

# Circular City Labs



## Testing reusable packaging systems in cities

### Context

Cities are a major origin of waste production due to their high population density, consumption rates and industrial activities. As urban populations grow and economies develop, the amount of waste generated in cities tends to increase.

Reusable packaging systems are an important part of the circular economy. They address the root of the problem by ensuring that less packaging is used and less waste is produced. Further, they conserve resources and prevent greenhouse gases emissions. Reusable packaging systems can be set up in different sectors and contexts, such as the gastronomy, large-scale events, retail, and e-commerce. Women play a crucial role in environmentally sustainable consumption, making 70 to 80 per cent of household purchase decisions. Moreover, female entrepreneurs can significantly contribute to new business areas of the circular economy. Therefore, women should be involved in the transition to a circular economy.

### Project goal

The project aims at a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through waste prevention. Reusable packaging systems are tested and the participation of women in the local circular economies is strengthened.



**Reusable packaging is designed to be used multiple times for the same purpose for which it was conceived. Reuse systems employ a circular system where packaging can be used, cleaned, refilled, and reused, over and over again. Reusable packaging is not transformed for a different purpose, and it is supported by a functional system that enables the package to repeatedly serve the same purpose.**



*WWF (2022). WWF Position: The Role of Reuse in the Circular Economy for Plastics.*

### Target group

The Circular City Labs invite local businesses and especially female entrepreneurs and leaders, city administrations, academia as well as civil society to promote reusable packaging systems and the participation of women in the local economy.

### Selected countries

- Albania
- Colombia
- Georgia



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## Approach

The project applies a multi-stakeholder approach, addressing the private and public sector in up to four selected cities. To support the development of reusable packaging systems and women's participation the following activities are implemented in each city:

**Collaboration with public sector:** Depending on their individual needs, municipalities could receive trainings on circular economy and reusable packaging. In general, the project aims to identify the potential role of cities to enable the implementation of reuse and to explore incentives and regulations to prevent packaging waste and to strengthen women's participation.

**Collaboration with private sector:** In each Circular City Lab, the project carries out accelerator programmes targeting local, preferably female-led companies that are interested to integrate reusable packaging into their business models.

For 4 months, 14 SMEs per city receive training on leadership, the circular economy and reusable packaging systems as well as support to develop their reuse solution. One women-led business will then be chosen in each city to pilot their idea for 8 months. Selected solutions for reusable packaging are primarily tested for feasibility, consumer acceptance and financial viability.

**Communication and dialogue:** The project promotes the concept of reusable packaging systems in international and national contexts. It fosters the dialogue and collaboration between companies as well as municipalities on lessons learnt and enabling conditions for reuse systems and the participation of women in these businesses.

**Feminist development policy:** Circular City Labs will be implemented considering the feminist development policy focus set by the German Government. Each activity will have a specific focus on gender equality and the participation of women in the local circular economies.



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