

GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2697

Data, metrics and target development to support London's transition to a low-carbon circular economy

Executive summary:

This decision form seeks approval for up to £20,000 of expenditure under the Waste and Circular Economy team's budget for 2023-24. The funding will be provided to ReLondon (a partnership of the Mayor of London and London boroughs), in the form of a grant, to deliver a project reviewing metrics and targets that will be used to support London's transition to a circular economy. ReLondon's project will analyse current circular economy data and metrics, across key sectors, helping to demonstrate the potential benefits of realising a circular economy in London. It will identify r-strategies (e.g., recycling rate, reuse rate, repair rate) and potential levers for action, to enable effective r-strategies across key sectors. This project will also evaluate the benefits of different types of, and the most suitable, high-level metrics and targets (as used elsewhere globally and by industry) that could be used to support the transition in London. This project supports the Mayor's role to create, enable and accelerate London's transition to a low-carbon circular economy.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Environment and Energy approves expenditure of up to £20,000 from the Waste and Circular Economy team's 2023-24 budget. This is to grant-fund ReLondon to support its project, which will analyse current circular economy data and metrics. This will help to inform action to support London's continued transition to a circular economy.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities. It has my approval.

Name: Catherine Barber

Position: Assistant Director,
Environment and Energy

Signature:



Date:

15/01/2024

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Waste and Circular Economy (WCE) team acts on behalf of the Mayor of London to undertake statutory functions on waste; and accelerate London's transition to a circular economy, in line with the Mayor's priorities set out in the London Environment Strategy (LES). The current linear economy is where products are produced using new and often virgin materials; and are disposed of after use. The circular economy is one where goods are kept in use as long as possible through reuse and repair; and where materials are recycled and only disposed of when they can no longer be reused or recovered, in line with the waste hierarchy. The circular economy reduces waste and greenhouse gases associated with consumption; and increases recycling.
- 1.2. The statutory duties undertaken by the WCE team include reviewing local authority Reduction and Recycling Plans; reviewing waste authority contracts and strategies; and overseeing the review of circular economy statements. In addition, the WCE team works closely with ReLondon, a partnership with the Mayor of London and the London boroughs, to support circular and sustainable activities that reduce waste and consumption-based emissions; and increase recycling.
- 1.3. ReLondon (the operating name of the London Waste and Recycling Board, a statutory body created by section 356A of the GLA Act 1999) has the statutory objectives to promote and encourage the production of less waste; an increase in recycling; and the use of more environmentally beneficial waste collection and disposal methods in Greater London.
- 1.4. ReLondon was established to improve waste and resource management in the capital and accelerate London's transition to a low carbon, circular economy. Its mission is to make London a global leader in sustainable ways to live, work and prosper by revolutionising Londoners' relationship with 'stuff'; and helping London waste less, and reuse, repair, share and recycle more.
- 1.5. ReLondon, in partnership with the Mayor of London, published [London's Circular Economy Route Map](#) in 2017. The route map identified:
 - eight cross-cutting themes (communication, collaboration, policy, finance, innovation, demonstration, procurement and business support) that are key to enabling a circular economy in London
 - five focus sectors for London (the built environment, food, textiles, electricals and plastics).
- 1.6. The route map also informed two of the Mayor's strategy documents:
 - the [London Environment Strategy](#) establishing the aim for London to become a low-carbon circular economy, and setting the following 2030 targets:
 - 65 per cent recycling rate
 - 50 per cent food waste reduction
 - the [London Plan](#), establishing the obligation for referable projects (to the Mayor) to submit a circular economy statement and to comply with the following targets:
 - 95 per cent recovery rate for construction and demolition waste
 - 20 per cent use of recycled or reused materials.
- 1.7. Together, these strategic documents have helped London to take the first step towards transitioning to a circular economy. However, further action is needed to set the policy framework and foster a circular economy, at scale, in London.

1.8. Further action is needed to identify metrics for London that will:

- promote reuse and reduction of waste (existing metrics mainly drive recycling rates over repair, reuse and reduction of waste)
- influence a larger system change towards a cross-cutting circular economy – existing targets relate to specific sectors (e.g., food, built environment) or type of waste (e.g., municipal waste), and thus fail to influence a larger system change
- support reduction of consumption-based emission as a contribution to net zero.

1.9. ReLondon's project is aligned with the Mayor's priorities on waste and circular economy, which is to create, enable and accelerate London's transition to a low-carbon circular economy.

1.10. This project aims to provide an updated strategic framework for supporting London's circular economy, including understanding priority sectors and the role of metrics and targets in driving action.

1.11. ReLondon and the GLA have a three-year strategic partnership agreement with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF). All three share an ambition to accelerate London's transition towards a more circular economy. Under the partnership agreement, the organisations have committed to providing targeted support on circular economy priorities for London. EMF has provided considerable expertise in identifying what is successful elsewhere, in terms of approach to measuring and setting targets for the circular economy. ReLondon has supported specific sectors and businesses in London to adopt more circular practices and business models.

1.12. In furthering this work, the GLA is proposing to provide grant funding to ReLondon to produce a strategic London-specific assessment of priority sectors; and identify options for measuring progress towards a more circular economy. This will include the role of metrics and targets that could be used at a city-wide or sector-wide scale. The project will be led and managed by ReLondon; and will contribute to the outcomes of the partnership between the GLA, ReLondon and EMF.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

Objectives

2.1. The Mayor is committed to accelerating London's transition to a low-carbon, circular economy.

2.2. ReLondon's programme of work aims to help business, local government and Londoners shift to more circular systems in their working practices and daily lives. Their programmes aim to change deep-seated habits and behaviours regarding consumption and use of virgin materials, helping others to waste less; and reuse, repair, share and recycle more.

2.3. The objective of ReLondon's project is to analyse current data and metrics on London's circular economy, providing the evidence base for the development of approaches to further develop London's circular economy and assess potential metrics that could support and measure progress.

2.4. This project will support the Mayor's role and ambition to create, enable and accelerate London's transition to a circular economy. It will identify key sectors and identify potential circular economy metrics for London. The outputs of the project will be collated into a report to be published on the ReLondon website.

Expected outcomes

2.5. This project will be delivered in four work packages as outlined below:

Work package 1 – demonstrating the benefits of a circular economy

- Collecting and compiling existing data¹ on:
 - current material flows (material consumption, waste, r-strategies,² cross-cutting numbers and breakdown for key materials/sectors)
 - current environmental and socio-economic impact of London's economy (e.g., consumption-based emission, jobs, and turnover of circular businesses – cross-cutting number and breakdown for key materials/sectors)
 - potential impact of circular economy uptake scenarios on the above environment and socio-economic indicators.
- Identify data gaps.

Work package 2 – identifying key sectors and r-strategies

- Identify potential levers for action available to the Mayor and London boroughs to enable r-strategies in different sectors and qualitatively measure their potential impact (low, medium, high).
- Propose a set of key sectors and r-strategies to prioritise based on:
 - their potential impact on environment and socio-economic indicators (result of work package 1)
 - the Mayor's and boroughs' power to enable those r-strategies in key sectors (result of work package 2).

Work package 3 – evaluating potential high-level metrics and targets for London (cross-cutting and sector-specific)

- Review of existing metrics and targets set up by other national and local authorities, and by industry groups worldwide.
- Evaluate targets set up by other organisations (identified above) and London's key sectors; and r-strategies of identified options for a set of cross-cutting and sector specific targets that could be used to monitor London's progress towards a circular economy.
- Assess data availability to regularly monitor targets and identify potential data gaps and challenges.

Work package 4 – proposing actions to fill gaps

- Propose a set of actions that can be taken to fill the data gaps identified in work packages 1, 2 and 3. The data gaps may relate to:
 - existing research that demonstrates the benefits of a circular economy towards specific impact targets
 - industry or city-level recognised and achievable targets for specific sectors or r-strategies
 - data to monitor relevant targets and metrics.
- Potential actions that can be taken to fill the data gaps could be:

¹ Examples of existing reports to be used: London [food](#) and [textiles](#) footprint reports, London's waste composition analysis, [London's consumption-based emissions accounting](#), [London's jobs and skills report](#), the [future of urban consumption in a 1.5 degree world](#) (C40).

² For example, recycling rate, reuse rate, repair rate, service vs goods rate. A full list of 'r-strategies' are available on Circularise's page on [strategies for a circular economy](#).

- development of specific research
- using local policies (e.g. planning) to collect specific data
- survey or other type of specific data collection actions
- lobbying to national government (e.g. Defra or the ONS) to collect UK-wide relevant data.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in considering whether to grant this approval, due regard must be had to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sex, and sexual orientation (and marriage or civil partnership status for the purpose of the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination only).
- 3.2. It is not anticipated that the delivery of this project will have any adverse impact on a specific group or those with protected characteristics. As part of the project we will, data permitting, look to review the impact proposed options on equality, so that any policy decision taken as a result can ensure the approach to transitioning to a circular economy can benefit all Londoners.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. The grant funding approach is in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code.

Key risks and issues

- 4.2. Identified risks and proposed mitigations are outlined in the table below:

Risk	Mitigation
Time pressures to deliver work package outputs, e.g., due to delays in approvals caused by Christmas break, or resource constraints.	• ReLondon has an existing partnership with the Mayor of London and London boroughs; and has demonstrated its ability to successfully deliver several projects for London on time and within budget. • Development of clear and realistic milestones; and regular updates to GLA on progress.
Significant data gaps identified impacting planned delivery approach of work packages.	ReLondon can use its existing network and resources, including its partnership with EMF, to fill any data gaps and/or identify how any data gaps can be filled.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.3. Chapter 10 of the LES contains policies and proposals aimed at accelerating London's transition to a low-carbon circular economy. Details of relevant policies are included in section 1, above.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.4. There are no conflicts of interest to declare for any of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is requested for expenditure of up to £20,000 from the WCE team's 2023-24 budget, within the Environment Unit, to grant-fund ReLondon. This is to support its project to analyse current data and metrics to inform the evidence base for a future circular economy strategy and targets for London.
- 5.2. The grant funds will be paid in two tranches. The first (£10,000) will be made on completion of work package 1. The second (£10,000) will be paid on completion of work packages 2, 3 and 4.
- 5.3. All expenditure will be incurred by 31 March 2024.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 6.1. The table below sets out how the project will be delivered and completed:

Activity	Timeline
Delivery start date	End of January 2024
Work package 1	End of February 2024
Work packages 2, 3 and 4	End of March 2024
Delivery end date	End of March 2024

Appendices and supporting papers:

None.

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will be published either within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 – Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under the FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form? NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Nina Di Certo has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Corporate Investment Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 15 January 2024.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCIAL SERVICES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:

Nina Di Certo

Date:

15/01/2024