journal of Spatial Development](#) (EJSD). EJSD is an open access journal providing high-quality scientific contributions to spatial planning, regional development, policy making and governance, from European and EU-related perspectives. The journal serves as a platform for critical academics and spatial development professionals to share cutting edge research. The Best Paper Prize is mostly selected among the top 10 papers. Runner-up papers will be invited to be published as part of a special issue in [PlaNext – Next Generation Planning](#), the international peer-reviewed open access e-journal of the AESOP YA.

Participants who have applied for the Best Paper Prize are requested to submit their full paper via email to AESOPYAConference2025@umwelt.uni-hannover.de by **January 31, 2025**.

Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Use the <https://journals.polito.it/index.php/EJSD/about/submissions> provided:
- Full papers have a word limit between 7,000 – 10,000 words including spaces and notes and excluding abstract and references (for further info visit [this website](#))
- Include an abstract of a maximum of 200 words (concise, briefly stating the research question/s and problem/s, main research objective, methodology and results, and significant conclusions).
- Include a maximum of 5 keywords.
- Bibliographical references should be ordered alphabetically and formatted according to the APA citation style.
- Papers should be submitted via email as Word format files. Please name your file as follows: 'SURNAME_Name_Track number.docx' (example: SMITH_John_Track 1. docx)

Note: Participants who have **not** applied for the Best Paper Prize are **not** required to submit a full paper.

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

September 15, 2024 Call for abstracts

October 15, 2024 Submission of abstracts

December 13, 2024 Notification of acceptance

January 15, 2025 Registration deadline & Selection of participants for bursary

January 31, 2025 Submission of full paper (Best Paper Prize)

February 28, 2025 Evaluation for Best Paper Award

March 17-21, 2025 Conference