

ZERO CITY LAB

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

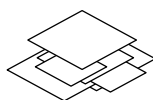
Guideline and ToRs Document





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1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Cities are a major source 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; about 75% of natural resources are consumed, 50% of global waste is produced, and more than 60% of the GHG emissions are caused. The linear economic thinking has been dominant economic model for most of the 20th century. This linear “take-make-use-dispose” economy is not working. It continually puts pressure on scarce natural resources and negatively impacts environment and society. This situation is being worsened with the rapid urbanisation and industrial development in many countries. About 50% of total greenhouse gas emissions and more than 90% of biodiversity loss and water stress come from resource extraction and processing. The amount of waste keeps growing, with the global waste generation expected to increase by 70% by 2050.

The **Circular Economy** is an economic model designed to **minimize waste** and **maximize resource** use by keeping products, materials, and resources in circulation for as long as possible. Unlike the traditional linear model, the circular economy model focuses on

extending the life cycle of products while maintaining and improving their value. Resources are utilised efficiently, focusing on sharing, leasing, and repairing products rather than throwing them away after a single use. By extending product lifecycles and cutting down on raw material extraction, the circular economy helps conserve resources and lower wastes and greenhouse gas emissions. It reduces the carbon footprint associated with manufacturing new products and contributes to mitigating climate change, fostering a more sustainable and resilient environment.

Circular Economy can be set up in different sectors and contexts, such as tourism, gastronomy, packaging, textile manufacturing, large-scale events, agriculture, retail, e-commerce and more. Women play a crucial role in environmentally sustainable consumption, making 70 to 80% 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.

Definition

The Circular Economy is a model of production and consumption where the life cycle of products is extended, wastes are reduced to a minimum and nature is regenerated. The model involves using resources efficiently and prioritizing renewable inputs, maximizing a product's usage and lifetime (through processes like maintenance, repair, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling, and composting) in order to extract the maximum value and recovering and reusing by-products and waste to make new materials or products.

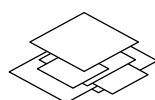
The circular economy tackles climate change and other global challenges, like biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution, by decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources. The circular economy is based on three principles, driven by design:

1. Eliminate waste and pollution
2. Circulate products and materials
3. Regenerate nature

Underpinned by a transition to reusable and renewable energy and materials, the circular economy is a resilient system that is good for business, people, and the environment.

Source:

<https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/topics/circular-economy-introduction/overview>





Zero City Labs Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas: *Circular Economy Solutions for Liveable Cities* is dedicated to advancing circular economy practices with a dual focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preventing waste. This initiative actively engages local SMEs and businesses while also involving research institutions, academia and civil society to drive innovation. By integrating these diverse stakeholders, the program not only tests cutting-edge circular economy systems but also aims to strengthen businesses', youth's and women's roles and participation in the local economy.

The Zero City Labs (ZCL) Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas project is powered by "EU for Circular Economy and Liveable Cities" (EU4CELC) and "EU4Innovation" (EU4I) programmes, carried out by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ Germany). ZCL is being implemented by ALBICT, in cooperation with Layer under the umbrella of the **Urban Partnership Accelerator (UPA)**, in partnership with the municipalities in the region and the prefecture.

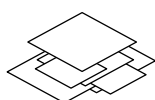
Driven by the mutual goal to accelerate the transformation of Albania towards an innovation-driven, circular, and knowledge-based economy, the EU4CELC, EU4Innovation programmes, ALBICT and other project partners have joined forces to support the local actors in the Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas region, especially business and entrepreneurs, research entities & academia and policy makers, to design and implement viable circular economy system and/or solutions that contribute towards effective waste prevention/management and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

All involved partners mobilized their respective resources to create an end-to-end support scheme covering awareness raising, facilitation, technical support, leadership training, practical knowledge on circular economy systems and solutions, networking, and pilot funding.

1.1 Contextual background and ZCL- Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas objectives

The specific objectives of the ZCL project represent a multifaceted approach to sustainability involving:

- Identifying, prototyping, testing and piloting Circular Economy solutions tackling issues in the production main municipal waste streams. The testing aspect implies thoroughly evaluating these circular economy systems or solutions in terms of economic viability, effectiveness, durability, and practicality.
- Strengthening and empowering women's participation in local circular economies. Women are responsible for 70-80% of household purchases, and they count on the need for legacy in re-use and circularity practices in Albania (minimising waste and maximising the use of resources). Strengthening women's participation involves creating opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, or leadership roles within circular economy initiatives.
- Contributing to the Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas region's environmental goals through an innovative response in preventing waste and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the area for a better urban inclusive life (simultaneously, contributing to Government of Albania's (GoA's) commitments outlined in the Fourth National Communication of Albania on Climate Change)





1.2 The Methodology

The Zero City Labs (ZCL) – Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas project takes an integrated and inclusive approach to tackle the urgent challenges of waste prevention/management and sustainable consumption. Central to its methodology is the engagement of the private sector alongside diverse stakeholders, harnessing their unique expertise to create innovative Circular Economy solutions tailored specifically for Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas needs. The goal is to develop independent systems or solutions for different waste streams, where each participant contributes to the collective effort of minimizing overall waste generation in the region. By leveraging the perspectives of various stakeholders, the project aims to establish effective and tailored Circular Economy practices that address Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas's unique needs.

The timeline for the Zero City Lab – Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas Project challenge spans from July 2025 to May 2026, comprising four main phases:

- **Open Call for Application in ZCL - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas:** This phase spanning for 1.5 months (25 June till 16 August) aims to attract suitable participants and applications related to innovative sustainable circular economy solutions. Through the open call and the info sessions, we invite targeted entities to submit their proposals for innovative circular economy solutions through the online system. The applications will be screened and selected to ensure a high-quality group of participants during the hackathon days.
- **Hackathon Days:** This phase involves a 3-days event with practical co-creation sessions during which participants collaborate intensively with trainers, coaches and mentors to elaborate further their ideas and solutions proposed.
 - o The hackathon culminates in a **Pitching Session** when teams present their proposals to compete for entry into the Accelerator Program. This phase is crucial, and participation is a precondition for selecting promising solutions to move forward to the Accelerator Program.
- **Acceleration Program:** Selected participants from the Hackathon will have access to the accelerator program, which spans over 1.5 months. During this time, participants will receive tailor-made training and mentoring (including from Diaspora professionals) on the circular economy concepts and circular economy systems applicable to their business case, business modelling, planning and financing, go-to-market strategy and other aspects related to the core of circular economy models. They will also receive support to further develop and refine their proposed Circular solution. As a final goal, the Accelerator Program aims to equip participants with the skills and resources needed to implement their proposed business ideas successfully.
 - o **Demo Day:** The teams participating and graduating from the accelerator will pitch their solutions after six weeks of intensive training and mentorship. The 4-5 most promising teams will be selected to pilot their solutions
- **Pilot Implementation of Selected Business Solutions:** After successfully completing the Accelerator Program and refining their business plans, selected participants will proceed to pilot their solutions for 6 months in the Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas region. This phase involves the practical implementation and testing of the proposed circular economy solutions in real-world settings. The pilot implementation aims to assess and test the feasibility and effectiveness of the solutions and gather valuable insights for future scaling and replication.

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1.3 Financial support for most promising circular economy solutions

The overall indicative budget allocated for financial support for piloting of the most innovative and impactful circular economy solutions coming out of the ZCL amount approximately 230'000 Euros, to be provided by GIZ, via EU4CELC programme. Selected Business Proposals that successfully complete the Accelerator Program following the Hackathon Days will be eligible to compete on the Demo Day for financial support.

The proposed solutions will be ranked based on their feasibility, impact and scaling possibilities. An important objective of the ZCL- Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas is to establish a network of private actors to partake in circular economy systems and empower them to pilot such systems in the market.

The EU4CELC programme (implemented by GIZ) will finance up to 5 tickets with an amount of up to 50,000 EUR.

A ticket is defined as a contract for piloting of the solution or part of the solution to participants having successfully completed the Accelerator Phase. Implementation time is limited up to June 2026.

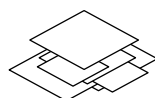
The tickets may differ in size and number to fit the different anticipated needs of the solutions developed by the accelerator participants.

It's important to note that eligible co-financing for these proposals includes the applicant's own sources of finance and in-kind contribution. This ensures that the solutions to be funded, can rely on other ranges of income, to allow for sustainable financial models that promote long-term viability and success.

The own contribution (as co-financing) to be provided by the ticket recipient cannot consist out of any other public or donor sources, to maintain transparency and accountability in the allocation of funds.

In the application criteria, it is explicitly mentioned that Companies / entities, which have been granted financing from national or international donors for the past 12 months are not eligible for this call.

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2. RULES OF THE CALL

The ZCL - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas Open Call operates under specific rules designed to foster innovation, collaboration, and women's empowerment within local circular economies. The primary objective of this call is to catalyse the development of **economically viable circular economy solutions** while actively involving and supporting women-led initiatives. Following, are some of the key rules of the present call.

Objective: The call aims to initiate a journey of innovation and collaboration to develop economically **viable circular economy solutions**, with a specific focus on agriculture and food processing, tourism, textile and wood waste, while also empowering women in local circular economies.

Targeted Audience: The call is open to:

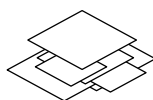
1. Businesses operating in the territory of Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas region, in different sectors of the economy (including tourism, HoReCa, retail & grocery, e-commerce, textile manufacturing, wood waste processes, logistics, agriculture and food processing, material production etc.), who are interested in integrating circular economy solutions into their business models and/or operate a circular economy system for partners. A preference will be given to entities owned and/or co-owned, managed-co-managed by women.¹ Women play a crucial role in environmentally sustainable consumption, making 70 to 80 % of household purchase decisions. Female entrepreneurs can significantly contribute to new business areas of the circular economy.
2. Consortiums/ Joint Ventures composed of up to three entities. The consortium must be led by a registered business entity, which will act as the primary applicant and responsible party for the project. However, the other entities can also be research institutions or NGOs
3. Additionally, (female) entrepreneurs, start-ups, and innovators with creative ideas for circular economy solutions in the city are encouraged to apply. The applicants can be a startup /or startup team consisting of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 individuals.
4. A sole individual: the applicant can be a sole individual (early idea stage startup, entrepreneur, professional expert, IT – developer or other) willing to join a team during the hackathon phase.

Stakeholder Involvement: The call seeks to involve a wide range of stakeholders, including private entities, academia, researchers, and civil society organizations, in contributing to the development and implementation of sustainable circular economy solutions.

Inclusivity: While the call primarily targets physical and juridical persons, it is inclusive and welcomes participation from individuals and organizations committed to advancing the goals of the Zero City Labs - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas project (in partnership with registered commercial entities).

In a nutshell, Zero City Labs - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas is designed for businesses, startups, research entities and individuals across various sectors and industries, seeking to develop circular economy solutions falling in any of the following four main categories.

¹ For ownership, total or partial, we intend the possession of equity in the business by women (as shown by the National Center Registration Extract). For management, we intend the position of “administrator of the company” is a woman (as shown by the National Center Registration Extract).





2.1 Type and amount of financing

The Zero city Lab - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas project has secured a total funding allocation of approximately 230,000 Euros which is specifically designated to support the implementation of business pilots in Circular Economy Solutions and Systems.

2.1.1 GIZ tickets / Grants

The GIZ tickets are to be financed through:

- The EU for Circular Economy and Livable Cities (EU4CELC) will finance up to 5 tickets with an amount of up to EUR 50,000.

Note: The tickets financed via GIZ (EU4CELC) will be managed through a Grant Agreement assigned to a third-party grant manager, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the process.

Funding Type: The funding is provided in the form of a grant, transferred under a Grant Agreement, emphasizing the commitment to support most innovative and impactful initiatives in circular economy solutions and systems.

Management: The Grant Agreement will be managed by a designated third-party grant manager, ensuring proper oversight and compliance with funding regulations.

Transparency: The entire funding process, monitoring of implementation of the proposed solution, and reporting will be conducted in a transparent manner, with clear guidelines and procedures outlined in contractual agreements.

Coverage: The funding will cover a significant portion of the project costs, up to 90%, depending on the specific requirements and scope of each Business Pilot.

Co-Financing: While the largest share of project costs will be covered by the grant funding, participants should bring in a Co-financing of at least 10% of total costs of the initiative, in the form of financial and/or in-kind contribution.

Overall, the funding structure is designed to provide robust financial support for implementing Business Pilots in the field of Circular Economy, which work together in one system, while promoting accountability, transparency, and collaborative partnerships within the Zero City Labs - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas project.

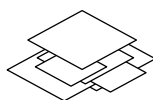
2.2 Beneficiaries

2.2.1 Applicants

The applicant for this Call (as indicated above) for Applications can be:

- A formally registered business;
- A start-up/or team of startups with minimum two individuals and a maximum of four;
- A team / joint venture / consortium led by a registered business (up 3 entities);
- Sole individuals (with breaking through innovative ideas who are willing to join teams during the hackathon)

It is a must that the proposed Circular Economy solution should be implemented/ piloted in the territory of Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas region.





2.2.2 Eligible and not eligible costs

The eligible costs from this Call for Application include:

- Costs of newly staff engaged in the project (gross amounts including taxes on income and benefits, however this excludes salaries of managing staff / founders) or external expert services (for product development, including technology development and testing, R&D, feasibility studies, etc.)
- Sales and marketing services (including business development consulting and conference participation expenses)
- Procurement of goods and related services (including equipment, installations and raw material for manufacturing)
- General expenses such as technology/application/data subscriptions, website construction, etc.
- Patent application and fees, relevant certificates (such as sustainability-related certifications encouraging environmentally friendly practices and products).

The non-eligible costs from this Call for Application include:

- Customs expenses and other taxes.
- Taxes, including VAT, duties and fees.
- Debts and debt service fees (interest).
- Provisions for losses, debts or possible obligations in the future.
- Costs declared by the beneficiary and financed by another financing source;
- Cash payments from the project account.
- Loans to third parties.
- Purchases of land or buildings, leases and any renovations.
- Foreign exchange losses, fees and fines.
- Entertainment and hospitality expenses.
- Recruitment and relocation costs.

2.2.3 Expected co-financing

The applicant is expected to contribute at least 20% of the total costs of the project, in cash or in-kind. Note that Companies / entities that have been granted financing from national or international donors for the past 12 months are not eligible for this call, nor can these funds count as co-funding.

2.3 How to apply and phases of the ZCL Korça, Pogradec, and Prrrenjas

In this section, we outline the application process and the successive phases of the ZCL - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrrenjas program, providing insights into each stage's objectives and deliverables.

2.3.1 Phase 1. Open call for interested applicants in ZCL - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrrenjas

Phase 1 focuses on soliciting business proposals from entities interested in participating in the ZCL Korça, Pogradec, and Prrrenjas Program. These proposals should offer innovative solutions aligned with the program's objectives, particularly focusing on circular economy systems.



A. Content of Business Proposals:

1. The proposed business idea/solution falls within the circular economy framework, demonstrating innovation and commitment to reducing waste and promoting circularity;
2. Details as much as it is possible the solution or system you can include operational model such as selection of appropriate primary materials, repairing/maintenance, sharing, reusing, , separating, repurposing, returning and refilling processes, infrastructure requirements, etc.;
3. Team composition, demonstrating the capacity to carry out the proposed initiative;
4. Availability of the team for a 6-8 hours of training and coaching sessions per week during the Accelerator Program;
5. Have at least one team member with English proficiency at a level that allows for interaction throughout the project activities;
6. Proposed timeline for implementation of the proposed circular economy/business initiative.

Application Process: Interested parties are required to submit their proposals via the dedicated website [Zero City Lab – ALBICT](#) and Google form [Zero City Labs – Application Form – ALBICT](#), ensuring completeness and adherence to specified guidelines.

Deadline and Further Information: The open call for applications will commence on **June 25th, 2025** and remain open until **August 15th, 2025**. Applicants are encouraged to review additional information provided on the program website for clarity and programmed info sessions.

Language. The application can be submitted either in English or Albanian (We encourage to submit it in English).

Results: After a thorough review process (phase 1), the best applications will be shortlisted and the selected entities will be notified via email. They will be invited to join the Hackathon (phase 2). All other entities that are not selected in this phase will be officially notified (via e-mail).

2.3.2 Phase 2. Participation in the Hackathon

The entities shortlisted and invited to join the hackathon, will be asked to submit on due time (not later than the hackathon dates) the following documentation; serving as key eligibility criteria.

A. Administrative requirements / eligibility criteria

- i. For registered applicants:
 1. Formal registration in NRC (National Registration Center Form – ekstrakt QKB);
 2. Proof of payment of national and municipal taxes (e-Albania, Municipality);
 3. Proof of payment of social/health contributions (e-Albania)
 4. Certificate of no penal cases (Dëshmi Penaliteti – e-Albania)
- ii. For individuals or groups of individuals
 1. Certificate of no penal cases for the team leader (Dëshmi Penaliteti – e-Albania)
 2. Confirmation of willingness to register as a business should their initiative be selected for grant award.



Description of the Hackathon: The Hackathon is a dynamic and intensive event designed to foster innovation and collaboration among participating teams planned for **11-13th of September**. The event will take place in Korça. Over the course of the 3 days, up to 20 teams will work diligently on developing their proposed solutions with the guidance of mentors, coaches and experts. The objectives of the Hackathon include:

- Enable teams to gain insights into market needs and opportunities within Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas region, Albania, and on a global scale.
- Empower teams by providing them with confidence, connections, and support to clarify and refine their ideas and solutions.
- Facilitate the development of innovative solutions by leveraging the diverse expertise of coaches, mentors and stakeholders.
- Foster a room of cooperation during which teams are encouraged to merge their ideas and extend their teams together.
- Identify teams with the potential to thrive during the next stage of the program based on their motivation, drive, and ability to collaborate effectively.

The Hackathon serves as a crucial gateway for teams to showcase their capabilities and progress toward realizing impactful solutions within Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas circular economy landscape.

On the **3rd day of the Hackathon**, all participating teams will **pitch their initiatives and solutions** in front of a **Jury Panel**. The format of presentation is PPT. After the Hackathon, the Jury Panel will evaluate the participating teams based on predefined criteria to select the top-performing teams. The jury panel will shortlist 10-12 teams based on their performance and potential for further development of the proposed solutions. The selection process is anticipated to take up to 1 week. These selected teams will proceed to the next phase of the program, advancing to the Accelerator Program stage (Phase 3).

2.3.3 Phase 3. Participation in the Accelerator Program

Phase 3 entails the participation of **10-12 selected teams** from the Hackathon in the Accelerator program.

Description of the Accelerator: The Accelerator program is designed to provide tailored support to selected teams, fostering their growth and scalability within Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas circular economy landscape. Through a mix of coaching, technical expertise and networking opportunities, participants will go through a two months program of interactive capacity building, peer-exchange and co-creation sessions to help them improve their proposed circular economy solutions.

The objectives of the Accelerator Program phase include:

- Equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to consolidate their circularity strategies and become resilient leaders in the face of social and environmental challenges.
- Support businesses in analysing different pathways for scaling their impact through traditional growth, expansion into new contexts, or collaborative initiatives.



- Foster collaboration and networking by providing access to partners' and implementers' networks, mentorship opportunities, and alliances with accelerator participants, program partners, and stakeholders.
- Build a roll-out-plan for the solution in an interconnected fashion with the system.
 - o Description and detailed workplan;
 - o Business plan (including the budget template).

How the Accelerator Programs helps participants?

- *Knowledge & Skills:* Participants will engage in group workshops and individual sessions aimed at realigning their business approach, understanding their team dynamics, and refining their sales and financial models.
- *Growth / Scalability:* The program will guide participants in exploring various paths for scaling their impact, whether through traditional growth, adaptation to new contexts, collaborative initiatives, or mission-driven systemic change.
- *Access to Networks and Alliances:* Participants will benefit from access to global networks, program partners, mentorship networks, and national actors. Pitch training and Demo Day presentations will provide opportunities for participants to showcase their businesses to the impact ecosystem at the national level.

Demo Day: This event, scheduled for October 31st (taking place in Pogradec) marks a key milestone in the Zero City Lab acceleration programme. The teams participating and graduating from the accelerator will pitch their solutions after six weeks of intensive training and mentorship. The 4-5 most promising teams will be selected to pilot their solutions

2.3.4 Phase 4. Pilot implementation

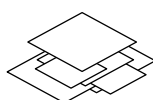
Grant award will occur according to the ticket description in Sub-section 2.1. Implemented initiatives will be monitored during the implementation of their working plan proposed by the granting authority (in accordance with the grant agreement signed by the parties).

2.4 Application process -the entry point to the Zero City Lab

The initial application for ZCL - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrrenjas must be completed on-line [Zero City Labs – Application Form – ALBICT](#). Any interested party must:

- Fill out the application form fully;
- Provide a clear description of the need your proposal satisfies, a description of the solution proposed, the impact the solution has in the circular economy, team composition and other aspects listed;
- Have a person assigned to the ZCL – Korça, Pogradec, and Prrrenjas whose availability consists of at 6-8 hours per week for participation in the Accelerator Program.

Note: the applicants invited to attend the hackathon will be asked to provide evidence on eligibility (updated extract from National Registration and other documents requested, proof of tax declaration (e-Albania), no tax liabilities for local dues, social, health and other taxes, no penal cases). See section 2.3.2 Phase 2. Participation in the Hackathon and administrative requirements.



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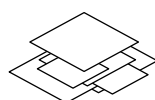


Additional information may be requested during the application and selection process, and non-delivery of requested information will result in dismissal from the process.

2.5 Zero City LabTimeline

Phases	Date
Phase 1	
Announcement of the call for applications in ZCL - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas	25 June 2025
Info sessions (in person and online)	July – August 2025
Application submission deadline	15 August 2025
Evaluation of applications (1) (shortlist of up to 20 applications invited to join the Hackathon)	25 August 2025
Phase 2	
Hackathon days	11-13 September 2025
Pitching of business ideas	13 September 2025
Evaluation of applications (2) (shortlist of 10-12 applications joining the Accelerator Program)	Mid-September 2025
Phase 3	
Acceleration Programme	Mid-September – October 2025
Demo Day	31 October
Evaluation of applications (3) (shortlist of applications awarded a grant ticket)	November 2025
Phase 4	
Due diligence and signing of the contracts with the grant manager	November 2025
Pilot implementation	November 2025 – May 2026
Monitoring of implementation plans	Up to June 2026

Implemented by:



In partnership with:





3. Intellectual Property Rights

All participants in ZCL - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas, at any phase, are entitled to the moral and economic rights of any intellectual property rights that may arise because of their participation in the program, as per the guidelines in this call. In the case of joint ventures or consortia, the intellectual property rights that arise from participation in the ZCL - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas phases will belong to the participants (and be shared equally between team members in case otherwise specified).

All participants in ZCL - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas, at any phase, affirm that the contributions made in the proposal and during the program execution are solely their own authorship. If the contributions are not their own, they confirm that they have obtained the necessary authorization to use them and that they do not infringe the intellectual property rights of any third party. In any case, they agree to take full responsibility for any claim, demand, action, remedy, petition or request related to intellectual property. All information, ideas, initiatives and projects contained in the proposals submitted by the applicants to this call will be acknowledged as the intellectual property of their respective creators.

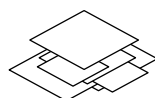
All participants in ZCL Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas, at any phase, affirm to refrain from infringing on the rights of third parties, such as copyright, intellectual property, and industrial property, unless expressly authorized by the owner.

All individuals involved in ZCL - Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas, at any stage, bear complete responsibility to address any claim related to the intellectual property contained in the proposed solution or associated with limitations or encumbrances to the right of ownership. Furthermore, they assume responsibility for the abovementioned concepts, including compensation for any damages that may arise, which will be borne at their own risk. As a result, they indemnify the entities involved from any claims related to the rights involved in fulfilling the contract that is intended to be signed.

All participants, at all phases, grant permission for any content related to their company that is submitted to the call to be archived by the entities for internal registration purposes

All participants involved in all phases of the project hereby authorize GIZ and all project partners (along with their affiliates, associates, or subsidiaries) to disseminate, through appropriate media, information including their name, surname, photographs, and videos taken during the activities conducted throughout the project duration, without any type of economic compensation, remuneration, royalty, or any other kind of payment for such use. The information, images, and/or videos are not used for direct or indirect profit but to provide transparency about program development.

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3.1 Controversies

Any controversy that may arise from the registration or participation in this call will be expressly and irrevocably subject to Albanian legislation, courts and authorities, expressly waiving any other jurisdiction that may correspond to them by reason of their present or future domicile or for any other reason.

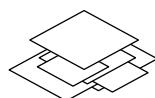
3.2 Final remarks

For any information related to this call, contact: info@albict.org & rubin.beci@giz.de

All questions and/or clarifications about the call must be requested by e-mail at the specified addresses.

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ANNEX

Evaluation and Selection as per each phase

Phase 1. Evaluation and selection of applications

In this phase, the assessment of the applications will focus on several key criteria, including the sector they operate in, the region (city), solution's impact on circular economy systems and its contribution to the sustainability of the local economy. Evaluators will also consider the scalability of the solution in the broader market, the degree of innovative potential embedded within it, and the strength and complementarity of the team composition driving its implementation.

Assessment of the applications	Points
- Impact of the solution on circular economy systems	0-20
- Impact on the sustainability of the local economy	0-20
- Scalability of the solution in the market	0-20
- Embedded innovative potential	0-20
- Team composition	0-20
Total	100

A jury / reviewers' team will review the applications and select the best proposed circular economy solutions. The 20 first-ranked business proposals are invited to join the Hackathon of ZCL- Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas. The applicants invited to participate the Hackathon will be informed via e-mail.

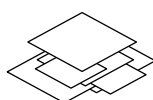
An additional request / layer of selection criteria for the invitees in the hackathon is the administrative check. (see below for details)

Phase 2. Participation and assessment of progress in the Hackathon

During the Hackathon, the selected teams will work intensively to improve, refine and clarify the proposed solutions. A jury will evaluate their progress based on the outlined criteria. Top 10-12 performers will be selected and **enter the Accelerator Program**.

Evaluation criteria to enter the Accelerator Program:

In this phase, the administrative check must ensure compliance with the required administrative documentation. If not present (all or in part), the applicant will be excluded from the ZCL- Korça, Pogradec, and Prrenjas, and a notification will be sent.

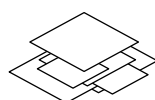


**Eligibility Criterion**

A. Administrative check	
i. For registered applicants:	
– Formal registration in NRC (National Registration Center Form or Extract); ○ Be a formally registered entity (physical and juridical persons);	Yes/No
– Proof of payment of national and municipal taxes (e-Albania, Municipality);	Yes/No
– Proof of payment of social/health contributions (e-Albania)	Yes/No
– Certificate of No penal cases (Dëshmi Penaliteti – e-Albania)	Yes/No
ii. For individuals or groups of individuals	
– Certificate of no penal cases for the team leader (Dëshmi Penaliteti – e-Albania)	Yes/No
– Confirmation of willingness to register as a business should their initiative be selected for grant award.	Yes/No
All administrative check documents must be submitted to move to the application assessment step as follows:	

B. Technical Criterion	Weight
1. Potential impact of the proposed solution on circular economy systems	0-20
2. Potential impact on the sustainability of the local economy of the proposed solution	0-20
3. Scalability and growth potential - Replicability of the solution in other markets and/or countries - Target network in place for supporting piloting of solution and market knowledge	0-20
4. Embedded innovative potential	0-20
5. Sustainability of the business model - The business presents a feasible or logical model for the circularity project; - The business has to offer complementary solutions to them; - The team has clarity about the market and the competitive differential of the business	0-20
Total	100

Participants selected for the accelerator and those who have not been selected will be notified via e-mail.





Phase 3. Participation and assessment of progress in the Accelerator Program

The teams participating in the Accelerator Program will develop their proposed circular economy proposals under the guidance of mentors and experts. At the end of the Accelerator Program, a jury will evaluate team progress and performance at the Demo Day **for grant awards**.

Criterion	Points
1. Potential impact of the proposed solution on circular economy systems	0-20
2. Potential impact on the sustainability of the local economy of the proposed solution	0-20
3. Scalability and growth potential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replicability of the in other markets and/or countries - Target network in place for supporting piloting of solution and market knowledge 	0-20
4. Embedded innovative potential of the proposed solution.	0-20
5. Sustainability of the business model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The business presents a feasible or logical model for the circularity project; - The business has to offer complementary solutions to them; - The team has clarity about the market and the competitive differential of the business 	20
Total	100



Figure 1: the timeline of Zero City Lab

Endnote: The first version of this document “Guideline for Application” was developed by CoPlan, one of the consortia members implementing Circular City Lab-Tirana. CCL Tirana is a joint effort of the European Union and Germany via (1) Circular City Labs Project (2) EU 4 Circular Economy and Livable Cities and (3) EU4Innovation programmes in partnership with the Municipality of Tirana. This document acted a basis for further use in the CCL- Shkodra project also powered by EU 4 Circular Economy and Livable Cities and EU4Innovation programmes.

