



Engaging stakeholders for the urban bioeconomy

Tools and resources for cities and regions



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1. Why is engagement important?

Stakeholder engagement refers to the process of involving and communicating with individuals, groups, or organisations that have an interest or influence in a particular project, organisation, or decision-making process.

It is important for several reasons:

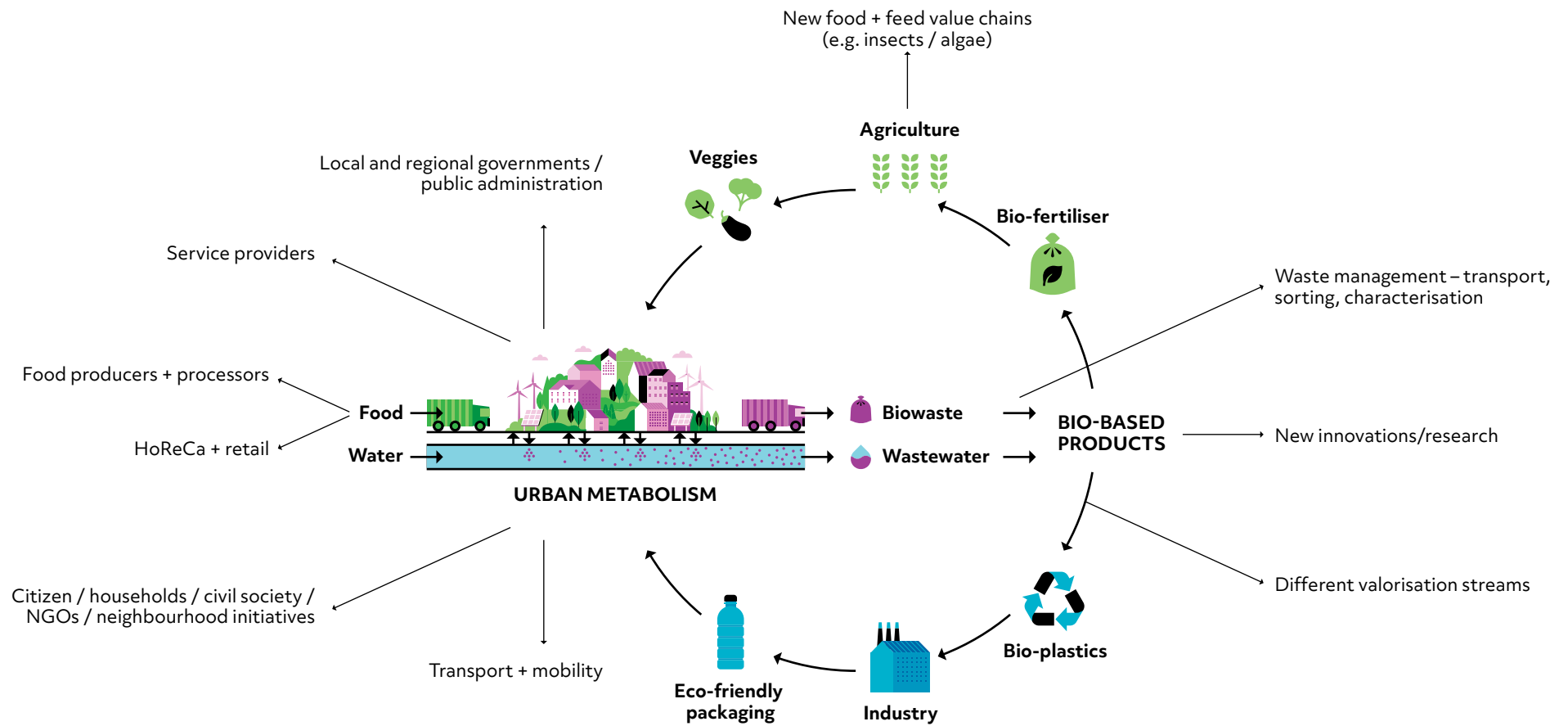
1. **Identification of concerns and interests:** This helps in making informed decisions that take into account the diverse perspectives and needs of stakeholders.
2. **Building relationships and trust:** By involving stakeholders in decision-making processes, organisations demonstrate their commitment to transparency, openness, and inclusivity.
3. **Mitigating risks:** By involving relevant parties in discussions and decision-making, organisations can gain valuable insights and expertise that help in identifying and addressing potential issues before they escalate.
4. **Enhancing decision-making:** Engaging stakeholders allows organizations to tap into valuable knowledge, expertise, and experience, which may lead to alternative solutions and innovative ideas.
5. **Facilitating collaboration and cooperation:** By involving stakeholders in the process, organisations can foster a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, leading to increased cooperation and support for the objectives of the project or organisation.
6. **Managing conflicts:** By providing opportunities for stakeholders to express their concerns and perspectives, organisations can work towards finding common ground and mutually acceptable solutions.

Overall, stakeholder engagement is crucial for organisations to understand, address, and balance the interests and expectations of various stakeholders. It helps in making more informed decisions, building positive relationships, and ultimately achieving sustainable and mutually beneficial outcomes.

This manual provides tools and resources specifically for cities and regions looking to engage stakeholders on the topic of urban bioeconomy.

More information about the specific tools and resources listed can be found in the HOOP Hub.

[Visit the HOOP Hub](#)



Activities and stakeholders in the urban bioeconomy. Source: CSCP and CETENMA (2021)



2. Challenges

Conducting successful stakeholder engagement activities is essential but not easy. Many challenges can arise to hinder efforts, such as:

1. **Lack of resources:** Stakeholders often do not have enough time or budget to participate in extra activities on top of their daily job. This is why it is extremely important that the engagement activities are as closely aligned as possible with the stakeholders' core work and motivations.
2. **Lack of motivation and conflicting interests:** Stakeholders might have different priorities and/or conflicting objectives. It is important to understand their key drivers during the stakeholder mapping phase and approach individuals directly to explain why their involvement is key to the success of the activity and how they can benefit from joining.
3. **Lack of political commitment:** Uncertainty regarding the commitment of policymakers can be caused by elections. To create networks, momentum, and a solid base for future operations, move quickly before the election period starts. After a change in leadership, take into account any potential new risk or opportunity and evaluate how they can impact your project.
4. **Lack of inclusivity:** The stakeholder identification should be as inclusive as feasible to avoid unintentionally excluding pertinent groups. Through site visits, talks with already identified stakeholders, and interviews with key actors the original list of stakeholders should be confirmed, amended, and continuously updated. Reaching out to groups that are generally out of decision-making processes is crucial, especially in the case of vulnerable or marginalized groups that may be affected by the project.
5. **Lack of right skills:** The process of engaging stakeholders requires a variety of capacities from the actors involved, including facilitation and leadership skills from the organization leading the process, technical knowledge about the subject matter, as well as a cooperative attitude from the stakeholders taking part in it.

3. Good practices

Biopatrols for citizen engagement in Murcia, Spain

As a true HOOP lighthouse, Murcia was not only the first municipality in the region to introduce selective biowaste collection, but is also already engaged in various European projects and initiatives on circular economy and biowaste recycling. Murcia has carried out various engagement activities, focusing in particular on citizens, households and food markets, including: media campaigns, various information materials and channels, education programmes in schools, citizen surveys, public visits to the waste facilities, information points in the neighbourhoods, cooking workshops and the so-called “biopatrols”.

Initiated within the ValueWaste project, the biopatrols have proven particularly successful and can be considered a best practice worth replicating. Trained teams were positioned in different parts of the city to engage directly with citizens. It turned out that, when speaking to the coaches face-to-face, citizens dared to ask all their questions and voice any doubts and could thus easily be taught about proper waste sorting. This was especially helpful in the first weeks of introducing the new waste sorting system. The biopatrols also managed to achieve a snow-ball effect in the information flow (e.g. from schools to parents and families, from large producers to all consumers). Since the biopatrols were in frequent and direct contact with the waste collectors, it was also possible to react directly – meaning if the biowaste collected in some streets had poor quality or quantity, the biopatrols would directly react and move their mobile stand to this street and engage with the household representatives. In summary, the biopatrols significantly contributed to obtaining a high quality of biowaste from the beginning of the changed collection system.



Introducing food waste collection in the market, Murcia, Spain. Source: Ayuntamiento de Murcia

Long-term campaigns and commitment to citizen engagement in Münster, Germany

AWM (“Abfallwirtschaftsbetriebe Münster”, the publicly owned waste management provider of Münster) has been well aware of the need to involve citizens long before the HOOP project, and has already launched and run many information campaigns and cooperated with various citizen initiatives.

AWM puts a lot of emphasis on engaging school children at a young age to bring them into contact with waste topics. The activities include the organisation of visits to the waste management facility, which includes hands-on in situ opportunities to learn about waste valorisation. The highlight is the “Deponie-Erlebnispfad” which is an educational path running on an old landfill to inform mostly school children in a playful way about recycling.

In terms of engaging citizens, AWM has launched a successful campaign named “Aktion Biotonne” that aimed to launch widespread information campaigns for

citizens to achieve a sustainable behaviour change (better biowaste sorting), mainly based on the three pillars of education, motivation and reminding. Information channels are leveraged ranging from print media to advertisements on waste trucks. In addition, controls of biowaste bins have been implemented and lead to further improvements since incorrectly filled bins are warned with a yellow card for the first time and if repeated will not be emptied and marked with a red card by AWM. This has proven to be a good measure to change behaviour. The results include reducing impurities from 3.5% to 1.9% in less than a year. Building on the already existing actions taken in this main engagement campaign and also the learnings regarding remaining impurities will be at the centre of engagement of citizens and stakeholders in Münster.

More inspiring good examples can soon be found in the [HOOP Hub](#) under “best practice factsheets”.

Visit the [HOOP Hub](#)



4. HOOP tools and resources

Biowaste Clubs

What is a Biowaste Club?

Facilitated by the CSCP as well as Science for Change (in Murcia) and 2GOOUT (Greater Porto), the eight HOOP Lighthouse Cities and Regions bring local stakeholders together in a dialogue platform called a Biowaste Club. Under the guidance of aforementioned HOOP partners, stakeholders representing the quadruple helix meet at least twice per year per lighthouse city. In these meetings, they identify the main barriers, challenges and opportunities along the value chain, including their own needs and interests. They agree on a roadmap of how this transition should take place. It is then up to the stakeholders to plan and carry out pilot activities together.

Not sure what a 'Biowaste Club' is all about? CSCP created a video to explain the concept in full.

[Watch the video](#)

How to turn it into practice?

In the HOOP project, Biowaste Clubs are the main dialogue platform for stakeholder engagement in the Lighthouses. They are made up of key local stakeholders, such as representatives of the municipality, of waste collectors or of citizens' initiatives. Biowaste Clubs aim to foster local commitment and engagement for a more circular biowaste value chain.

The set-ups, compositions and formats of each Biowaste Club Meeting may vary depending on the topics relevant in each Lighthouse at a given time.

Learn how the HOOP lighthouses are running their Biowaste Clubs and what results they are getting out of it by

- reading [this report](#) on the HOOP engagement activities
- following the HOOP project and meeting us in person during upcoming events
- engaging with our experts directly through the HOOP Hub

Find more step-by-step guidance in the [national action manuals of the SCALIBUR project](#). Further in depth national action manuals, including the learnings from the 8 HOOP lighthouses, can soon be found in the HOOP hub.

[Visit the HOOP Hub](#)

Citizen Engagement App

Play is an integral part of human interactions, helps people understand each other, and can shape new solutions by tapping into collective intelligence. For this reason, the project has launched the HOOP Trainers app that utilises gamification and citizen science to engage people on the topic of biowaste.

The app, developed by Science for Change, invites players to complete three missions around the topic of biowaste and bioproducts. The overall goal of the game is to transform 'Dubiop' to 'Cirklop', representing a green and circular city that reduces, recycles, reuses, repairs and recovers the waste it generates.

Data collected from the HOOP Trainers missions helps partners to better understand citizen's perception in the region about biowaste separation, acceptance of products made from biowaste and their proposals to construct a greener and more circular region.

The data from the HOOP Trainers missions in Murcia, M Western Macedonia, Albano Laziale and Münster are available on the HOOP website. These outcomes were discussed in the local Biowaste Clubs and helped develop recommendations to improve the local biowaste collection.

[Read the reports](#)



Dubiop and Cirklop, the main characters in the HOOP Trainers App. Source: Science for Change 2023

5. Meet the HOOP experts in stakeholder engagement

What is your organisation and your role in HOOP?

We, the Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP), are an international nonprofit Think and Do tank that works with businesses, policy makers, partner organisations and civil society towards a good life. In HOOP we are responsible for stakeholder engagement, supporting the lighthouse cities and regions in their work with their local stakeholders.

What are the 'Biowaste Clubs' being implemented in the project?

'Biowaste Clubs' are a methodology developed and implemented by the CSCP to engage stakeholders in a given territory. They form the main dialogue platform for the stakeholder engagement in the HOOP lighthouse cities and regions.

The Biowaste Clubs include all key local stakeholders, such as representatives of the municipality, waste collectors and citizens' initiatives. These actors will decide upon and – together with the HOOP partners – implement pilot actions that:

- Increase consumer awareness and acceptance of urban biowaste-derived products.
- Change behaviour towards better recycling rates, in order to increase quality and quantity of the biowaste collected.
- Implement best practices in biowaste collection, transport, sorting, pre-treatment and characterization.
- Promote new, circular business models and foster social innovation.
- Initiate new local and national policies and initiatives and.
- Set milestones for national action manuals.

Ultimately, the members of the local Biowaste Clubs should become national

biowaste ambassadors and help spread the key learnings and success stories across the HOOP pilot countries and beyond.

What are the main challenges you have encountered, and how have you overcome them?

Working in a European-wide project means that there is going to be a different context, setting and varying goals in each participating city or region. With our strong local HOOP partners in each lighthouse we managed to apply the Biowaste Club methodology as needed. Planning of events during covid-times was tricky but by staying flexible with the format this has also been overcome so far.

Which advice would you give to a city or region that would like to start engaging stakeholders on biowaste?

Utilising a structured process – such as the 'Biowaste Clubs' – from the beginning is essential. Aside from this, having clearly defined responsibilities and an open mind to the needs and wishes of the stakeholders, are key to successfully engage stakeholders.

Learn more about the Collaborating Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP)



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6. Dive deeper in the HOOP Virtual Academy

National Action Manuals for Local Uptake

The SCALIBUR National Action Manuals for Local Uptake analyse the key experiences and learnings from the project's pilot cities in engaging their stakeholders: Kozani (Greece), Albano Laziale (Italy), and Madrid (Spain).

The manuals offer a step-by-step guide on how to set up and run long-term multi-stakeholder engagements in order to enhance the acceptance and adoption of newly developed technologies and processes. Additional manuals are being created in the course of the HOOP project.

[Read the manuals](#)

Further in depth national action manuals, including the learnings from the 8 HOOP lighthouses, can soon be found in the [HOOP hub](#).

Citizen Involvement on Circular Economy

The FORCE project's Handbook for Citizen Involvement on Circular Economy provides guidance on how to promote pro-environmental behaviour among citizens in urban areas.

To promote responsible consumption, as well as compliance with waste separation schemes five criteria have proven to be of high importance: strategic planning; inclusivity; transparency; continuity and resources dedicated. The manual provides a brief description of these criteria and their importance. Best practices examples from the four cities are also presented for inspiration.

[Read the handbook](#)

Urban metabolism and participatory processes

The UrbanWINS Toolkit: A guide on urban metabolism and participatory processes for more efficient urban waste policies can be used by any European public authority, urban policy maker, decision maker, private organization, waste expert, NGO and other organisations looking for effective measures to prevent, reduce and improve waste management.

Besides presenting over 70 best practices, the toolkit provides guidance on stakeholder engagement, including a theoretical description of the stakeholder identification and engagement processes.

[Download the toolkit](#)

Involving citizens in circular economy

The CECI project aims at transferring knowledge among European regions to bring more relevant and efficient policies to promote citizen involvement in the circular and sharing economy. Part of the activities saw partners developed a handbook for regions outlining how to trigger, and maintain, citizen involvement.

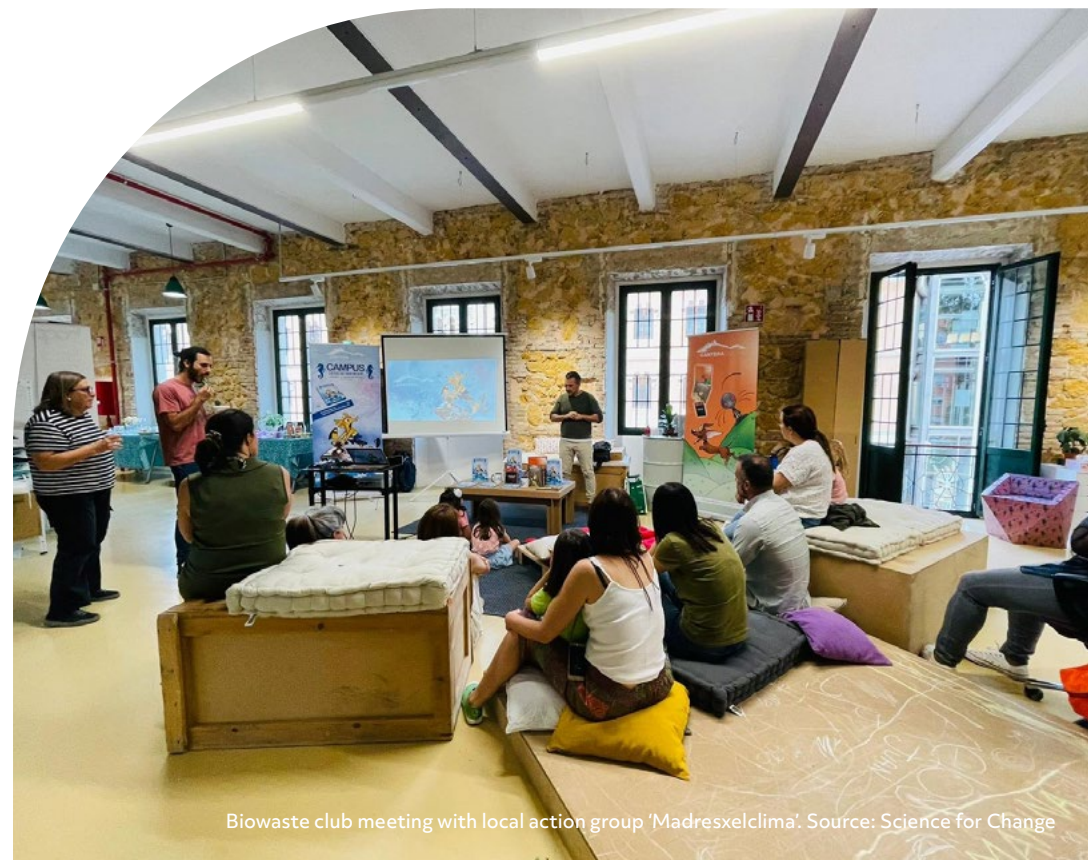
[Access the handbook](#)

Behavioural change approaches

The WaysTUP! Project developed a behavioural change approach with citizens and local communities, improving and changing longstanding perceptions on urban bio-waste and promoting the active participation of citizens in its collection.

This report outlines the scope of the behavioural change campaign.

[Read the report](#)



Biowaste club meeting with local action group 'Madresxelclima'. Source: Science for Change

7. Key takeaways

1. Stakeholder engagement is crucial for organisations to understand, address, and balance the interests and expectations of various stakeholders. It helps in making more informed decisions, building positive relationships, and ultimately achieving sustainable and mutually beneficial outcomes.
2. Conducting successful stakeholder engagement activities is essential but not easy. Common challenges include lack of resources, lack of motivation, lack of political commitment, lack of inclusivity, and lack of skills.
3. Utilising a structured process is important for successful engagement. In the HOOP project, so-called 'Biowaste Clubs' were set up as a dialogue platform in each of the eight lighthouse cities and regions. This methodology, developed by the CSCP, includes all key local stakeholders, who co-design strategies and actions.
4. Technology can be harnessed to engage stakeholders. HOOP partner Science for Change developed an app that utilises gamification and citizen science to engage people on the topic of biowaste.
5. Sometimes only a face-to-face interaction will do. In Murcia (Spain) 'biopatrols' were deployed to speak directly to citizens about the newly introduced biowaste collection scheme. This provided a visible and approachable point where residents could ask their questions.
6. Lots of resources are available to help improve stakeholder engagement in your territory. Check them out in the [HOOP Virtual Academy](#).



HOOP is a Horizon 2020 project that supports 8 lighthouse cities and regions in developing large-scale urban circular bioeconomy initiatives that will focus on making bio-based products from urban biowaste and wastewater.

[Visit our website](#)

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