

## **Integrated Action Plans and Training Course for Circular Land Management**

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### **1 ABSTRACT**

The project CircUse–Circular Flow Land Use Management is financed from the program CENTRAL EUROPE. Twelve partners are preparing the concept of Circular Flow Land Use Management, which represents an integrative policy and governance approach. This would presuppose a changed land use philosophy with regard to land utilization. Such modified land use philosophy can be expressed with the slogan “avoid–recycle–compensate”.

To implement the CircUse philosophy the developing of action plans on a local level with the circular flow land use management concept included can be an appropriate way. Action plans have been initiated by the CircUse partners countries taking part in the project. An element of an action plan can be the development of institutional models or rather management structures–case studies will show ways to develop such structures. Furthermore an initiated training course to circular flow land use management fosters awareness and implementation of the philosophy. The following text will give an overview of above mentioned activities which support sustainable land management.

### **2 ACTION PLANS TO CIRCULAR FLOW LAND USE MANAGEMENT**

In general action plans represent a package of measures, which can contribute to promote more sustainable land use in our cities and regions. The action plans help to steer brownfield redevelopment and promote land utilization with specific focus on the new European funding period 2014-2020.

The project CircUse developed action plans in six partners countries to influence urbanised land governance, planning, information, organization, stakeholders’ co-operation, marketing of the inner development potential, funding and budgeting arrangements. These action plans have covered various scales of operation, ranging from a site-based plan to a regional plan. Plans were produced in English and in the local language, hence, partners can share on a transnational basis the experiences they have gained while preparing and negotiating their action plan. These plans demonstrate six various approaches to sustainable urbanised land use management with a common aim: more sustainable urbanised land use.

The integrated action plans for circular land use management of urban regions represent a package of measures which can be implemented or initiated locally. These have been prepared for the project pilot areas of the Ústí NUTS III region (CZ), for the Trnava microregion (SK), for the region of Voitsberg (AT) and for Middle Saxony (DE). They promote the increased use of existing urbanised land and contribute to brownfield redevelopment strategies. The packages of measures usually aim at reducing zoning for development of undeveloped land and exploiting the inner development potential of urbanised land. In addition, two other pilot areas have also prepared action plans but with different focuses. In Asti (IT) the focus of the action plan has been put on implementing a new tool, the Spatial Development Support System (SDSS), which will be tested on Asti’s pilot case. In Piekary (PL) the focus falls on the selection and site specific planning with investments for the greening of a brownfield. The action plan is prepared for the district of Piekary, where the funding for the plan has been allocated. This plan includes measures for economic and social reactivation of the post-industrial district coping with all negative effects of the past with all the sites’s constraints keeping it currently unusable.

The integrated land use management action plans for circular land use management are informal instruments which establish circular flow land use management on a short and mid-term basis. The plans result from discussions among stakeholders on the aims of land use policy and incorporate the outcomes from various analyses of existing local, regional and national governance instruments. Assessments of spatial and organisational shortcomings were also considered. These plans reflect the willingness of participating

stakeholders to work jointly on improving the sustainability of urbanised land use within their jurisdiction or interest area. The plans help to unify the interests of various local stakeholders and help to set up common goals, identify measures, and find funding sources which would lead to the fulfilment of the identified goals. Also the documents allocate responsibility and budgets for realising these measures. Such plans are normally closely linked with established instruments of formal and informal spatial planning. However, the action plans also list stakeholder responsibilities, aspects of organisational and management processes, as well as performance reviews and a time schedule for implementation.

Preparation of an action plan is a process which leads to specific packages of measures necessary for the short and mid-term timeframe to make progress towards accomplishing the policy aims of sustainable urban and regional land use. Integrated action plans are highly implementation-oriented. They cannot and should not replace current planning but instead the measures depicted in the action plans should be combined with spatially relevant formal and informal planning or existing sectoral planning and concept planning. One of the most important benefits of the action plans is that they provide a framework for transparency in decision making processes, a flow of information, and an improved communication structures.

The approach proposed is multidisciplinary, based on economic, social and environmental aspects: so the potential partnerships are high in number and importance. Such partnerships are moving towards a more strategic and collaborative approach, ensuring more intense relationships able to create additional value to the project. This shift represents an opportunity to maximize benefits for partners and citizens. This kind of approach is used for collaborative activities, including the development of interoperability, cross-sectorial participation and new opportunities offered by innovative solutions.

### **3 INSTITUTIONAL MODELS FOR CIRCULAR FLOW LAND USE MANAGEMENT**

The success of circular flow land use initiatives is closely linked to the availability of adequate operators and financial tools to implement these policies. Given the fact that private initiative is limited, the creation of specific agencies is recommended. Even though land management is a main component of regular local government actions, the implementation of the circular flow land use management concept still needs a management structure. The creation of specific agencies could be an important tool to assure the delivery of a better public service in close relation with private stakeholders.

Over the years many different models for these agencies have been tested in Europe, with differing structures (100% public / 100% private / public-private mix); legal forms (private limited / private not-for profit / charitable etc.<sup>1</sup>); geographical boundaries (from site-specific to city / municipality, sub-regional or regional areas); and operational remits (from basic site remediation & recycling, through to responsibility for wider economic and/or social responses).

#### **3.1 Management structures in Europe**

Specific models for operators in Europe are the creation of development agencies, such as the legal structures of “Etablissement Public Foncier” in France and the “Land Restoration Trust” in the United Kingdom and the former regional development company North Rhine-Westphalia (Landes-entwicklungs-gesellschaft Nordrhhein-Westfalen (LEG) (NRW-URBAN) with the “Grundstücksfonds in North Rhine-Westphalia.

The three selected case studies highlight innovative institutional solutions of circular land management on inter-municipal and regional level. They go beyond purely marketing or project-oriented approaches. Common features are:

- The main goal is a sustainable urban and regional development
- They are not based on individual projects or individual portfolios
- They prepare the development of problematic sites
- All institutions are not profit-driven and nor complementary and they are not competing with the private housing sector

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<sup>1</sup> There is some debate as to how truly ‘private sector’ these agencies are. It is true to say that they are created by the state and the extent of their true independence is very often dictated by the prevailing structures of governance; however it is accepted that many do operate on a daily basis independently of other government/state agencies.

- They are dependent on the close cooperation of local authorities
- They have access to ongoing public funding programs (eg. from ERDF), which remain unchanged
- They are set-up as "interdisciplinary teams" where, alongside the planning qualifications, qualifications for environmental remediation, legal, administrative and financial sciences are also involved

### **3.2 Development of management structures in the CircUse project**

The development of this management structure could be also part of a regional CircUse action plan (see above). Such a structure should have defined competences, a business agenda and a mission statement that matches the regional development plan. These tasks can be either fulfilled by an already existing or by a newly established organisation. Both approaches have their pros and cons. In the CircUse project both models will be tested—because it develops innovative agency models in the Silesian region in Poland and the region Voitsberg in Austria.

In the City of Piekary in Poland, circular flow land use management objectives will be implemented through the existing Piekary Śląskie Industrial and Technological Park EkoPark Ltd. (short term: Ekopark) organisation. This organization in Piekary will be used to implement a new land management function. The aim of the CircUse activities in Piekary is the start of operations for the management structure to carry out the tasks of investment planning, maintenance of a land management database, and public awareness activities. The main responsibility of this CircUse pilot project will be the establishment of a future concept for a 130 hectare former mining area as well as a new definition of tasks and proposals for new management structures to foster land revitalisation. Above all, a feasibility study will describe the business agenda for land management and the organisational integration.

In the Austrian pilot region of Voitsberg in Styria, a new land management agency will be established. Similarly, the Voitsberg region was also a former mining area. For this region, an operational structure and a business plan for a new land management agency will be developed. In this CircUse pilot project so far, main regional stakeholders were identified, tasks defined, and the work on a management concept has started. The business plan depicts the business agenda of the future agency and a sustainable financing plan. The management agency's main responsibilities will be data monitoring, development of an overall concept, initiation of sustainable projects, transfer of information, and awareness building. The aim of the CircUse activities in the region of Voitsberg is the presentation of a model agreement for setting up a land management agency that is transferable to other PPs.

The evaluation of the activities and experiences of the pilot regions Piekary and Voitsberg and the comparison with other good European practices will result in a model for appropriate management structures in Central Europe. Based on the experience from Piekary and Voitsberg an implementation concept for the other CircUse pilot regions will be developed. All CircUse partner regions will select and discuss proposals on adequate local/regional institutional models based on the European examples and first steps of the pilots in Silesia and Styria.

In general the conjunction with instruments of a circular flow land use management “co-operation” and “organisation/management” and “management” are important fields of activity. Therefore new structures of organisation, management and co-operation were developed and tested in the framework of CircUse project.

## **4 CIRCUSE TRAINING COURSE**

Besides new management structures, it is also important to disseminate the circular flow land use philosophy to those actively engaged in land management activities. To do this, training course material concerning circular flow land use management was developed within the CircUse project and is offered to local authorities and other stakeholders for adaptation and reuse. The development of training materials was based on the realisation and evaluation of a “pilot training course”. The pilot training course “Land use of tomorrow in the region of Voitsberg” was held in May 2011 in Baernbach (Austria). This step was important to gain practical experience regarding the functioning of a previously prepared training course method. Based on the experience of the Baernbach pilot training course, a “Guideline for the preparation of a CircUse training course in partner countries” was developed. The guideline for a sustainable land management

training course is aimed at the promotion of the idea of circular flow land use management in EU member states.

The guideline includes training course materials consisting of six modules. These modules include strategic and instrumental aspects of a circular flow land use management in the fields of urban and regional planning, soil and land use information, co-operation (e.g. municipalities, public and private partners), funding programmes and schemes, as well as economic incentives. The course material has a transnational character since it will be able to be transferred and used as a training support in other regions and also in other projects concerning sustainable brownfield and greenfield management. The following table lists the names, aims and contents of the six course modules.

Modules	Aims	Contents
Land use impact – problem analysis and interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduction to the issue of circular flow land use management</li> <li>general awareness raising referring to problems with land take development</li> <li>identification of interdependency and interdisciplinary nature of the problems associated with uncontrolled land taking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>land consumption in the relevant country (e.g. brownfields: inventory and potentials, settlement development and follow-up costs for infrastructure)</li> <li>objectives of the national sustainable strategy (if existing) or other relevant political documents of the relevant country</li> <li>current situation of the state, region or city</li> <li>outcome and results of land consumption in the last decades (ecological, social and urban development problems)</li> </ul>
Principle, aims and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understanding of the methodical approach of circular flow land use management</li> <li>clarification of terms referring to the method</li> <li>show the additional value of CircUse to conventional planning traditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>principle of circular flow land use management</li> <li>objectives of circular flow land use management</li> <li>strategy of circular flow land use</li> <li>management scopes of action of circular flow land use management</li> </ul>
Pilot municipality – land potentials and development scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development of the future City ...(insert city).. with consideration of the CircUse principle</li> <li>check of inventory potentials for inner development</li> <li>become acquainted with balancing approaches and scenario development to achieve sustainable land management</li> <li>become acquainted with practice tools for the implementation of circular flow land use management in the municipality/region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>circular flow land use management in the municipality</li> <li>land take potentials in the inner area and outskirt area</li> <li>land balances and prognoses for the land demand</li> <li>data management</li> <li>development of planning at municipality level</li> <li>scenario techniques</li> </ul>
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identification of approaches for all relevant administrative and private actors</li> <li>identification and analysis of behaviour patterns, motivation, support and opposition</li> <li>awareness raising for network development and the creation of adequate cooperation and organisational structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spectrum of actors</li> <li>demands for land use</li> <li>setting up of building, types of cooperation and organisational forms</li> </ul>
Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development of understanding regarding the effects, potentials to achieve objectives, and efficiency of single instruments</li> <li>development of knowledge concerning an adequate use of instruments</li> <li>awareness raising for possible new (e.g. economic) steering instruments for sustainable land use management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mix of instruments: fields of action and strategic objectives</li> <li>existing instruments for stronger regional circular flow land use management to foster an inner development</li> <li>additional existing instruments of a circular flow land use management in regions with a growing development dynamics (special issue: protection of free space and regeneration areas)</li> <li>additional existing instruments of a circular flow land use management in regions with a shrinking development dynamics (special issue: re- and deconstruction, renaturation)</li> <li>new instruments for a regional circular flow land use management</li> </ul>
Action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduction to requirements, objectives and the development of action plans</li> <li>knowledge building of a general processing algorithm and adaption approaches on the way to action plans</li> <li>Implementation of objectives und instrument proposals to measurements and activities in the frame of integrated action plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>general information on action plans</li> <li>preconditions for the development of action plans</li> <li>land policy objectives of action plans</li> <li>structure of action plans</li> <li>exemplary measurement packages for a regional action plan</li> </ul>

Table 1: Six modules of the CircUse trainings course for local authorities and stakeholders, German Institute of Urban Affairs

The guideline will help to implement a CircUse training course in EU countries; all users, though, have to adapt and optimise it referring to national or regional purposes. Therefore, the curricula has to be adapted by integrating aspects of policy framework, of the countries' and regions' general grade of development and experience in the field of land use management, the specific situation of land consumption and the schedule

of responsibilities for tasks of land use planning and land use decision making between all relevant stakeholders. It is important to remark that all these aspects are dependent on a relevant urban region or municipality and cannot, therefore, be directly transferred from one to another EU member state.

The adaption of the course material should be implemented on the municipal or regional level. For the organisation of a training course it is important to start planning at an early stage. Preparations should be started five months before the fixed date of the training course. Relevant stakeholders on the regional level will vary from region to region, but will be identified among the following groups:

- land use planners and environmental experts in municipalities and regions,
- decision makers on a municipal and regional level (in administration, as land owner and developer),
- other interested expert audience.

It is always important to include the decision makers and other responsible stakeholders for the relevant issues. In general, the training course should be a two days event. It is suggested to seek the involvement of an experienced moderator for the implementation of such CircUse training course on local level.

The “Guideline for preparation of CircUse training course in partner countries” is published on webpage [www.circuse.eu](http://www.circuse.eu).

## 5 CONCLUSION

The potentials, chances, and preconditions for implementation of a circular flow land use management are ambitious, but sustainable changes of current behavior are needed. Common problems and a diversity of national and regional frameworks could be faced by a common strategy of circular flow land use management. The implementation of circular flow land use management needs an integrated approach which encompasses the wider spectrum of policies and activities providing a package of instruments (policy mix). In this instance, current and potential new instruments should be gathered according to regional differences in framework conditions. Permanent knowledge acquisition and awareness of circular land use management are crucial preconditions for a successful implementation of a strategy for reducing land take and strengthening inner development. The instruments, action plans, and training courses presented above contribute significantly to the improvement of land management by both teaching those causing unsustainable land use and offering a tool for the better management of land.

## 6 REFERENCES

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