

# Embracing Retrofitting: A Path to a Greener Future

As we look around our cities, it's clear: we're at a crossroads. Our buildings are old, and they're using up a lot of energy and resources. The [Circularity in the Built Environment: Unlocking Opportunities in Retrofits White Paper](#) from the World Economic Forum has some eye-opening insights that push us to rethink how we approach our built environment. It's time to consider retrofitting as a smart and sustainable way forward.

## Why Do We Need to Change?

Did you know that buildings are responsible for about [37% of global carbon emissions](#)? With more people moving into cities, the demand for construction materials is skyrocketing. The traditional way of tearing down old buildings to put up new ones isn't just wasteful; it's harmful to our planet. Retrofitting allows us to upgrade existing buildings instead of starting from scratch. This means we can save materials and reduce waste.

## What is Circularity?

At the heart of retrofitting is a concept called circularity. This means keeping materials in use for as long as possible. Imagine if we could take materials from old buildings and use them in new projects instead of throwing them away. The White Paper suggests that by 2050, we could need up to 40 billion tonnes of materials for retrofitting, and we could potentially reuse half of that. This not only cuts down on waste but also helps lower our carbon footprint.

## Economic Benefits for Everyone

Retrofitting isn't just good for the environment; it's also a smart business move. The retrofit market is expected to grow from \$500 billion today to about \$3.9 trillion by 2050. That's a huge opportunity for everyone involved—real estate owners, designers, manufacturers, and even waste handlers.

Investing in retrofitting means opening up new revenue streams and staying competitive. Plus, it could create over 2 million new jobs in North America and Europe alone. This is not just about saving the planet; it's about boosting local economies and providing good jobs for people.

## Tackling the Challenges

Of course, retrofitting comes with its challenges. We need to figure out how to source sustainable materials and navigate the rules and regulations. But these hurdles aren't impossible to overcome.

Collaboration is key. By working together and sharing ideas, we can build a strong network that supports circular practices. Governments can help by offering incentives like tax breaks for sustainable projects. And using technology, like materials passports, can make tracking materials easier.

## **A Call to Action**

So, what's the takeaway from the Retrofit Boost report? It's a wake-up call for everyone involved in the built environment. We need to rethink what we value and how we achieve sustainability.

Let's ask ourselves: how can we make the most of our existing buildings? What creative solutions can we come up with to ensure our structures are not just functional but also environmentally friendly?

The answers lie in our willingness to embrace change. By prioritising retrofitting, we can pave the way for a sustainable future. The time to act is now. Let's seize this chance to turn our buildings into models of sustainability and innovation.