# Your Municipality's Sharing Economy Journey

# A 5-Step Guide

This guide contains the insights from the partners of the Interreg Europe project "Good Cities". It outlines a path for municipalities who would like to start engaging in the Sharing Economy. This guide shows the Good Cities pathway to initiate and nurture a thriving local sharing economy, drawing on key learnings, methodologies and actionable steps from the project and is full of links to our own or third-party materials.

**Why start working on the sharing economy?**
Sharing is one of the highest levers of the circular economy, offering a powerful way for a municipality to build a more sustainable and resilient city. By fostering a shift away from overconsumption and towards a more efficient use of resources, sharing initiatives directly reduce waste and environmental strain. This approach not only helps achieve key sustainability goals but also has the potential to strengthen community bonds and to provide equitable access to resources, making a city more vibrant and inclusive.

Partners involved in the Good Cities project have gained a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of the sharing economy and its spread and challenges in Europe. They've also gained insight into ideas and developments related to the sharing economy in other regions, and have received encouragement and knowledge on how to advance the field.

As one partner notes, *"It's easy to explain the idea of the sharing economy, but difficult to achieve real popularity with practical solutions. "*

However, there is significant interest: *"In general, we experience a significantamount of curiosity and openness in regards to the idea of sharing economy. We experience more positive responses than negative."*

# Challenges Faced by Municipalities Across Europe

**Public awareness and cultural acceptance**
According to the Cluster of Bioeconomy and Environment of Western Macedonia and the Region of Western Macedonia, one of the main barriers is still cultural. *"One key barrier we still encounter is limited public awareness and cultural acceptance of the sharing economy, especially when it comes to reusing goods like toys, tools, or household items. Many people still associate 'used' with 'less valuable' or feel hesitant to share due to concerns about quality, hygiene, or ownership."*
– Partner Western Macedonia and CluBE

In addition, partners note that in some regions, especially in parts of Eastern Europe, there is a lingering **distrust of collective ownership.** This stems not only from concerns about control and quality but also from **negative historical experiences** with collective systems, making cultural acceptance even more challenging.

**Making sharing part of everyday life**
As the City of Malmö highlights, the challenge is to move sharing from niche to normal: *"It is difficult to mainstream the sharing economy and making it a recognized part of everyday life (not just a niche) is vital. This requires focus on communication, awareness, and developing long-term maintenance and sustainability models."*
– Partner Malmö

A way forward is to **link sharing to existing municipal strategies** on sustainability, social inclusion, and innovation. By embedding sharing practices into well-established agendas, municipalities can give them greater legitimacy and visibility.

# Challenges Faced by Municipalities Across Europe

**Investments required from cities**
From Tartumaa's perspective, financing remains a challenge.
*"Many solutions lack a successful (private) business model, requiring municipalities to subsidize. Yet, many municipalities are not yet ready for large expenditures needed to normalize sharing practices, also due to a lack of clear understanding on impact and implementation."*
– Tartumaa

**From many ideas to concrete solutions**
As one Hungarian partner explains, the difficulty is often about focus:
*"What we find challenging is narrowing the endless ideas of piloting. Especially, to create pilots that can stand the test of time, that are not just a temporary project."*
– Újbuda

**Measuring success that includes multiple objectives and dimensions**
The challenge in measuring success in the sharing economy for cities is balancing competing priorities. Defining and tracking social, environmental, and economic impacts requires balancing political objectives and an understanding of diverse communities, with the key challenge being the development of reliable metrics for both tangible and intangible ones metrics.

Understanding your baseline involves comprehending your current local context, existing resources and initiatives, community needs, and sharing practices. This step is crucial because a clear understanding of your starting point allows you to identify opportunities, tailor initiatives to specific local conditions, and measure progress effectively. Without a baseline, it's challenging to set realistic goals or evaluate the impact of your sharing economy efforts.

## Actions

Get an understanding of the possible existing services within the sharing economy, such as libraries of things or peer-to-peer sharing. You can find examples from our partners **here.** You can also explore additional resources to deepen your understanding such as existing **knowledge hubs** or other **useful websites.** Create a baseline circular economy understanding of your municipality. Map out your stakeholders and existing services, identifying the varying actors within your ecosystem (such as public, private, research and civic), within this **stakeholder mapping template.** (first: quadruple helix)

Create **a map** pinning the current initiatives. Focus on all circular initiatives, as these could be open to implementing sharing elements in the future.

**Methodology Example:**
Online mapping exercise

# Step 1:

## Understand Your Baseline

Defining a clear goal and vision is essential because it transforms the understanding of the baseline into a shared direction for change. A strong vision of what a successful sharing economy looks like helps cities move beyond scattered initiatives towards a coherent strategy. It is important to establish specific, achievable objectives.

## Actions

Create a sharing city vision for, dream big! Based on your vision, you can start to work out smaller ideas and more concrete goals that tackle your local challenges or address your policy objectives.

Host collaborative workshops with multiple departments and external stakeholders to gather ideas on which user groups, goods or services you want to focus on and to explore ecosystem models.

Create territory- or stakeholder-specific goals to make your sharing strategy more concrete.

Summarise and visualise the key potential, needs and vision

**Methodology Example:**
**Vision workshop Good Cities**



# Step 2:

## Develop a Clear Goal & Vision

Understanding the governance roles your municipality can take provides clarity on how to best support the local sharing economy. By identifying both the role you currently play and the role you should take in the future, you can avoid fragmented efforts, build trust with partners, and ensure initiatives connect to wider goals such as sustainability, inclusion, and wellbeing. The five-role framework developed by Lund University offers useful guidance for this reflection.

As Malmo observed, "The municipality does not always need to be the initiator. In many cases, our role is better suited as enabler, facilitator, communicator, supporting civil society and private actors who are closer to the communities and more agile in implementation. This shift in mindset has helped us focus our efforts on creating the conditions for initiatives to thrive, rather than trying to run them directly."

## Actions

Identify your current role in existing sharing initiatives.

Explore which new roles your municipality could take by learning from global examples.

Organise roundtables with colleagues and/or external stakeholders to gather feedback on the city's role.

**Methodology Example: '5 Roles Policy Framework'** from Lund University & **Bartók Roundtable**



# Step 3:

## Define your municipality's role

While local governments play a significant role in shaping policies, creating infrastructure, and fostering community engagement, the success of the sharing economy relies on the collaboration of various stakeholders, including individuals, businesses, and other organizations. We have to work together with our stakeholders and partners to ensure a healthy and activated sharing economy. Creating a strong and engaged network of stakeholders that are enthusiastic to collaborate with you is key to a successful local sharing economy journey.

## Actions

Based on your initial mapping (Step 1), identify and engage diverse, relevant stakeholders, including cultural institutions, businesses, NGOs, public bodies, and residents, aligning them with your goals to foster both a core group of committed partners and a broader network of actors.
*Example: If your aim is to enable sports equipment for all residents, a relevant stakeholder could be sport organisations.*

Conduct stakeholder surveys and initial dialogues to identify key challenges, potential actors and needs

Establish regular, inclusive stakeholder meetings to ensure bottom-up input and co-creation. As Tartumaa notes, "The meetings have fostered interaction between different municipalities in Tartu County and encouraged them to think more about innovative spatial planning. Additionally, the concept of the 'sharing economy' has now entered the vocabulary of municipal officials."

*"Stakeholders contribute greatly to determine problems to which we should find solutions too, and they are enthusiastic when it comes to brainstorming solutions, new projects."* - Újbuda

**Methodology Example:**
**Stakeholder roundtable Újbuda**



# Step 4:

## Invite the Right Stakeholders

Citizens are at the heart of the sharing economy. Their participation grows when they see clear benefits in their daily lives and feel that their perspectives are valued. Engaging people early helps uncover what they actually want to share, borrow, or rent, and why. It also creates space to address doubts, cultural attitudes, and knowledge gaps. Involving citizens builds trust, strengthens ownership, and ensures that initiatives reflect real needs while raising awareness of the environmental and social impact of sharing.

## Actions

Organise community events and citizen roundtables to discuss which goods and services people want to share.

Use surveys or interactive tools to identify priorities, motivations, and concerns.

Offer education and awareness activities, such as gamification to highlight the personal, financial, and environmental benefits of sharing

*"Through our work in GOOD CITIES, we've learned that the sharing economy of goods thrives when it's convenient, community-based, and visibly impactful. Citizens are more likely to participate when they see clear personal and environmental benefits—such as saving money, reducing waste, or helping others."*
- CLuBe and Western Macedonia

**Methodology Example:  Gamification in Action: Teaching Kids the Sharing Economy with Wheel of Fortune 🎡 Greece Good Cities Day**

# Step 5:

## Engage your citizens

# Moving forward

**Implement, Learn & Adapt:** Each step has iterations and the order may vary. Staying flexible to continuously adapt to your local situation is key. Engage in gathering feedback, and be prepared to adapt your approach based on real-world insights and new initiatives and market developments. Build trust to encourage long-term engagement of your local stakeholders in the planning, implementation and monitoring of sharing solutions.

Sharing has always existed, but its formal inclusion in our systems is a recent and creative development. As the world continues to change, be bold in exploring novel approaches within your city and look to other examples for inspiration.

No perfect model exists, but there are many ways and opportunities to create one that inspires, supports and boosts your local sharing economy.

*"Trust-building through transparent communication and small, visible wins encourages long-term participation. We've also learned that flexibility is crucial—adapting to local needs and feedback strengthens impact."*
- Partner CluBE

# Moving forward

## Promising practices and sharing economy examples

Drawing inspiration from successful practices around the world, you can learn valuable lessons on how to effectively navigate the complexities of the sharing economy and create a positive impact in your own city. You can find **here** a library of successes or check-out the examples below:

- **Large-scale sports equipment sharing lockers** (e.g., **Piffl**) and the **Digital Kiosk project** show potential.

- **Smarta Kartan,** Loop2, Miutcánk (community resource sharing platforms) are promising for increasing sharing and enabling people to collaborate.

- Tilburg's **Toy Library** exemplifies how reuse, social inclusion, and education can be combined to give new life to donated toys, support families, and reduce waste.

- **Initiatives** where the local authority acts as a **matchmaker**, such as roundtables like the **Ùjbuda Community Roundtable**, and motivates ecosystem actors to adapt sharing practices, especially with a **community-building focus**, are highly effective.

- **Library of Things** models let people access a wide range of goods for low fees while significantly cutting down on waste. A great example is **La Manivelle** in Geneva, which saved **543 tons of CO2 in 2024.**

# Moving forward

## What is the Good Cities project? And how can I engage or follow?

The Interreg Europe project GOOD CITIES drives innovative sharing economy services for goods and spaces in urban areas. Our mission is to improve resource efficiency and equitable access by embedding sharing systems into city life, cutting consumption and reducing Europe's ecological footprint. Working with local stakeholders and policy tools, we reduce the flow of goods, limit environmental impacts, and at the same time promote well-being and social cohesion. Six EU public authorities clarify their roles, build governance frameworks, and design strategies based on proven practices. Together, they equip cities with policies and tools that foster trust, cooperation, and the infrastructure to embed sharing in daily life.

## If you want to know what comes after Step 5: Find out with us, join our journeys:

Find us on **Linkedin** or on our **Project Website,** and follow the work of our partners:

- Association of Municipalities of Tartu County (EE)
- City of Jyväskylä (FI)
- City of Malmö (SE)
- Cluster of Bioeconomy and Environment of Western Macedonia (EL)
- Eutropian (AT)
- Municipality of Újbuda (District XI of Budapest) (HU)
- Region of Western Macedonia (EL)
- Tilburg Municipality (NL)

Interreg Europe | Co-funded by the European Union

GOOD CITIES