



# Planning and decision-making in Mikkeli

Extract from the Demonstration Report

Mikkeli, Finland



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This text describes Mikkeli's experience on using the planning and decision-making guidelines and the organizational changes for interventions on the city strategies. The sections come from Mikkeli's CityLoops demonstration report available [here](#).

# Planning and decision-making guidelines

## INSTRUMENT NAME

Roskilde University, a CityLoops participant, developed a framework and a methodology for promoting systemic changes in the municipal decision-making process related to construction and demolition with the aim of promoting circularity.

The tool consists of two parts:

1. A framework to map key decisions across the phases of demolition and construction, addressing the planning gap between demolition and construction projects. a. Indicate when decisions should be taken, which stakeholders should be involved, and what knowledge inputs are needed during different stages of the process. b. Address how relevant CityLoops-tools can be incorporated in the planning process supporting decision-making.

2. A workshop method addressing organisational change in operationalisation of circular planning and decision-making targeting three levels: i) strategy, ii) operations and iii) capacity building.

In Mikkeli the methodology was used internally in the CityLoops project team, but the city administration was not engaged in this work, because language barriers were considered to have negative effect on the internalization of the goals. Instead, a set of workshops and strategy formulation activities was tailored to the specific needs of Mikkeli and managed by the Miksei Ltd. team with backup from the Roskilde expert.

## Lessons learned

The framework and the circular framing of the demolition process and linking it to new construction was eye opening to the Mikkeli CityLoops team. The importance of first ensuring a strategical view of Circular Economy and incorporating this view into the City strategy was recognized. Before that, systemic changes in the procurement process would not be achieved. The different administrative units must have a common goal in facilitating circular thinking. This thinking must traverse city planning, real estate management, permitting procedures, environmental regulation, procurement, municipal waste management and business promotion activities.

There are strong barriers against changing the practice of using qualitative circular criteria in procurement of construction and demolition services. On the other hand, circular businesses are recognized to have potential for employment.

Using the Miro group working tool was found useful when working with expert technical staff, but in approaching political decision makers more conventional interaction tools may be practical.

[<Link to instrument>](#)

Table 1. Impact of city-wide application of tool A: Planning & Decision-Making Guidelines.

Planned outcome	Intermediate outcome review
<p>1: 100% of the procurement of demolition projects include the new guidelines for screening and selective demolition, making these an essential part of the procurement processes within the City of Mikkeli.</p>	<p>Outcome partly reached. The guidelines developed in CityLoops are ready for use in other projects, however, there have been no demolitions in Mikkeli since the demolition described in demonstration action. It is expected that there will be more demolition projects in the city before the end of the CityLoops project. The final evaluation report will examine the role of the guidelines in those projects.</p>
<p>2: The City of Mikkeli is well known as "Circular Economy City" and operates according to the CE closed loops principles. Circular economy is incorporated in new strategic objectives.</p>	<p>Outcome partly reached. One of the most significant impacts of the project is the mention of the circular economy in the city's strategy and climate program. There has been very good progress in the strategic level on circular economy but putting the goals into practice still re-quires work.</p>
<p>3: At the end of the project, use of CDW (especially crushed concrete) to replace virgin construction materials (soil) has increased as a result of new guidelines in planning and decision making. 5% reduction in consumption of virgin construction materials within the city of Mikkeli.</p>	<p>The target has not been reached. The consumption of virgin materials in a city such as Mikkeli depends on many factors outside the control of CityLoops. It is difficult to isolate the impact of the CityLoops guidelines.</p>
<p>4: By the end of the project, 5% reduction in the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> related to extraction, processing and transportation (incl. logistics) of construction materials (replacement of virgin soil material with crushed concrete).</p>	<p>Outcome reached. However, the total amount of crushed concrete available to replace virgin material in Mikkeli varies from year to year and depends on many factors outside of the control of CityLoops. Since material recycling in construction has been incorporated in Mikkeli's official climate policy, one may expect a long-term impact in the direction of the expected outcome.</p>

## Interventions related to city strategies

Miksei CityLoops team took actively part in the preparation of the City Strategy 2022-2023 and the Municipal Climate Program. Circular CDW management was recognized as an important element in the Climate Program and CityLoops was acknowledged as a project that contributes to the roadmap for implementing this program and to the monitoring of progress.

On the proposal of the CityLoops project, in October 2020, the city government authorized the mayor to sign the Declaration on Circular Economy Cities proposed by ICLEI. In it, the city commits itself to setting circular economy targets, integrating a circular economy perspective into decision-making, promoting the circular economy in procurement, and reporting on progress to the ICLEI (Network of Local Governments for Sustainability).

The CityLoops project has participated in the preparation of the City of Mikkeli's climate program by providing comments on the draft to the Environmental Services Unit preparing the program. A separate section on "Recycling of materials in construction" was included in the program.

In parallel with the CityLoops demonstration, the city council has approved an overall strategy for the years 2022-2025 (Mikkelin kaupunki 2021a). One of the focus areas in this strategy is Circular Economy, with the following three lines of action: a) The municipality is committed to include circular economy issues in all vocational education curricula. b) 25 % of public tenders related to CDW and biowaste should include requirements promoting sustainable development, Circular Economy and climate issues.

The city council has approved a climate program for Mikkeli in 2021 (Mikkelin kaupunki 2021b). The main goals related to CE are:

- the commitment to reuse or recycle excavated soil and demolition materials
- to promote business models based on public-private partnerships

Based on this overall strategy two implementation programs were prepared. Blue Economy and Green Economy were selected as two of Mikkeli's main business promotion sectors or platforms (Mikkelin kaupunki 2022a). Blue Economy refers to circular economy in the water treatment sector. The content of the Green Economy concept is under discussion, but it may be interpreted as Circular Economy or Resource Efficiency.

The CityLoops-project has strengthened the knowhow and the human resource base in CE issues within Miksei Ltd. This was institutionalized in 2022 by establishing a permanent Sustainable Development Team in Miksei. Miksei Ltd. was assigned with the role of coordinating activities related to the Green Economy platform in the Service Agreement 2022-2023 with the City (Mikkelin kaupunki 2022b).

The Environmental Services for the Mikkeli region is the local environmental authority, responsible for compliance monitoring and promoting climate policy. Together with the city administration it produces annually a document named Environmental Statement. In 2022 a

new chapter was included in this statement: Promotion of Circular Economy. Under this chapter goals and new procedures are proposed to increase circularity in infrastructure projects, green area management and management of contaminated soil.

# CITYLOOPS

CityLoops is an EU-funded project focusing on construction and demolition waste (CDW), including soil, and bio-waste, where seven European cities are piloting solutions to be more circular.

Høje-Taastrup and Roskilde (Denmark), Mikkelí (Finland), Apeldoorn (the Netherlands), Bodø (Norway), Porto (Portugal) and Seville (Spain) are the seven cities implementing a series of demonstration actions on CDW and soil, and bio-waste, and developing and testing over 30 new tools and processes.

Alongside these, a sector-wide circularity assessment and an urban circularity assessment are to be carried out in each of the cities. The former, to optimise the demonstration activities, whereas the latter to enable cities to effectively integrate circularity into planning and decision making. Another two key aspects of CityLoops are stakeholder engagement and circular procurement.

CityLoops started in October 2019 and will run until September 2023.



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