



## SESSION DESCRIPTION

# A3 Cities in transition: From waste management to circular city economies

## Panel

**Date:** April 26, 2018

**Time:** 14.30 – 16.00

**Rooms:** S34-25

**Language:** English

**Contact:** Keith Weitz

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**Organized by:** RTI International

### OBJECTIVE

Waste represents inefficiency, which translates to economic loss and negative impacts to the environment, public health and social well-being. Moreover, waste management represents one of the largest cost to city budgets. Policies and programs to reduce the amount of waste generated are a priority, and turning waste that is generated into resource streams can generate revenues and create jobs. Transitioning from traditional waste management to a circular city economy is a complex endeavor that cuts across the domains of technology, economics, environment, governance, behavior change, education and social well-being. Cities must balance economic, environmental, social and other objectives to be sustainable.

The objective of session was to exchange knowledge, best practices, technologies and innovative solutions to challenges facing cities as they transition to a circular city economy. In this session, panelists discussed emerging and innovative solutions, issues and challenges, and fostered debate and interaction with the audience. The panel included participants from a variety of stakeholder groups including cities, NGOs, development Banks, and industry. The session was designed to focus not only the technical solutions but also on the underlying governance and capacity-building cities need to enhance service delivery, building Public-Private Partnerships, and ensuring that innovative solutions needed to implement a circular economy can be implemented.

### OUTCOMES

Participants gained a better understanding of:

- Approaches for planning and managing waste as part of the whole urban system that considers the dynamic and evolving nature of cities.
- Business models and financing approaches to support circular economy programs and infrastructure.
- Strategies cities can employ to spur innovation, technology adoption, and market creation through policy reform or voluntary programs that create incentives.
- Barriers and challenges facing cities with respect to improving waste management and adopting circular economy measures.
- Strategies, successes, lessons learned, and recommendations for future measures and activities that can help cities transition from waste management to a circular economy.



## METHODOLOGY

- The facilitator introduced himself and each speaker, the circular economy concept and its implementation issues. **(15 minutes)**
- The remainder of the session was organized around the guiding questions, with each panelist given time to respond to individual questions, and to respond to comments made by other panelists. **(45 minutes)**
- The facilitator managed questions and answers from the audience. **(25 minutes)**
- The facilitator concluded with closing remarks. **(5 minutes)**

### Guiding questions:

1. What barriers exist for cities interested in moving towards a circular materials economy?
  - How can industries, infrastructure and programs that are heavily linked in a circular economy be made resilient to external conditions such as fluctuations in market prices for material and energy products?
  - Has the transition towards a circular economy created friction between the old and new approaches and how have they been overcome?
2. How can barriers be overcome?
  - What transformative or disruptive technologies currently helping to advance the circular economy or are needed to advance the circular economy.
  - What are innovative business models and financing strategies can be employed by cities to pay for new infrastructure and programs?
  - What type of enabling policies and other measures from National and local governments are needed to support the transition to the circular economy?
  - What information is needed to inform local decisionmakers about circular economy interventions and to better integrate environmental, economic and social impacts?
  - What changes are needed in business models, consumption behaviours, finance and fiscal mechanisms, as well as triggers and pathways for technological and social innovations to facilitate the circular economy?
3. Are there definable economic development opportunities that come with transition towards a circular economy?
4. What top 3 interventions could cities do in the short term to start their transition to the circular economy?

## CONTRIBUTORS

Facilitator	<i>Keith Weitz, Deputy Director, Sustainability and Resource Management, RTI International, Durham, USA</i>  Director at RTI International working to implement sustainable waste and materials management and circular economy in global communities.
Panelist	<i>Catherine Allinson, Director, Future Earth Ltd, London, UK</i>  Director of Future Earth Ltd specializing in the facilitation of urban sustainability and resource management, climate change mitigation and adaptation and human well-being for resilience. Also, leads the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office Smart Sustainable Cities initiative.
Panelist	<i>Sunandan Tiwari, Senior Program Manager, Global Projects, ICLEI World Secretariat, Bonn, Germany</i>  Head of the Global Projects team at the ICLEI World Secretariat with experience in urban climate change adaptation and resilience building, climate financing, biodiversity management, and sustainable urban development issues.



- Panelist *Gwendolen White, Chair, Sustainability Commission, City of Bloomington, USA*  
Chair of the City of Bloomington, Indiana, Commission on Sustainability and Founder of Sustainability Within Reach LLC specializing in sustainability reporting, sustainability strategy development, and assurance preparedness.
- Panelist *Johannes Paul, Advisor, Concepts for Sustainable Waste Management, GIZ, Eschborn, Germany*  
GIZ adviser who works in global communities to implement research and development projects that relate to environmental policy and circular economy with focus on waste management, marine litter and sectoral climate mitigation.
- Panelist *Lisa Junghans, Director, Climate Finance & Urban Resilience Expert, GIZ, Berlin, Germany*  
Lisa has academic and professional experience in the fields of urban planning, climate change adaptation and finance.

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**Further recommended reading**

RTI International: <https://www.rti.org/>

C40 Waste to Resources Network: <http://www.c40.org/networks/waste-to-resources>

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