



C3 Circular Advisory Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is C3 and how can my city benefit from what the C3 offers?

The **Circular City Centre – C3** is a competence and resource centre at the European Investment Bank (EIB) that supports EU cities in the circular transition. C3 has been established in cooperation with the European Commission, in the context of [the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#), under co-funding from the EU. On the [C3 web page](#) you can learn about the C3 [Circular City Advisory \(CCA\)](#) and the [Circular Project Advisory \(CPA\)](#) programmes, which are designed to help your city from early-stage exploration of circular principles to preparing circular projects for funding and/or financing and implementation, as further outlined below. By consulting the C3 web page and [LinkedIn page](#) you can stay up to date with the latest C3 and circular city developments, access C3 publications, tools, and other resources, and learn about C3 webinars and other events.

2. What advisory programmes do C3 offer to cities?

C3 offers a comprehensive and complementary range of advisory services and support to cities channelled through **two different programmes**, which both are **free of charge** for cities and public project promoters:

- The three different [Circular City Advisory \(CCA\)](#) programmes each comprises 4 online workshops during a 4-6 month period with some preparatory and homework between workshops. Depending on how far the city has reached in their circular transition, the programme supports cities in developing a circular strategy, a pipeline or a particular circular project towards funding and/or financing and implementation.
- The [Circular Project Advisory \(CPA\)](#) programme offers tailored in-kind support to help public sector promoters develop larger projects (above EUR 20m in project investment cost) towards readiness for funding and/or financing and eventually implementation. The advisory support is delivered to the project promoter (the municipality itself or any other body under public control) by consultants hired and managed by the EIB. The amount of support provided to each project, is agreed on a case-by-case basis and depends on many factors (type and size of project, needs, circularity ambitions, potential for improvement, etc.). Given the overall CPA budget, an indicative figure for the consultancy services delivered to each project is 100 person-days.

You can apply to participate in these programmes by filling out the [Expression of Interest \(Eoi\) form](#) for the [CCA](#) or [CPA](#) programme.

3. Which of the C3 advisory programmes should we select?

C3's advisory programmes complement each other to offer a structured support to a city at each stage of their circular transition. Cities can start with the [CCA programmes](#), where the first CCA 1 programme is aimed at helping the city develop a circular city strategy. The city can then progress to the CCA 2 and/or CCA 3 programmes that focus on developing a circular project pipeline or an individual circular project, as outlined below.

- **CCA 1 First steps - Plan and prepare:** Targeting cities looking to establish a framework strategy for developing various circular economy projects. This entry-level programme helps create the foundational structure for future initiatives.
- **CCA 2 Next steps - Facilitate and act:** Designed for cities ready to brainstorm and develop a pipeline of circular projects within a key sector. This stage focuses on generating and refining ideas for a target sector with circular potential.
- **CCA 3 Final steps - Invest and implement:** Suited for cities that have a well-developed circular project idea and need assistance in finalising and preparing the project for funding and/or funding and implementation. This stage supports the transition from concept to action.

For cities that have a larger (cost above EUR 20m) and more mature circular project that needs further development towards implementation in terms of circularity and readiness for funding and/or financing, the [CPA programme](#) offers tailored support addressing the specific project needs. This programme aims to help the city prepare a project to a stage where it can [secure funding and/or financing](#) from the EIB or other sources.

4. What are the benefits of participating in the CCA and/or CPA programmes?

In both programmes, which are [free of charge](#) for cities and public project promoters, C3 experts help cities to progress in their circular transition and [to take circular action and promote circular change](#). C3 has a particular focus on helping cities [identify and develop circular projects towards funding and/or financing and implementation](#). The C3 experts not only provide technical guidance and support but also facilitate the process of [building internal capacity](#) and strengthening project identification and development. Moreover, the CPA programme provides to the promoters' consultancy services which they would otherwise have to fund, procure and manage themselves.

5. What are the requirements for participation in the CCA and CPA programmes?

The C3 advisory programmes are offered to [cities in the EU](#). Participants must be able to [commit time and resources to fully benefit from the programme](#). While there are no specific requirements for

individual projects for the **CCA 3 programme**, they should align with the principles of the circular economy and demonstrate potential for significant impact to be considered eligible.

The **CPA programme** targets **projects** driven by public promoters that should be of a **reasonable size** (project investment cost above EUR 20m). The projects should be **sufficiently mature** and developed to allow for concrete improvement in circularity and have some first indications of funding and/or financing options. Therefore, starting from a project concept or idea is not possible, nor can the CPA assist projects which are already fully developed and fully funded and/or financed.

6. Is there a deadline for application to the CCA and CPA programmes?

For the **CCA programme** there are three application periods during a year in Q1, Q2 and Q4. Cities should download and fill out the Expression of Interest (EoI) form for the **CCA** programmes and submit it to C3@eib.org before the deadlines indicated on the [C3 web page](#). Once selected, C3 will start onboarding the cities and then schedule the workshops together with the city.

There is no deadline for application to the **CPA programme**. A **CPA EoI** can be submitted at any time. Considering the extensive support provided through the CPA, a careful screening phase is needed to assess whether the proposed project suits the CPA programme. This may require collection of further project information as complement to the EoI. If your project is accepted for CPA assistance, the C3 CPA team will discuss the scope of the CPA assistance with the promoter and relevant stakeholders, as needed. This process can take from some weeks to a few months, depending on your reactivity.

7. When do the C3 advisory programmes start?

The **CCA programmes** are structured over a series of four workshops spread over approximately four to six months. They are offered in three pre-defined yearly batches starting in Q1, Q2 and Q4 of each year.

The **CPA programme** timeline will be tailored to the specific needs of the city and project and the agreed scope of the CPA assistance. It can be assumed that the CPA assistance will take from three months up to a year depending on the type and needs of the project and the scope of the CPA assistance.

8. Can I submit more than one C3 advisory application?

Cities can submit one EoI to participate in the CCA programme and another EoI to participate in the CPA programme, as outlined in the response to Question 6. The C3 team will assess and inform you about which programme fits your city best.

9. What if we have different projects/ideas at different stages of development?

If a city is developing several projects or ideas at different development stages, we encourage to include the most promising project in the EoIs. Cities should discuss with the different departments the needs of each project and C3 will support them in identifying which programme is best suited for different projects.

10. How many people could attend the CCA workshops?

To benefit from the CCA workshops, cities should assemble a **circular team**, usually comprising about **5 to 10 individuals**, including a designated **circular champion** to lead the coordination of activities. These participants should include professionals from the city who are engaged with circular economy and/or sustainability issues more broadly. Depending on the focus sector/project, cities should include experts from those specific sectors. If a focus project has already been selected, the city should include key stakeholders from various departments or public project promoters involved in the design and preparation of that project.

11. Who can be a circular champion and what is their role?

A **Circular Champion** is a person who is familiar with the city's circular economy ambitions, plans and programmes and who can serve as the main contact for delivery and coordination between the city circular team and the C3 team, ensuring smooth execution of the programmes. The Champion will schedule the workshops, make sure the circular team is available and can join the workshops, coordinate the collection of information requested in the homework template and the follow up on tasks between workshops.

12. What is the time required for participating in the CCA programme?

Each participant in the **CCA programme** should anticipate spending about 2 - 2.5 hours per workshop, and in addition about 4 hours of preparatory work and reading before the programme starts and between each workshop. The Circular Champion, who is the primary contact responsible for delivery and coordination, will need to dedicate about 8 hours of preparatory work and reading before the programme starts and between each workshop.

For the **CPA programme**, considering the scope of the support provided, a high level of commitment by the project team and other relevant parties may be required. Since the CPA aims at facilitating the project readiness for funding and/or financing, involvement also of teams responsible for planning, governance, finance, etc. may be needed in addition to the technical team. The level of commitment and inputs required from the city project team varies depending on the assistance needed and agreed between the C3 team and the city at the beginning of the CPA.

13. How do we prepare for the CCA workshops?

To prepare effectively for the CCA workshops, participants should complete the homework template, which will involve collecting and compiling information and preparing to present the findings at the workshops. Participants should also read suggested documents to be well prepared for the workshops. Active participation during the workshop is crucial to ensure a valuable and successful outcome for the city.

14. Can private sector representatives also attend the CCA and CPA programmes?

The primary focus of the **CCA programme** is staff from municipalities and public sector promoters. If a focus sector or project has some external stakeholders that it would make sense to involve in the workshops, this can be suggested to the C3 team.

While the **CPA programme** supports projects by municipal or public promoters, private sector stakeholders involved in the project should be included in the work as needed.

15. Can C3 supported circular projects benefit from EIB funding?

The EIB and C3 focus on helping cities identify and prepare circular projects to readiness for funding and/or financing. The EIB offers a range of [lending products and instruments](#) that can finance such projects should there be an interest in this from the city. C3 will also introduce other sources of funding and financing.

16. How is C3 connected to the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)?

C3 is delivered in cooperation with the European Commission, in the framework of the [Circular Cities and Regions Initiative \(CCRI\)](#), and under co-funding from the EU.

C3 supports and complements CCRI's work with its development of guidance documents and tools for awareness raising and the organisation of webinars and other events for knowledge sharing. Through its advisory programmes, C3 has a strong focus on helping cities progress in their circular transition and in identifying and preparing circular projects for financing and implementation. The EIB is a CCRI Associated partner, and as the EU and Climate Bank, the EIB can be seen as the CCRI financing partner with particular focus on helping CCRI cities and projects secure financing for their circular projects.

17. What is the difference between the C3 and CCRI advisory programmes?

The difference between the C3 advisory programmes and CCRI's Project Development Assistance (PDA) primarily lies in their scope and depth of services, and in some cases in their target promoter types. For instance, **CCRI PDA initiatives**, such as [CircularInvest](#), focuses on supporting both public and private promoters, including start-ups and scale-ups, to develop circular economy proposals and mobilise finance for relatively mature projects ranging **from EUR 1m to 20m in project cost**. This initiative offers technical, economic, and legal support over 2 to 6 months. This complements the **C3 CPA programme** which provides similar services but to projects with a **project cost above EUR 20m**.

18. Can a city already involved in the CCRI apply for C3's services?

Yes, you can, if you have sufficient staff resources to participate in both programmes. Since CCRI activities and EIB C3 offer different scopes of services and target different project sizes and maturities, your project(s) must meet the respective requirements to be eligible and fully benefit from the respective advisory services.

19. What do you mean with.... - C3 vocabulary

| Term | Explanation |
|-------------------------|---|
| Project | An investment project at full rather than pilot scale |
| Public promoter | The municipality or any public entity or publicly owned company which is responsible for the project preparation and implementation |
| Appraisal/due diligence | The project evaluating process focusing on e.g. eligibility, feasibility and viability of a project for financing/funding |
| Project maturity | The stage of project preparation, e.g. project concept, pre-feasibility study, feasibility study, project implementation/financing plans, designs/tender documents, permits |
| Financing | Debt/loan type of financing |
| Funding | Grant/subsidy type of financing |