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TRAINING AND MENTORING CURRICULA: CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

[Drawing propositions for the Training and Mentoring curricula]

Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021–2027

Circular MuSe Project – Work Package 4 (WP4)

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Training and Mentoring Curricula was developed within the Circular MuSe project (Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021–2027) to strengthen the capacity of municipalities and municipal utilities in applying Circular Economy (CE) principles in service provision.

The curricula are grounded in survey results from Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, and Denmark, which assessed current experience, knowledge gaps, and training needs among municipal actors.

The findings highlight shared priorities such as improving access to CE funding, strengthening practical CE implementation skills, and promoting peer learning, alongside distinct national focuses: regulation-to-practice alignment (Denmark), data-driven innovation (Sweden), policy and funding coherence (Poland), and small-scale pilot development (Lithuania).

The curriculum integrates structured training, mentoring, and applied learning to support municipal professionals at different readiness levels. Its modular design ensures adaptability to local contexts while fostering cross-border cooperation and innovation.

This activity has been prepared with the financial support of the Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021–2027, which fosters cross-border cooperation among coastal regions of Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden. The Programme promotes innovation, sustainable development, and regional resilience through joint initiatives addressing shared challenges. The Circular MuSe project, and this Training and Mentoring Curricula in particular, contribute to the Programme's priority "Green and Resilient South Baltic", advancing the circular economy transition and resource efficiency in municipal services.

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2. PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

The purpose of this Training and Mentoring Curricula is to provide a structured framework for education and mentoring that enables municipalities and service companies to implement Circular Economy principles in municipal operations.

It is directly informed by the Circular MuSe survey conducted under Work Package 4 (WP4), which mapped current CE awareness, readiness, and training priorities.

The curricula aim to address identified gaps in technical expertise, financing, policy comprehension, and project management, helping municipalities translate CE principles into practical, measurable actions.

3. METHODOLOGICAL BASIS

The curricula design follows an evidence-based approach built upon the Survey Report (October 2025), which included responses from municipal administrations, service companies, utilities, and associations across four partner countries.

The mixed-method assessment identified regional differences in readiness and key challenges, such as funding constraints, lack of technical skills, and fragmented policy implementation.

The findings shaped the curricula structure and content, ensuring relevance to real institutional contexts. The methodology also ensures coherence with EU and national CE strategies, integrating both quantitative and qualitative insights into the module design.

The Training and Mentoring Curricula follow a progressive, competence-building logic that reflects the varying levels of readiness among municipal actors identified in the survey. The structure moves from **basic awareness-raising (Level 1)**, through **applied and systemic learning (Level 2)**, to **regional specialization and strategic integration (Level 3)**. This tiered design allows participants to advance gradually—from understanding CE principles, to implementing practical solutions, and finally to leading regional or cross-border initiatives. Such a progression ensures both inclusiveness for beginners and depth for experienced practitioners, while maintaining a coherent framework adaptable across the South Baltic region.

In this curricula, teaching and mentoring are viewed as two interconnected components of the learning process, each serving a distinct purpose. **Teaching** provides the structured, knowledge-based foundation — offering participants theoretical insight, conceptual understanding, and methodological tools related to the Circular Economy. **Mentoring**, on the other hand, focuses on personalized guidance and applied learning**,** helping participants translate theory into practice within their specific institutional and regional contexts. Through mentoring, learners receive targeted support from experienced experts, enabling them to refine project ideas, address implementation challenges, and build long-term competence. The integration of teaching and mentoring ensures both the acquisition

of essential knowledge and its sustained, real-world application, reinforcing learning outcomes and supporting continuous professional growth.

Target Groups

The Training and Mentoring Curricula are designed for a broad spectrum of professionals working in or with municipalities, each group corresponding to a specific training level.

TRAINING PROGRAM

Level 1 – Basic Understanding (Foundation)

This level strengthens participants' basic competences to recognise CE opportunities in daily municipal work, apply simple circular practices, and contribute effectively to CE-related operational improvements.

Target Audience:

- Newly appointed municipal employees and technical staff.
- Personnel from municipal service companies (e.g., waste, water, or energy management).
- Local government representatives with limited experience in Circular Economy (CE) principles.

Purpose:
To introduce fundamental CE concepts, demonstrate their practical relevance for municipal operations, and build awareness of circular practices and responsibilities.

Level 2 – Advanced Trainings (Systems & Innovation)

This level strengthens participants' competences to design and manage CE solutions, apply systems thinking, coordinate multi-stakeholder cooperation, and use data and digital tools to support evidence-based planning and implementation.

Target Audience:

- Middle management and technical experts responsible for planning and service optimization.
- Environmental specialists and project managers involved in CE-related initiatives.
- Representatives of inter-municipal cooperation bodies or regional agencies.

Purpose:
To deepen understanding of CE systems, promote innovation and technological uptake, and enhance capacity for planning, financing, and managing circular solutions in public services.

Level 3 – Regional Specialization

This level strengthens high-level competences in CE governance and policy integration, enabling participants to lead strategic planning, ensure regulatory alignment, support scaling of CE pilots, and promote institutional cooperation across regions and countries.

Target Audience:

- Senior municipal managers, strategic planners, and policymakers.
- Representatives of ministries, associations, or public enterprises leading CE strategies.
- Experts involved in transnational CE cooperation and pilot project scaling.

Purpose:
To strengthen strategic CE leadership, align municipal action with regional and EU-level policy goals, and develop tailored approaches for local implementation and cross-border collaboration.

MENTORING PROGRAM

The mentoring programme strengthens participants' practical competences to translate knowledge into implementable CE actions, improve project design and stakeholder coordination, and increase readiness for financing, implementation, and performance monitoring.

Target Audience:

- Selected participants from all three levels.
- Individuals or teams developing practical CE projects.
- Municipal innovators seeking guidance on funding, partnerships, and implementation.

Purpose:
To provide continuous support and professional growth opportunities through one-on-one and group mentoring, peer learning, and expert feedback on real-life CE projects.

4. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The Training and Mentoring Curricula aim to:

1. Build foundational and advanced knowledge of Circular Economy concepts relevant to municipal services.
2. Develop technical, managerial, and financial skills to plan, fund, and implement CE initiatives.
3. Strengthen collaboration and knowledge-sharing networks among municipalities and utilities.
4. Support participants in developing pilot projects, funding proposals, and partnerships.
5. Create a mentoring ecosystem for sustained capacity building and professional growth.

5. TRAINING STRUCTURE AND LEVELS

The four-topic structure of each training level is designed to ensure **completeness, balance, and progressive learning**. It provides a coherent pathway that covers all essential dimensions of the Circular Economy — conceptual understanding, practical application, technological innovation, and financial or governance aspects. This structure guarantees that participants gain both theoretical and operational competence within a manageable learning scope. By limiting each level to four core topics, the curricula remain focused, time-efficient, and adaptable to diverse institutional contexts while maintaining consistency across all partner countries.

The curricula is organized into three progressive levels, each tailored to a specific stage of CE maturity.

Level 1: Basic Understanding (Foundation)

Target group: Municipal and service-company staff **with limited or no prior knowledge of Circular Economy (CE)**, including newcomers, administrative staff, and operational-level employees who require a foundational understanding of CE principles and municipal waste/resource management.

Format: Workshops, interactive lectures, and group exercises.

Duration: 0.5–1 day per topic.

Topics include:

1. Introduction to the Circular Economy (CE)
2. Municipal Services and CE Applications
3. Urban vs. Rural CE Challenges
4. Waste Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling Strategies

Each topic introduces participants to the foundational CE concepts and helps them apply theory to municipal practices:

1. **Introduction to the Circular Economy (CE)** – Provides the conceptual foundation of the CE, distinguishing it from the linear model. Participants explore key terminology, global trends, and municipal relevance. Case studies illustrate how circular economy principles are integrated into collection, treatment, and disposal systems.
2. **Municipal Services and CE Applications** – Examines CE principles in municipal services such as waste, water, and energy. Participants identify reuse and recycling opportunities through real case studies and community-based initiatives.
3. **Urban vs. Rural CE Challenges** – Analyzes differences between urban and rural municipalities in implementing CE. The module emphasizes resource management, logistics, and stakeholder collaboration, introducing adaptive solutions for smaller municipalities.
4. **Waste Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling Strategies** – Introduces waste hierarchy and municipal-level actions to reduce waste generation. Practical exercises highlight reuse systems, repair cafes, and awareness campaigns.

Level 2: Advanced Trainings (Systems & Innovation)

Target group: Municipal and service-company staff with **intermediate CE knowledge and practical experience**, including middle management, technical experts, and planners who are responsible for designing, coordinating, or improving CE-related systems, services, and innovative solutions.

Format: Expert-led workshops, site visits, and case analysis.

Duration: 1–1.5 days per topic.

Topics include:

1. Circular Business Models for Municipal Utilities
2. Collaboration and Partnerships in CE
3. Technologies and Digital Tools for Circular Solutions
4. CE Financing and Investment Opportunities

These modules focus on innovation, technology integration, and system-level transformation, combining theoretical sessions with applied workshops:

1. **Circular Business Models for Municipal Utilities** – Explores CE-driven models such as product-as-a-service and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems. Participants evaluate European best practices and simulate model adaptation to their municipalities.
2. **Collaboration and Partnerships in CE** – Focuses on inter-municipal cooperation, PPPs, and industrial symbiosis. Participants practice stakeholder engagement, partnership-building, and communication strategies.
3. **Technologies and Digital Tools for Circular Solutions** – Introduces IoT, AI, and data-driven tools for CE. Participants learn how to integrate monitoring systems, digital reuse platforms, and performance dashboards into municipal operations.
4. **CE Financing and Investment Opportunities** – Guides participants through EU, national, and local funding opportunities. Exercises include drafting project concepts, budgets, and financing models for circular projects.

Level 3: Regional Specialization

Target group: Municipal and regional stakeholders with **advanced CE competence and decision-making responsibilities**, including senior managers, policymakers, and CE project leaders who require country-specific regulatory, strategic, and scaling knowledge to integrate CE into regional planning and governance frameworks.

Format: Regional workshops, study visits, and cross-border exchanges.
Duration: 1–2 days per module.

Country-focused modules:

1. Lithuania: Small-scale CE pilots, local resource valorization.
2. Poland: Policy alignment and CE funding mechanisms.
3. Sweden: Data-driven CE monitoring and innovation scaling.
4. Denmark: Regulation and circular procurement frameworks.

Lithuania – Focus on affordable CE pilots and local resource use. Participants learn how to implement micro-pilots for green waste, sand reuse, and shared regional solutions.

Poland – Focus on regulatory integration, CE funding, and C&D waste reuse. Participants work on aligning project proposals with policy frameworks.

Sweden – Highlights innovation, EPR models, and digital monitoring systems. Participants explore Swedish pilot examples and innovation funding opportunities.

Denmark – Focuses on regulatory and procurement frameworks. Participants learn how to incorporate CE principles into tenders and develop market solutions for secondary materials.

The proposed training is structured into three levels; however, the levels and their topics are independent and non-sequential, allowing participants to join modules based on their needs and prior experience.

6. MENTORING PROGRAM

The three-topic structure of the mentoring program reflects a progressive and personalized learning pathway that aligns with participants' development stages. It begins with **basic mentoring**, focused on identifying opportunities and sharing experiences; advances to **applied mentoring**, supporting project design and partnership-building; and culminates in **regional mentoring**, fostering cross-country collaboration and policy alignment. This three-step logic ensures continuity from knowledge acquisition to real implementation and strategic integration, while keeping the mentoring process focused, achievable, and adaptable to diverse participant needs.

The proposed mentoring topics are **independent and non-sequential**, they can be followed without prior participation in the teaching program. Each topic addresses a distinct aspect of Circular Economy implementation, allowing participants to engage in mentoring based on their specific needs, experience level, or institutional priorities.

Target group: Participants from all levels.
Format: Individual and group mentoring sessions, online and in-person (3–6 months).

Mentoring supports implementation of CE initiatives, offering guidance on project design, business planning, and stakeholder collaboration.

Target group: Participants from all levels.
Format: Small groups, peer-to-peer, expert mentors.
Duration: 0,5 – 3 days for each topic (in 1–6 months after training).

Basic level mentoring focus on:

- How to identify CE opportunities in daily work
- Sharing local experiences of waste prevention and recycling

Mentoring Topics (3 topics)

1. **From Idea to Pilot: Designing Your First CE Project**
   Individual mentoring for identifying a local CE opportunity and developing an actionable mini-project plan.
2. **Building Partnerships and Networks for CE Implementation**
   Guidance on inter-municipal cooperation, PPPs, and partnerships with private sector and academia.
3. **Funding Readiness: Preparing Short Concept Notes or Proposals**
   Mentoring on basic project preparation (problem framing, objectives, outputs, budgeting).

Advanced level mentoring focus on:

- Designing circular pilot projects within municipal companies
- Building effective PPPs and stakeholder networks

Mentoring Topics (3 topics)

1. **Scaling and Institutionalising CE Practices**
   Mentoring on embedding CE principles across departments and services; creating governance mechanisms.
2. **Financial Engineering and Investment Readiness**
   Detailed coaching on business planning, investment models, and preparing for funding applications (EU, national, regional).
3. **Advanced Pilot Implementation Support**
   One-on-one expert mentoring to optimise existing pilots (e.g., construction waste reuse, green waste valorisation, or sand residue management).

Regional mentoring focus on:

- Cross-country knowledge exchange (Poland–Lithuania–Sweden–Denmark)
- Mentoring on project financing, policy compliance, and scaling CE solutions

Lithuania case: Mentoring Topics (3 topics)

1. **Designing a Micro-Pilot in a Small Municipality**
   Tailored mentoring for planning a pilot with limited resources and measurable impact.
2. **Engaging the Community and Municipal Leadership**
   Mentoring on communication and stakeholder involvement for smaller communities.
3. **Building Partnerships for Shared Waste or Resource Solutions**
   Support for forming regional collaborations and joint applications.

Poland case: Mentoring Topics (3 topics)

1. **Developing CE Pilots Compliant with Polish Legislation**
   One-on-one guidance to align project concepts with environmental and waste management law.

2. **Building CE Governance within Municipal Administration**
   Mentoring on setting up CE coordination teams, monitoring systems, and KPIs.
3. **Preparing Project Applications for CE Funding**
   Hands-on mentoring for drafting proposals for Polish and EU programs.

Sweden case: Mentoring Topics (3 topics)

1. **Building Data-Driven CE Monitoring Systems**
   Mentoring on creating KPI dashboards and simple data structures for performance tracking.
2. **Translating CE Strategy into Departmental Practice**
   Guidance for middle managers on cross-department implementation.
3. **Scaling CE Pilots through Partnerships and Innovation Clusters**
   Tailored support to link local pilots with regional innovation ecosystems.

Denmark case: Mentoring Topics (3 topics)

1. **Regulation-to-Practice Implementation Support**
   Expert mentoring to navigate legal, compliance, and tendering issues.
2. **Designing Scalable CE Business Models**
   Mentoring utilities and municipalities to structure viable, market-based CE services.
3. **Developing CE Procurement Clauses and Specifications**
   Practical mentoring on drafting tender requirements that promote reuse and resource efficiency.

Mentoring provides structured guidance to support implementation of CE initiatives developed during the training. Basic-level mentoring helps identify CE opportunities and share experiences. Advanced mentoring supports pilot design and partnerships. Regional mentoring fosters cross-country collaboration and mutual learning.

7. TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

The curricula adopt a blended learning approach that combines theoretical understanding with hands-on practice, ensuring that participants not only acquire knowledge but also learn to apply it effectively in real municipal contexts. This approach draws on adult learning principles, experiential education, and peer exchange to foster long-term competence development.

Key learning methods include:

- **Case-based workshops and exercises:** Participants engage with real or simulated municipal challenges, analysing circular solutions and designing action plans. This practical approach encourages problem-solving, critical thinking, and knowledge contextualization within their professional environment.
- **Peer-to-peer and group reflection:** Structured discussions and collaborative assignments promote mutual learning among participants from different municipalities and countries. These sessions help identify common barriers, share best practices, and build a network of peers engaged in CE transformation.

- **Study visits and hands-on demonstrations:** Visits to pilot sites, innovation hubs, or municipal utilities provide tangible exposure to circular practices in operation. Experiencing real-life examples enhances understanding of both technical processes and organisational aspects of CE implementation.
- **Online sessions and resource libraries:** Complementary online learning modules, webinars, and shared digital repositories extend the learning experience beyond in-person sessions. This ensures flexible access to educational materials, case studies, and EU-level resources relevant to each module.
- **Ongoing mentorship and knowledge exchange:** Mentoring connects participants with experienced experts who provide tailored advice, review project ideas, and guide implementation. Through regular consultations and peer learning circles, participants receive continuous support and feedback that sustain their progress after formal training ends.

The logic of this blended approach is to balance knowledge acquisition, skills development, and experiential learning, supporting participants' transition from understanding CE concepts to successfully implementing them in practice.

8. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE AND FORMATS

Step 1 (Months 1–2): Basic understanding modules
Step 2 (Months 3–4): Advanced trainings
Step 3 (Months 5–6): Regional specialization
Step 4 (Months 7–9): Mentoring sessions.

The schedule is flexible and adaptable for national and institutional contexts.

The proposed training is structured into three levels; however, the levels and their topics are independent and non-sequential, allowing participants to join modules based on their needs and prior experience.
The proposed mentoring topics are independent and non-sequential, they can be followed without prior participation in the teaching program.

Participants may attend all three training levels and all related topics, as well as participate in mentoring across all levels. Alternatively, depending on their expressed needs and professional priorities, participants may choose to engage only in one selected mentoring topic.

9. EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES PER MODULE

Each module defines measurable learning outcomes that participants are expected to demonstrate by the end of the training. The outcomes are structured across three competency levels (basic, advanced, regional), ensuring a progressive development of knowledge and practical skills, as well as direct applicability to municipal and regional Circular Economy (CE) implementation.

Level 1 (basic) Modules:

By the end of Level 1 modules, participants will be able to:

- Explain key CE concepts and distinguish between linear and circular economic systems in terms of resource use, waste generation, and sustainability outcomes.
- Identify practical CE entry points within municipal waste management and service delivery (e.g., collection, sorting, reuse, recycling, and public engagement).
- Recognize barriers and enabling conditions for CE implementation in both rural and urban settings, including infrastructure gaps, public behavior, and service coverage differences.
- Apply the waste hierarchy in municipal decision-making and propose basic community-based reuse and prevention strategies (e.g., repair, donation systems, reuse centers).

Level 2 (advanced) Modules:

By the end of Level 2 modules, participants will be able to:

- Design, adapt, and justify a circular business model suitable for a municipal or public service context (e.g., product-as-a-service, reuse schemes, local circular procurement models).
- Develop partnership frameworks and governance structures that enable cross-sector CE cooperation among municipalities, businesses, NGOs, and citizens.
- Integrate digital tools and monitoring approaches to support data collection, performance tracking, and decision-making related to waste and resource flows.
- Prepare a structured funding concept or draft proposal for CE implementation, including objectives, activities, expected results, budget logic, and potential funding sources.

Level 3 (regional) Modules:

By the end of Level 3 modules, participants will be able to:

- Analyze country-specific and EU-aligned CE regulations and identify feasible compliance pathways for municipal and regional actors.
- Develop CE pilot initiatives that are tailored to local contexts and aligned with national or regional development priorities, ensuring realistic timelines, stakeholders, and deliverables.
- Apply data-driven monitoring, reporting, and evaluation methods to assess CE project outcomes, including environmental, social, and economic indicators.
- Build institutional and policy-oriented frameworks that support CE scaling, replication, and long-term integration into regional planning and governance structures.

Mentoring Program:

By the end of Level 3 modules, participants will be able to:

- Analyze country-specific and EU-aligned CE regulations and identify feasible compliance pathways for municipal and regional actors.
- Develop CE pilot initiatives that are tailored to local contexts and aligned with national or regional development priorities, ensuring realistic timelines, stakeholders, and deliverables.

- Apply data-driven monitoring, reporting, and evaluation methods to assess CE project outcomes, including environmental, social, and economic indicators.
- Build institutional and policy-oriented frameworks that support CE scaling, replication, and long-term integration into regional planning and governance structures.

To ensure training quality and practical impact, the learning outcomes are structured to reflect the progressive development of **knowledge**, **skills**, and **competences**. This approach supports both capacity-building and real-world application in municipal Circular Economy (CE) implementation.

Knowledge (what participants will understand)

The training builds a strong foundation of CE-related knowledge, enabling participants to:

- Understand core CE principles, terminology, and policy logic, including the waste hierarchy, resource efficiency, and sustainable service delivery.
- Gain awareness of CE-driven models, including reuse systems, circular procurement, product-as-a-service concepts, and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) mechanisms.
- Become familiar with the broader CE governance landscape, including EU and national strategies, compliance requirements, and available public funding instruments.
- Recognize differences between rural and urban CE contexts, including infrastructure constraints, stakeholder roles, and behavior-change needs.

Skills (what participants will be able to do)

The training strengthens practical and analytical skills that participants can directly apply in their professional roles, such as:

- Applying CE concepts to municipal planning and daily operational challenges.
- Identifying local CE opportunities and formulating feasible solutions for waste prevention, reuse, and recycling improvement.
- Designing circular business and service models suitable for local government contexts.
- Developing stakeholder engagement plans and partnership structures for CE cooperation.
- Using basic digital tools or monitoring approaches to track waste/resource flows and support decision-making.
- Drafting CE project documentation, including implementation roadmaps and funding proposals.

Competences (how participants will apply learning in real contexts)

Beyond knowledge and skills, the training supports long-term competences essential for sustainable municipal and regional CE transition:

- **Strategic competence:** ability to align CE initiatives with local development priorities, policy requirements, and sustainability goals.
- **Operational competence:** capacity to plan and manage CE pilots with defined roles, timelines, and expected outcomes.
- **Collaboration competence:** ability to build cooperation between municipalities, service providers, businesses, NGOs, and communities.

- **Governance competence:** ability to navigate institutional responsibilities, compliance pathways, and coordination mechanisms.
- **Monitoring and reporting competence:** ability to evaluate CE progress through indicators, data collection, and evidence-based reporting.
- **Innovation competence:** readiness to adapt to new circular approaches and scale successful practices through replication and institutional integration.

Progression across modules

The three-level structure ensures a gradual learning progression:

- **Level 1** focuses on **understanding and recognition**, supporting foundational knowledge and awareness.
- **Level 2** focuses on **application and design**, supporting practical municipal-level implementation skills.
- **Level 3** focuses on **strategic integration and scaling**, strengthening regional planning, policy alignment, and institutional development.

Mentoring as competence-building support

The mentoring program is designed as a bridge between learning and implementation. It ensures participants:

- transfer learning outcomes into concrete municipal CE actions,
- receive targeted feedback on feasibility and alignment with policy/funding frameworks,
- improve confidence and capacity to lead CE initiatives beyond the training period.

10. TRAINER GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Trainers are encouraged to contextualize content, use interactive delivery, focus on practicality, employ visual tools, and promote collaboration. Feedback collection and mentorship coordination are integral for continuous improvement.

Trainers play a crucial role in the success of this program. The following guidelines ensure effective facilitation and participant engagement:

- **Contextualization:** Adapt examples and terminology to the local context, using national policy frameworks, funding instruments, and regional case studies.
- **Interactive delivery:** Combine theory with discussion, group exercises, and problem-solving workshops. Avoid lecture-only formats.
- **Focus on practicality:** Emphasize real-life municipal challenges and guide participants in finding feasible solutions through exercises or project simulations.
- **Use visual tools:** Employ diagrams, data visualizations, and infographics to illustrate CE loops, value chains, and stakeholder interactions.

- **Encourage collaboration:** Facilitate group activities that stimulate peer learning and cross-country exchange.
- **Mentorship alignment:** Coordinate with mentors to ensure participants' post-training implementation plans are realistic and aligned with course objectives.
- **Diversity of learning styles:** Mix presentation, role play, digital tools, and site visits to accommodate various learning preferences.
- **Continuous improvement:** Collect participant feedback after each session to refine training materials and approaches.

11. EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

To ensure both the **quality of training and mantoring delivery** and the **long-term impact of the programme**, a multi-layered evaluation system will be applied. This approach will assess the effectiveness of preparation and organisation processes, participant learning progress, and the real-world uptake of Circular Economy (CE) initiatives in municipal practice.

1. Quality Assurance of Training Preparation and Organisation

Training quality will be evaluated through systematic monitoring of programme design and implementation, including:

- **Training relevance and alignment:** assessment of how well the training content matches municipal needs, national CE priorities, and the expected competence levels of participants.
- **Training structure and materials:** evaluation of module clarity, learning logic, consistency between objectives and outcomes, and the usefulness of learning resources (presentations, templates, case studies, exercises).
- **Training delivery and facilitation:** feedback on trainer competence, teaching methods, interaction level, and clarity of explanations, as well as the balance between theory and practical application.
- **Organisational quality:** assessment of scheduling, timing, communication, technical arrangements (online/offline), logistics, accessibility of venues/platforms, and overall coordination.
- **Participant engagement and inclusiveness:** monitoring of participation rates, group dynamics, equal involvement of different target groups, and responsiveness to diverse municipal contexts (rural vs. urban).

Evaluation tools will include short post-session feedback forms, structured reflection checklists, and trainer/mentor observations.

2. Learning Progress and Competence Development

Learning outcomes will be measured using both qualitative and quantitative tools to capture changes in knowledge, skills, and confidence levels:

- **Self-assessment tools** to measure perceived progress before and after each module (e.g., confidence in CE planning, governance, monitoring, funding design).

- **Knowledge checks and practical exercises** to assess understanding of CE concepts and ability to apply them in municipal settings.
- **Case-based assignments and scenario tasks** to evaluate problem-solving capacity and readiness to propose municipal CE solutions.
- **Peer feedback activities** to strengthen reflective learning and ensure shared learning between participants from different countries and institutions.

3. Impact Measurement and Follow-Up

The longer-term impact of the programme will be assessed by tracking how training outputs translate into concrete municipal and regional actions. This includes monitoring:

- **Number and type of CE initiatives initiated or strengthened** after the training (e.g., reuse pilots, improved separate collection, circular procurement actions, public awareness campaigns).
- **Quality and feasibility of pilot concepts or project plans** developed during the programme (including stakeholder involvement, budgeting, and monitoring indicators).
- **Evidence of institutional uptake**, such as integration of CE elements into municipal strategies, action plans, or cooperation agreements.
- **Sustainability and replication potential**, assessing whether pilot initiatives show potential for scaling or transfer to other municipalities.

Data sources may include implementation progress reports, mentor assessments, and follow-up surveys conducted after the training period.

4. Mentoring and Continuous Improvement Mechanisms

Mentor reviews and peer evaluations will play a key role in supporting quality improvement and ensuring long-term programme relevance. These will focus on:

- validating the practicality of CE plans and project proposals,
- providing targeted recommendations for improvement,
- identifying recurring gaps or capacity needs across participant groups,
- strengthening cooperation between municipalities and partner institutions.

The collected evaluation results will be used to refine training content, improve delivery methods, and adapt future programme cycles to emerging CE policy developments and stakeholder needs.

Annex I: Overview of Country-Specific Topics

This annex outlines the thematic focus areas for each participating country — Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, and Denmark — as identified through survey findings, stakeholder consultations, and national policy analysis. Each topic area represents a contextual specialization that guides national or regional modules under the Training and Mentoring Curricula.

Lithuania – Local Innovation and Small-Scale Circular Pilots

Lithuania's municipalities show strong motivation toward adopting circular principles but often face limitations in funding, technical resources, and institutional capacity. Therefore, training in Lithuania focuses on **low-cost, practical, and community-driven solutions** that can be implemented even by smaller municipalities or rural regions.

Core topics include:

- Development of **micro-pilot projects** (e.g., community composting, green waste valorisation, or material reuse in local infrastructure).
- Promotion of **citizen engagement** and awareness-building initiatives supporting circular lifestyles.
- Use of **shared municipal resources** and inter-municipal cooperation for scaling CE practices.
- Introduction of **monitoring tools** for tracking waste reduction and resource efficiency in local projects.

Expected impact:
Municipalities gain capacity to implement simple but impactful CE initiatives, integrate community participation, and establish groundwork for scaling circular practices regionally.

Poland – Policy Alignment, Construction Waste, and Financing Tools

Polish municipalities operate within a dynamic but complex regulatory environment where the transition to CE requires better integration between **national policy frameworks**, **municipal planning**, and **financing mechanisms**. The Polish specialization module therefore focuses on translating policy into actionable steps.

Core topics include:

- **Regulatory compliance and policy integration** — understanding CE-related legal obligations at EU and national levels.
- **Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste management** — developing systems for reuse, recycling, and valorisation of construction materials.

- **Circular funding mechanisms** — exploring regional and EU funding schemes (e.g., Cohesion Fund, LIFE Programme, national CE funds).
- **Industrial symbiosis** — promoting cooperation between industries and municipalities for shared resource efficiency.

Expected impact:
Participants strengthen their ability to navigate CE legislation, prepare project proposals, and collaborate with the private sector to secure funding and implement CE-oriented infrastructure.

Sweden – Technological Innovation and Data-Driven Circular Systems

Swedish municipalities already demonstrate a high level of maturity in CE practices, supported by digital infrastructure and strong environmental policies. Training in Sweden emphasizes **innovation, digital monitoring, and circular system optimization**.

Core topics include:

- **Smart waste and resource management systems** — leveraging IoT, data analytics, and AI tools to track and optimize resource flows.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) practices** — case studies from successful Swedish applications and methods for continuous improvement.
- **Innovation ecosystems** — cooperation with research institutions and startups to pilot new CE technologies.
- **Performance measurement** — developing and applying CE indicators for policy and operational assessment.

Expected impact:
Participants enhance their skills in data-driven management, innovation scaling, and integrating new technologies into circular planning and municipal governance.

Denmark – Regulation-to-Practice Transition and Circular Procurement

Denmark serves as a frontrunner in CE policy, emphasizing practical implementation and sustainable procurement. Danish training modules translate regulatory ambition into actionable tools for municipalities and service providers.

Core topics include:

- **Circular public procurement** — integrating CE principles into tendering processes and supplier evaluation criteria.
- **Regulation-to-practice transition** — operationalizing CE policies at the local level through concrete service redesign.
- **Market creation for secondary materials** — encouraging reuse and remanufacturing within municipal and regional markets.

- **Behavioural and organizational change** — strategies to engage public employees, citizens, and businesses in CE practices.

Expected impact:
Municipalities gain practical know-how to use procurement as a driver for CE innovation, foster local markets for circular products, and bridge the gap between regulation and day-to-day implementation.

Cross-Cutting Focus

Across all partner countries, the following themes connect the regional specializations:

- **Collaboration and knowledge sharing** between municipalities and across borders.
- **Financing mechanisms and project development** for CE initiatives.
- **Policy coherence** between local, national, and EU frameworks.
- **Monitoring and evaluation tools** for tracking CE progress.

Together, these elements ensure that the Circular MuSe Training and Mentoring Curricula remain both locally relevant and transnationally comparable, supporting the shared goal of accelerating circular transition in municipal services.

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Annex II: Suggested Training Materials and Resources

To support trainers and participants, the following materials and resources are recommended:

Core References:

- Ellen MacArthur Foundation. *Circular Economy in Cities: Practical Toolkit.*
- European Environment Agency. *Municipal Waste Management and the Circular Economy.*
- European Commission. *Circular Economy Action Plan (2020).*
- OECD. *Municipal Circular Economy Strategies and Financing Tools.*

Case Studies and Examples:

- *Helsingborg (Sweden):* Smart waste management and data-driven CE systems.
- *Aarhus (Denmark):* Green procurement and behavioural change campaigns.
- *Gdansk (Poland):* Construction waste reuse pilots and regional symbiosis.
- *Panevėžys (Lithuania):* Green waste valorisation and rural–urban integration.

Practical Tools:

- CE project design templates and funding proposal outlines.
- Partnership mapping and stakeholder engagement checklists.
- CE readiness self-assessment tool for municipalities.
- Monitoring and KPI framework for circular performance.

Digital Resources:

- Online repositories (e.g., Circular Cities Hub, EU Green Deal resources).
- Virtual training platform for participants.
- Shared library of training slides, reading materials, and case videos.