



Final Conference Takeaways

25 March 2025, Cartagena (Spain)

What is HOOP? The pioneer HORIZON 2020 project that provided technical, regulatory and financial Project Development Assistance (PDA) to 8 European *Lighthouse* cities and regions to unlock urban circular bioeconomy (UCBE) projects.

HOOP in numbers

120+ M € of induced investments
18 UCBE investment projects
25 Technologies evaluated
51 Technical & environmental studies
50+ Reports & manuals elaborated
7 UCBE evaluation tools produced
60+ Biowaste Clubs
1600+ Stakeholders engaged
3 Open market consultation processes
30 Webinars on UCBE
2 Policy conferences
9 Study tours
129 Members in the [HOOP Network](#)
1 [HOOP Circular Bioeconomy Hub](#)

Stakeholder engagement and citizen science

- Stakeholder engagement is a crucial tool for each city and region to advance their strategic goals. It can, for example, run in parallel to the PDA, providing inputs for the technical assessment and fostering innovation.
- The Biowaste Clubs served as effective platforms for stakeholder engagement and the development of new value chains for biowaste valorisation.
- The HOOP Trainers app helped assess citizens' commitment through gamification and aided in designing communication and engagement strategies.

Cross-cutting takeaways

- A regional approach must be adopted to account for local resources, markets, legislations, supply chains.
- Policy support and regulations are essential to stimulate demand for bio-based products. Many innovative value chains are often limited by regulatory obstacles.
- Non-financial leverage plays a crucial role in paving the way for future investments.
- The European Commission has established support services for cities, regions and project promoters: [EIB's C3](#) for large ticket projects (€20M+), [Green Assist](#) for smaller tickets (€2.5M+) and the [CCRI](#) for those actively looking for knowledge and ideas to implement a circular economy project or systemic solution.

The multidisciplinary, coordinated PDA

- A well-coordinated technological, legal, and financial PDA is essential for unlocking investments by assessing feasibility and risks; this process that can take months or even years.
- There is no one-size-fits-all PDA; it must be tailor-made and frequently adjusted according to the technology process, local needs and conditions.
- Technological and financial PDA partners started to speak each other's language.
- Financial perspectives must be integrated from the outset.
- Technical and regulatory feasibility are the pillars of bankability.
- Financing tools are available to scale up projects, while venture capitals and grants can support early-stage projects.
- Innovation public procurement emerges as a strategic tool to unlock high-impact technology, supporting both early-stage development (PCP) and scale-up (PPI). Procurement competitive procedures foster technological plurality, validate outcomes,

and drive performance, while maximizing value for money. Waste management operators and municipalities can act as smart investors, enhancing technology readiness, enabling market uptake, and reducing risks for private capital. However, this approach remains largely unknown and needs greater promotion and adoption.

HOOP impact in the Lighthouses and in the Network

- Creation of more pathways to valorise urban biowaste, through the familiarization with new technologies, business models and innovation public procurement.
- Increased quantity and quality of selectively collected biowaste.
- Collection of additional biowaste streams (spent coffee grounds, used cooking oils).
- Enhanced understanding of strategies to implement selective collection of biowaste in different contexts, including rural areas and historical centres.
- Greater awareness among citizens and stakeholders, along with the refinement of circular bioeconomy strategies.

The HOOP legacy

- Assessment tools such as the [HOOP Biocircularity Label](#) and the [Project Maturity Level](#) help to evaluate the circularity level and bankability.
- The HOOP Hub and HOOP Network have introduced pathways to promote tools, share expertise, and provide one-on-one capacity building. The Hub primarily serves as a learning experiences, while the Network organises study visits and other knowledge exchanges activities.
- These platforms will remain active in the coming years, meeting user expectations; their structure and *modus operandi* will be finetuned based on guidance from the Network.

Check out the [HOOP booklet "Closing the HOOP: A legacy of circular innovation"](#) for a graphical, concise yet informative resume of the project concept and results!



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N° 101000836



Coordinated by:

