

Group Study Visit in Prato, Italy

Circular economy solutions & urban governance in a highly industrialised textile city

Prato, an Italian Mission City of 200,000 inhabitants, serves as a laboratory for social, industrial, and cultural innovation, advancing circular and industrial transition strategies while collaborating with peer cities to strengthen the implementation of its Climate City Contract.

Key Climate Actions to discover

Industrial wastewater treatment and water reuse: In Prato's textile district, the city has developed an integrated circular water system through the GIDA treatment plant and the district-level "Progetto Acqua." By combining advanced treatment technologies, environmental monitoring, and strong public-private cooperation, Prato coordinates the entire industrial water cycle to enable water reuse, cut pollution, and strengthen climate resilience – offering a governance model for sustainable transition in dense industrial clusters.

Circular textile ecosystem: Recycling-oriented manufacturers and circular fashion companies demonstrate how mechanical textile recycling, eco-design, and short supply chains can turn waste into new market-ready products. By linking material recovery with innovation, finance, and consumer engagement, the district highlights both the enablers and barriers for SMEs in scaling circular, low-emission industrial models.

Circular City governance model, connecting industrial infrastructure, research and innovation, environmental services, and municipal governance. By integrating data, monitoring, skills development, and stakeholder engagement, the city supports its climate neutrality pathway while offering transferable lessons on public-private cooperation for other cities pursuing circular and low-emission transitions.

Learn from these enabling factors

- **Technological innovation & infrastructure** – Deploying circular water systems and textile recycling technologies to improve resource efficiency at district scale.
- **Governance and policy coordination** – Aligning municipal departments, utilities, and industry through integrated governance and public-private cooperation.
- **Finance and funding mechanisms** – Enabling SME transition and infrastructure investment through targeted financial and support tools.
- **Social and business model innovation** – Developing circular textile value chains that link environmental performance with local economic value.
- **Data and digitalisation** – Using monitoring systems and traceability tools to support compliance, planning, and performance assessment.

Learn about the collaboration with local stakeholders

- **Municipality of Prato** – City teams leading environmental, industrial, and urban innovation actions.
- **GIDA and partners** – Operators managing industrial water treatment and reuse.
- **Textile SMEs and circular manufacturers** – Companies advancing recycling, eco-design, and low-impact production.
- **Research and innovation actors** – Institutions such as the University and Prato Textile Hub supporting applied research and skills.
- **Business support and finance organisations** – Bodies helping SMEs invest in circular technologies.
- **Engagement and facilitation actors** – Groups enabling stakeholder dialogue and knowledge exchange.