

Foreword

Like many cities around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the city of Granada hard, with profound impacts on public health, social well-being and the local economy. As of April 2021, the Autonomous Region of Andalusia, where Granada is located, had the third-highest caseload and number of deaths in the country, after Madrid and Catalonia. The unemployment rate in the city of Granada, already among the highest in the country before the sanitary crisis, reached 28.4% in December 2020. In line with other tourism-dependent provinces, the province of Granada saw a significant fall in gross domestic product (GDP) in Spain (12.6% in 2020), the seventh-highest fall among Spain's 50 Provinces.

However, the COVID-19 crisis is also proving to be an opportunity to rethink urban policies towards more sustainable production and consumption patterns. Lockdowns and related measures saw significant reductions in carbon emissions and, in turn, a greater appreciation and awareness of citizens of the benefits that could arise from more sustainable economic and social models. In response, many cities implemented initiatives that built on this momentum, ranging from bike lanes to food banks, and many are now looking to the potential of the circular economy to accelerate that transformation.

The circular economy is based on three principles: i) design out waste and pollution; ii) keep products and materials in use; and iii) regenerate natural systems. By reconfiguring material loops, the circular economy can increase resilience in terms of food and energy security, reliable access to water, sustainable waste management and the future of transport. Cities could regain public spaces and regenerate green areas. More local food production could reduce transport costs, and organic waste could be used to close loops and strengthen links across urban and rural areas. Buildings, made of traceable and recyclable materials, could reduce emissions and absorb carbon dioxide, increase water efficiency and be self-sufficient energy-wise. This will require supportive and enabling regulations, investments, new forms of collaboration and partnerships and a cultural shift towards a more resourceful and less wasteful society.

The OECD Programme on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions is designed to support the efforts of national and subnational governments in that transition through evidence-based analysis, multi-stakeholder dialogues, tailored recommendations and customised action plans. The Programme relies on a consortium of cities and countries engaged in peer-to-peer dialogues and knowledge sharing activities, including, in addition to Granada (Spain), Glasgow (United Kingdom), Groningen (Netherlands), Tallinn (Estonia), Umeå (Sweden), Valladolid (Spain) and Ireland.

This report summarises the findings from a two-year policy dialogue with the city of Granada, to develop recommendations and a vision for its transition to a circular economy. It draws on existing best practices, catalysed by Granada's own experience with the transformation of a wastewater treatment plant into a biofactory in 2015, which saw the factory go from being an energy consumer to a producer, and contributed to increased water reuse and the production of new material from waste.

These recommendations, along with the set of tools in the OECD's Programme on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions, such as the Checklist for Action and the OECD Scoreboard on the Governance of the Circular Economy, will support Granada's transition from a linear to a circular economy, and position it as a future reference for the circular economy.



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