

# THRIVE!

Designing circular  
economies for people  
and planet

Transformative journeys to make  
cities thrive!

An aerial photograph of a modern urban park. The park features a mix of green spaces, including lawns and clusters of trees. A paved walkway runs through the park, and a road with a motorcycle is visible in the foreground. A white fence separates the park from the road. In the background, there are modern buildings and a large open area. A small white 'C' logo is visible in the top right corner of the image.

1

WHY  
**CIRCULAR AND  
REGENERATIVE  
CITIES**

# CITIES ARE THE EPICENTRE OF OUR GLOBAL SYSTEM...



**50%**

of global population  
lives in urban areas



**80%**

of global GDP is  
generated in cities



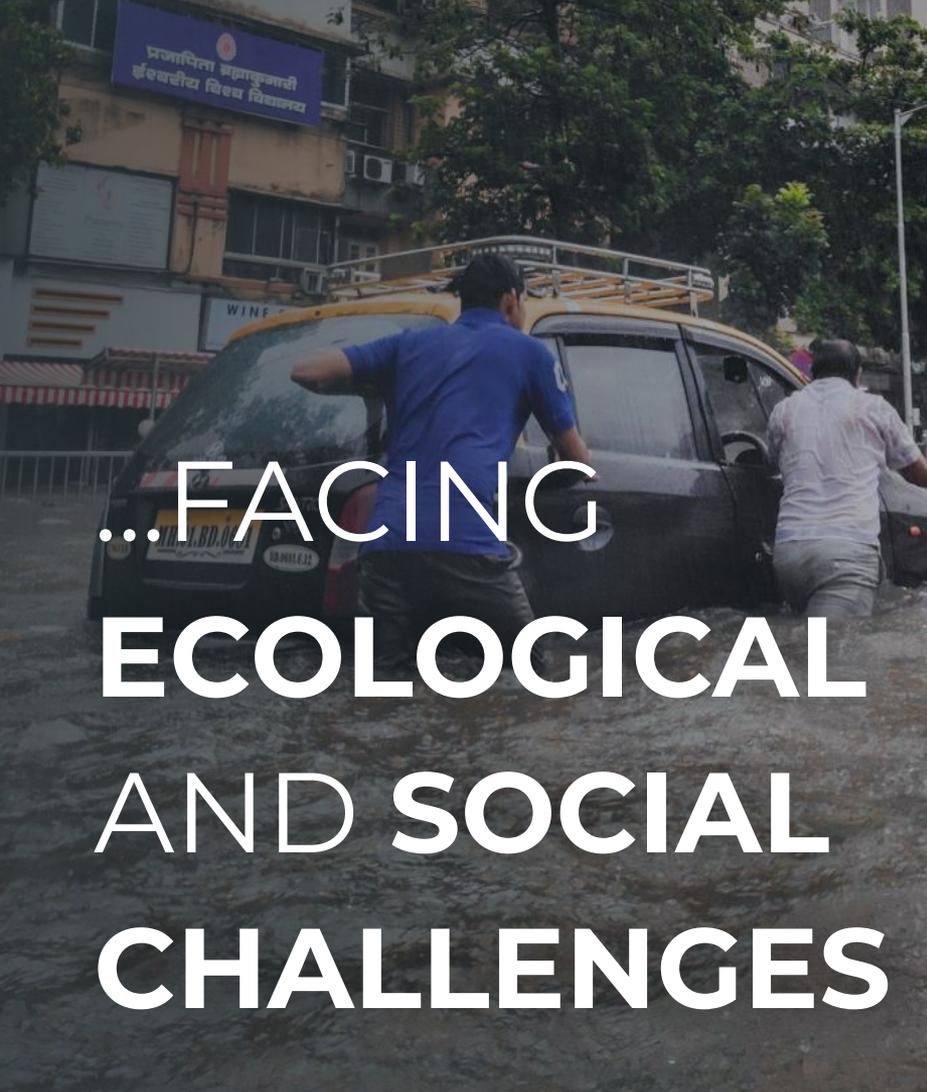
**2/3**

of global energy  
is used in cities

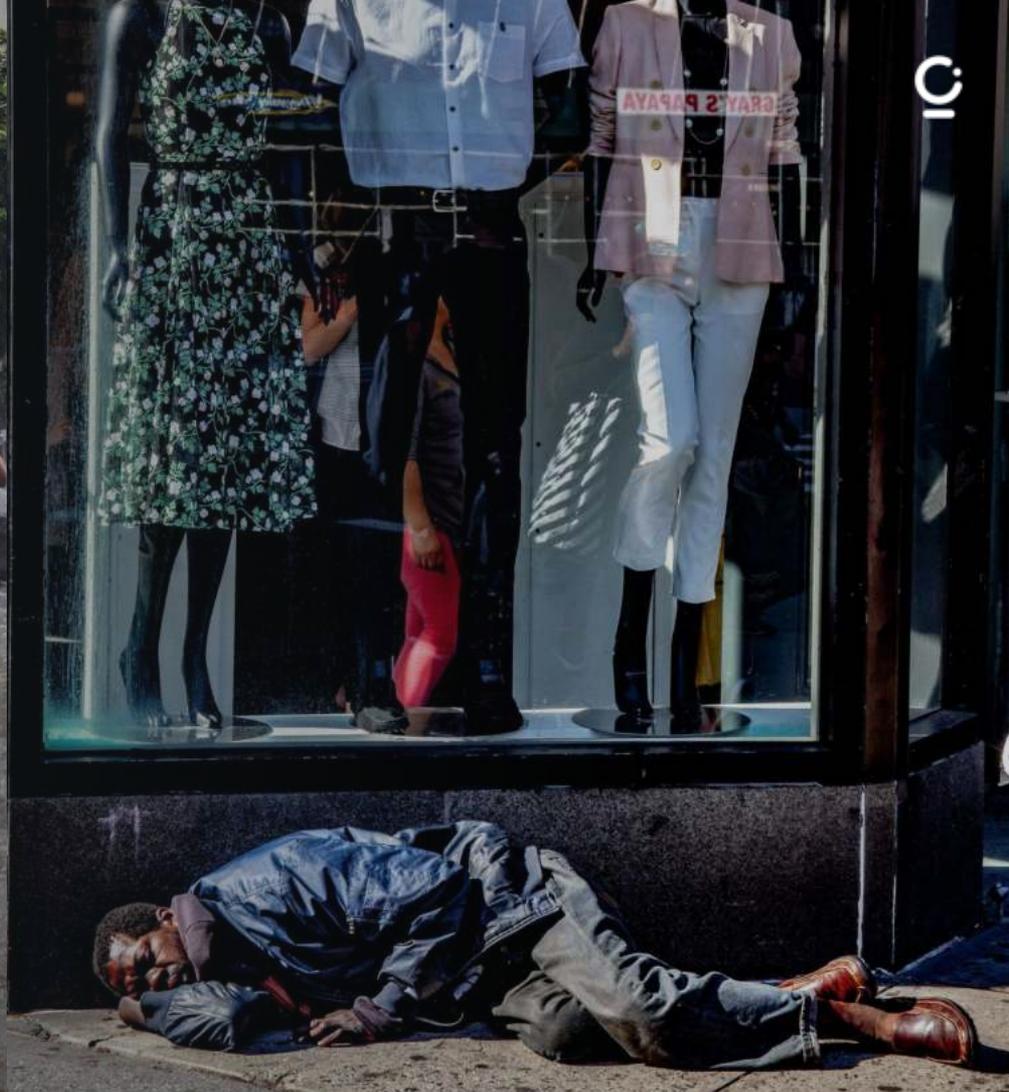


**70%**

of global resources  
are used in cities



...FACING  
ECOLOGICAL  
AND SOCIAL  
CHALLENGES



# AT THE CURRENT PACE, WE ARE HEADING TOWARDS...



A world that is  
**3-6 °C warmer**

High sea levels will engulf coastal regions, forcing nearly half the global population inland: we could see 2 billion climate refugees by 2100 and our growing population competing for space on a shrinking globe.



Growing  
**inequalities**  
across our systems

One in four urban residents (over 1 billion people) live in informal settlements. Climate breakdown will cause the number of displaced and vulnerable people to double to over 200 million each year by 2050. Despite the poorest 50% of the globe being responsible for only 7% of global GHG emissions, they will bear the brunt of rising temperatures (UN, 2020).



**Over-consuming**  
Earth's resources

According to latest projections, the global population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050. The equivalent of almost three planets could be required to provide the natural resources needed to sustain current lifestyles (UN, 2020).

Traditional institutional  
structures and siloed  
way of working...



...limit opportunities  
for **systemic solutions**  
and **deep transformation.**

# CHALLENGES CITIES HAVE:

## INNOVATIVE SYSTEMIC CHANGES ARE REQUIRED

“ We have the mandate to develop a circular economy strategy for the next 5 year.

“ The impact of our city goes far beyond its boundaries. The products we consume here have been produced and transported from elsewhere.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES HINDER INNOVATION

“ We want to be working together and not feel like we are competing.

“ We are not aware of the strategies developed by the other departments on Climate, Health, Education etc.

## THE CIRCULAR TRANSITION SHOULD BE A JUST ONE

“ Our agenda needs to talk about jobs, education, health, and climate change.

“ We want to make the circular economy accessible for everyone and not only for those who can afford it.

An aerial photograph of a city, showing a mix of modern high-rise buildings and lush green parks. The buildings are primarily on the right side, while the left side is dominated by large green spaces with circular paths and trees. The text 'IT'S TIME TO REDESIGN OUR CITIES' is overlaid in large white letters across the center of the image.

IT'S TIME TO  
REDESIGN  
OUR CITIES

# 2

## OUR APPROACH



A photograph of four children playing in a lush green forest. One child in a green shirt is jumping high with arms raised, while three other children in blue and red shirts are also jumping or running around. The scene is filled with tall trees and vibrant grass, creating a sense of nature and play.

We propose a  
**circular and  
regenerative**  
economic model that  
puts **people and  
planet at its heart**

# APPLYING HOLISTIC THINKING

To address the complex **social and environmental challenges** that cities face and foster collaboration beyond silos, we have designed a **transformative process** that combines the **Doughnut economic model** with **circular thinking**



# WHAT IS THE DOUGHNUT ECONOMIC MODEL?

The Doughnut model, developed by Kate Raworth, helps finding an answer to humanity's 21st century goal:

*How can we meet the needs of all within the means of our planet?*

In other words, to ensure that **no one falls short on life's essentials** (from food and housing to healthcare and political voice), while ensuring that collectively **we do not overshoot our pressure on Earth's life-supporting systems**, on which we fundamentally depend – such as a stable climate, fertile soils, and a protective ozone layer.

The **ecological ceiling** consists of nine planetary boundaries, as set out by Rockstrom et al, beyond which lie unacceptable environmental degradation and potential tipping points in Earth systems. The twelve dimensions of the **social foundation** are derived from internationally agreed minimum social standards, as identified by the world's governments in the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. Between social and planetary boundaries lies an environmentally safe and socially just space in which humanity can thrive.

(Source: [Kate Raworth/Doughnut](#))



## Part V: REFLECTIONS

*What are the three most important insights?*  
*What was valuable?*  
*What did you learn?*  
*What new insights did you gain about Amsterdam's City targets?*

**HOW DO WE WORK  
WITH CITIES?**



# OUR APPROACH

We have developed a highly participatory process that uses the Doughnut model as a tool and empowers city stakeholders to create thriving cities by designing circular strategies that integrate social and environmental considerations.



## Breaking through traditional city silos

We bring together different city stakeholders to explore the synergies between the different city agendas, and create a unifying vision and narrative for the city.



## Offering a systems view

We help cities to understand their global impacts and design circular strategies that put people and planet at their heart.



## Translating circular strategies into pilot projects

By engaging and activating the local network of changemakers that implement them on the ground

# APPLYING THE DOUGHNUT MODEL TO CITIES

**SOCIAL**

**ECOLOGICAL**

**LOCAL**

1. What would it mean for the people of this city to thrive?

2. What would it mean for this city to thrive within its natural habitat?

**GLOBAL**

4. What is this city's impact on the wellbeing of people worldwide?

3. What is this city's impact on the health of the whole planet?



3

OUR  
**OFFERING**



The Thrive journey is a multi-stakeholder process of co-developing a transformative circular economy strategy for a city or region.



### **BRING THE IDEAS TO PRACTICE**

By activating the local network of changemakers, we identify who should act and how in order to implement transformative pilot projects on the ground



### **ENVISION A THRIVING CITY**

Using the Doughnut model as a compass, we define a holistic vision and a unifying narrative for the city, linking circular economy with other agendas



### **RETHINK CITY'S CIRCULAR GOVERNANCE**

Diving deeper into the institutional design of the city, we explore ways to establish innovative forms of collaboration within and beyond the City



### **DESIGN TRANSFORMATIVE CIRCULAR STRATEGIES**

Together with the city stakeholders we co-design circular strategies that integrate social and ecological considerations, on local and global levels



### **MEASURE WHAT MATTERS**

Using the holistic thinking of the Doughnut, we develop new metrics to monitor the city's progress towards the circular vision



Gemeente  
Amsterdam

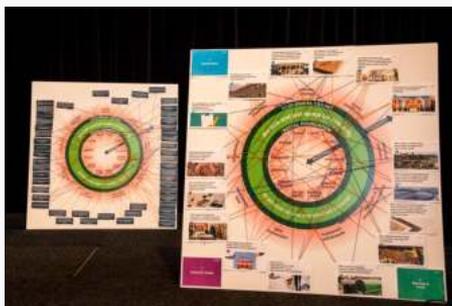


Duration: 10 - 12 months

#### OUTCOME

### A transformative circular economy vision and strategy

- **Circular strategies** integrating social and environmental considerations.
- **Empowered city stakeholders** with circular thinking
- **Aligned city agendas** under a common vision and narrative.
- **Engaged network** of changemakers.
- **Pilot projects** showcasing the vision on the ground.



Some cities are further on their circular journeys and have already prioritized key areas of impact, as for example Food or Construction. For these cities, we offer the "Deep Dive" journey, a participatory process focused on a specific value chain. We use the Doughnut model to understand the complete value chain of a sector and its interconnected local and global impacts on people and planet in order to design transformative circular strategies and projects.



Duration: 4 - 6 months

#### OUTCOME

#### Example: Holistic Food Sector

- **Full analysis of city's food system**, exploring its broader social, ecological and global impacts.
- **Transformative circular food strategies** with strong focus on people and planet.
- **Empowered policy makers** to design holistic strategies and translate them to projects.



A group of people are gathered around a long wooden table in a meeting room. In the foreground, a woman with glasses and a patterned scarf is pointing at a document on the table. Other people are seated around the table, some looking at the document and others talking. The room has white chairs and a metal cart in the background.

4

## OUR WORK IN PRACTICE



# THE EXAMPLE OF AMSTERDAM

# AMSTERDAM CITY DOUGHNUT\*

With the ambition to become a fully circular city by 2030, Amsterdam used the Doughnut model to develop circular strategies for the following sectors:

## Construction Food Consumer goods

- The City integrated priorities like **jobs and just transition**, **health**, **education**, **climate change**, and **biodiversity** into their circular economy strategy.
- Amsterdam analyzed for the first time its **impacts** on the planet and livelihoods worldwide **based on the consumption of products** by its residents and developed a new set of **social and environmental indicators** to **measure prosperity and success** through the Amsterdam City Doughnut\*.

*\*The Amsterdam City Doughnut was developed in partnership with DEAL and C40*



# A DYNAMIC CO-CREATION PROCESS

**8** months

**60+** City officials

**150+** local businesses, experts,  
and organizations

**10+** different municipal departments

**6** workshops





## STRATEGY EXAMPLE

The city of Amsterdam developed a strategy to **shorten the food value chain** by:

- Providing more space in the city for urban and peri-urban food production
- Building a more direct link between producers and residents
- Creating awareness & education campaigns for healthy and sustainable food diets
- Investing in innovation for local circular agriculture

# CITIES WE HAVE PILOTED THIS APPROACH WITH



## OUR PARTNERS



## RESOURCES

- [Creating City Portraits Methodology](#)
- [The City Portrait Canvas Tool](#)
- [Downscaling the Doughnut to the City](#)

## MEDIA MENTIONS

### Amsterdam to embrace 'doughnut' model to mend post-coronavirus economy

Dutch officials and think tanks committed to use guide to help city thrive in balance with planet

- Coronavirus - all updates
- See all our coronavirus news coverage



[Amsterdam to embrace 'doughnut' model to mend post-coronavirus economy](#)

TIME 2030

# BACK TO WORK

### Amsterdam Is Embracing a Radical New Economic Theory to Help Save the Environment. Could It Also Replace Capitalism?



[Amsterdam Is Embracing a Radical New Economic Theory to Help Save the Environment. Could it replace Capitalism?](#)



[How the Dutch are reshaping their post-pandemic utopia](#)

**DO YOU WANT TO BE ONE OF THESE PIONEERING CITIES?**  
THEN CONTACT US!



**ILEKTRA KOULOUMPI**  
Senior Cities Strategist  
[ilektra@circle-economy.com](mailto:ilektra@circle-economy.com)



Beyond the theory.  
Towards change.