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In4Green aims to foster green transition in small and medium-size European industrial cities. It is an URBACT project, running from 2023 to 2025, co-finaced by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). In4Green is a network of 10 European cities who will develop integrated action plans to promote their local green transition. This Quarterly Network Report reflects the performance of partners at transnational and local level in the development of exchange and learning activities.

January 2025.

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- Salerno: Francesco Formisano and Chiara Della Pepa.
- Solingen: Anna Mader.
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Pictures by: Jose Costero, Solingen City Council, Neue Effizienz, Avilés City Council, Salerno City Council, Larissa City Council, Famalicao City Council and Meath County Council.

IV QUARTERLY NÉTWORK REPORT IN4GREEN PARTNERS ARE:

AVILÉS (SPAIN) **BIJELO POLJE (MONTENEGRO)** DABROWA GÓRNICZA (POLAND) LARISSA (GREECE) NAVAN (IRELAND) SABADELL (SPAIN) SALERNO (ITALY) **SOLINGEN (GERMANY)** VILA NOVA DE FAMALICÃO (PORTUGAL) ŽĎÁR NAD SÁZAVOU (CZECH REPUBLIC) 0 \bigcirc



MARY D'ARCY. Climate Change Co-ordinator. Meath County Council. Navan (Ireland)



Food waste is a growing issue in Ireland with the average household discarding 150kgs annually. In Navan, there was a total of approx. 1,700 tonnes of food waste, equating to nearly €8 million in cost. The general idea of the testing action was to address **the issue of food waste in the Navan area by changing public behaviour and perceptions**. We wanted to test how people engage in discussions and demonstrations on how to reduce food waste from hosting talks and showcasing the Food Cloud unit and Biodigester in our Recycling Centre to how to grow their own food and composting with demonstrations and to test a pilot community garden scheme in the Navan area.

The activity was mainly focused on public servants and citizens. How were they able to participate? What did you ask them to do?

Both parties were able **to attend demonstrations and workshops** on food waste and food waste reduction with members of the public also receiving workshops on composting. Members of the public were able to connect and link in with each other to discuss ideas and potential opportunities through connecting. The public also had an increased **hands-on approach** with training on how to grow their own food so they can carry that knowledge back to their communities.

And how was the testing activity in general? Was it a positive experience?

Overall the testing activity was **very well received** with a high level of community engagement with attendance from a wide range of groups across the public. Many attendees wanted to see more similar events going forward and **provided ideas for further potential testing actions** that could be taken.

And finally, can you tell us what the main conclusions are? What did you learn from the test?

One key takeaway from the community garden project to be used going forward would be to facilitate similar events during warmer weather in the growing season. We learned that connecting groups with common interests from our events can be key in creating effective change in the community through building linkages and facilitating those connection opportunities. We also learned that liaising with local representatives helps improve engagement and outreach. In conclusion there is a huge appetite for community gardens in the urban area with potential to expand the programme to other groups in the community and improve outreach and that there is also potential to expand into other testing actions. Starting on the ground with a variety of stakeholders and small actions, we found that big differences can be made to help Navan become more sustainable.



THE LEAD EXPERT'S POINT OF VIEW.



2024 has come to an end, marking the conclusion of the second phase of this APN network: the Planning Actions Stage. The final quarter of the year has been particularly intense for the partners, as the period between the end of summer and the start of the Christmas holidays leaves little time to carry out activities. For this reason, the In4Green partners have worked tirelessly to make the most of the available time.

While the partners have continued developing the Integrated Action Plans and engaging stakeholders through the URBACT Local Groups, one of the most demanding tasks this quarter has been the organisation of testing activities. Designing, planning, organising, and evaluating these pilot actions has posed a significant challenge, but judging by the feedback received, the effort has always been worthwhile. Many valuable lessons have been gathered to inform the development of the Integrated Action Plans.

"Designing, planning, organising, and evaluating these pilot actions has posed a significant but worthwhile challenge." Jose Costero, In4Green Lead Expert.

During this last quarter of 2024, the In4Green partners participated in the third Transnational Meeting, held in Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal. Attendees had the opportunity to take part in sessions on testing activities, stakeholder engagement, study visits, and thematic learning on climate change, digitalisation, and sustainable energy communities.

One of the highlights of the third Transnational Meeting was the session dedicated to Mid-Term Reflection, during which partners discussed the progress of the network at both transnational and local levels. Overall, the partners believe that progress is on track and meeting their initial expectations, making significant changes to the original methodology or additional support from experts or the Secretariat unnecessary.

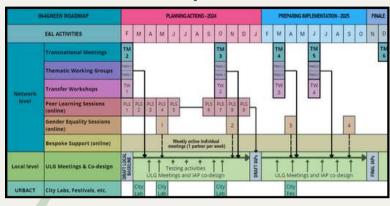
Meanwhile, online learning and exchange activities have continued to take place, with particular mention of the two thematic online workshops (Peer Learning Sessions) on water management and urban centre revitalisation, as well as the second session on gender equality.

By Jose Costero, In4Green Lead Expert.

2024 IV QUARTER BALANCE

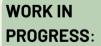
WHERE ARE WE NOW IN THE APN JOURNEY?

In4Green Roadmap

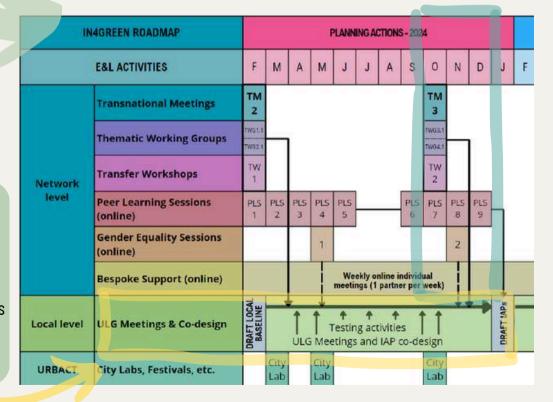


ACHIEVED:

- 2 Peer Learning Sessions.
- 1 Gender Equality Session.
- 12 Bespoke Support meetings.
- 1 Testing Activities support meeting.
- 3 Monthly coordination meetings.



- ULG meetings.
- IAPs drafting.
- Testing activities planning and organisation.





A meaningful and fruitful experience for exchange, collaborative learning and reflection on the progress of the network.

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On October 23rd and 24th of 2024, Vila Nova de Famalicão (Portugal) hosted the third transnational meeting of the URBACT In4Green network. During this event, partners advanced their collaborative learning and peer-to-peer exchange processes to coproduce local green transition strategies in partnership with their stakeholders.



The meeting brought together approximately 40 participants from nine European cities, along with representatives from the URBACT Secretariat, the URBACT Spain National Contact Point, and experts including Lead URBACT Expert Jose Costero and Ad Hoc Expert Mar Santamaria.

A time full of activities...

Thematic Working Groups

DIGITISATION AND INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION CLIMATE
NEUTRALITY
AND ENERGY
TRANSITION

Study Visits

CITEVE TEXTILE TECH CENTRE

FAMALICAO IN HUB

URBACT Methodology

TESTING ACTIVITIES

Transfer Workshop

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMMUNITIES

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Capacity building

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Mid-Term Reflection

MTR MFFTING

Management

COORDINATION & COMMUNICATION

During the III Transnational Meeting of the URBACT In4Green network, 9 partners and more than 20 stakeholders participated in sessions designed to foster collaboration and exchange. Highlights included presentations on testing activities, a workshop on the experiences of Sustainable Energy Communities in Larissa (Greece) and Navan (Ireland), and thematic workshops on Climate Neutrality and Decarbonization, as well as Digitalization and Industrial Innovation.

Once upon a time a group of stakeholders... Part I

It's 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, 23rd of October 2024. The setting is the ground floor of a sleek, modern building housing CNEVE, a textile industry technology centre located in Famalicão. Warm autumn sunlight streams through the expansive south-facing windows, illuminating the space.

Gradually, attendees litter into a spacious meeting room adjacent to the lobby, taking their seats at small, randomly arranged round tables. For most, this is the lirst time they are meeting their European counterparts face to face. Among them is Emma Gill, Boyne Valley Food Business Development Officer from Ireland, and Marcel-li Pérez, a Textile Engineer and professor at the Higher School of Design in Sabadell, Catalonia. Others, like Martin Mrkos, the Mayor of the Czech city of Žďár nad Sázavou, and Miguel Ángel Peña, Innovation and Research Manager at the Spanish company SATEC, are familiar faces in these types of gatherings.

URBACT lead Expert Jose Costero opens the session with a concise explanation of the vital role stakeholders play in designing action plans for the green transition. "The active participation of your stakeholders in the co-design and implementation of the integrated action plans you are developing is crucial for the success of your green transition processes," Jose asserts. Urban managers in the room nod in agreement, acutely aware of the challenge and importance of achieving this.

"But what motivates stakeholders to dedicate their time voluntarily?" Jose asks the audience, continuing: "Have you considered what they gain from participating? What drives them—whether it's influence, inspiration, knowledge, professional development, or something else?" He then sets the stage for the stakeholders to share their perspectives, inviting each to introduce themselves and explain their collaboration with their municipality, as well as their personal motivations.

Once upon a time a group of stakeholders... Part II

Emma Gill takes the floor, speaking about her work in Navan, Ireland. "Our food strategy is based on a collective approach to sustainability. Our vision is for the Boyne Valley to be recognised as a leading region for food sustainability and the role of food in contributing to our societal, environmental, and economic objectives."

Mext, Lawra García, an astrophysicist and innovation lead at the Spanish startup Room2030, shares her vision. "Our goal is to create the room of the future, which, manufactured industrially, will be intelligent, sustainable, flexible, and healthy," says Lawra, emphasizing that her company's involvement stems from a strong commitment to sustainability.

With each stakeholder's introduction, the room becomes a vibrant space of shared goals and diverse motivations, setting the tone for a collaborative and inspiring day ahead.

The testimonies at the event are as diverse as the people behind them: university researchers, CEOs, NGO workers, political representatives, municipal employees, and members of industrial associations. Each brings a unique story, yet all share a common purpose: contributing to the ecological transition of their cities, especially in the context of their economies and industries.

This shared mission is why they collaborate with local governments through URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) and why they travelled to Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal. Here, they came to learn firsthand about the efforts of other European cities and to exchange ideas with peers from different countries, even when language barriers made communication a challenge.

Their areas of interest were as varied as their backgrounds, though all were tied to the green transition: circular economy and recycling, energy transition and climate change, sustainable water management, sustainable food production, and the application of new technologies, among others.

MID-TERM REFLECTION. RESULTS:

Biggest risks to partners' IAPs:



- Low stakeholder engagement in the IAP design, or a lack of skills or capacity to involve them, could result in the IAP content not being widely shared or accepted, which poses a risk to its implementation.
- Excessive ambition in including actions in the IAPs may make their execution difficult due to a lack of funds or financing, or due to their infeasibility.
- Insufficient ambition in some IAPs or a very narrow focus may lead to a limited impact, which could reduce stakeholder buy-in.
- Over-involvement of ruling political representatives might lead to a loss of local authority interest in executing the IAP in the event of a change in government.
- Incorrect application of the integrated approach could result in the IAPs being contradictory to other local policies or the interests of other administrative levels.

Key messages:



- Enhancing stakeholder engagement: Limited stakeholder involvement poses a risk to IAP implementation. Addressing this will require targeted support for partners in ULG facilitation and stakeholder collaboration.
- **Balancing IAP ambition:** Both overly ambitious and insufficiently ambitious IAPs could undermine their success. Future priorities will focus on helping partners calibrate their action plans for feasibility and impact.
- Strengthening the integrated approach: To ensure alignment with local policies and broader administrative levels, the integrated approach will remain a central focus, with additional guidance and practice provided in 2025 activities.
- Capacity building for financing: Given partners' expressed need for support in financing strategies, Section 4 of the IAP will require special attention, with an emphasis on training and practical tools for identifying and securing funding.

Key learnings:

"It is always enriching to see how other cities plan actions and mobilize their stakeholders".

"We learnt useful information on how to develop the Integrated Action Plan, specially about the first two sections of the IAP".

"The meeting emphasized the importance of integrating sustainability into urban planning, focusing on green spaces, energy efficiency, and promoting circular economy".

"We learnt about how to promote cooperation between local administration and business sector".

"Reminder that there is a lot of useful information within the URBACT Toolbox and review status of IAP against URBACT cross cutting themes".

"Meeting the entire value chain in an industrial sector is key to reach quality processes like in Famalicao (textile industry)".

"Thanks to the sharing activities with other cities, we have gathered additional ideas on how to involve stakeholders in our testing actions."

"Community Engagement: Active involvement of local communities in decision-making processes was highlighted as crucial for the success of urban initiatives."





EXCHANGE & LEARNING BEYOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS

ONLINE PEER LEARNING SESSIONS (PLS) ORGANISED:

Peer Learning Sessions are an opportunity to know more, explore and learn from good practices and experiences of other partners in the network. The good practices (GP) and topics have been selected based on your interest and preferences discussed during the Activation Stage.

PLS7 - SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

Larissa's GP4 - Wireless System for Automatic Telemetric Metering of Digital Water Meters in the Water Supply Network of the Municipal Water Supply and Sewerage Company of Larissa (DEYAL).

Solingen's GP6 - Flood and torrential rain management for climate adaptation.

PLS9 - CITY CENTRE REVITALISATION

Avilés' GP2 - Regeneration of the historic city centre to enhance the quality of life and attractiveness of the city.

Navan's GP1 - Navan 2030 Integrated Public Realm and Movement Plan.

Salerno's GP4 - Revitalisation of the City Centre: Ex Chiesa Monte dei Morti





EXCHANGE & LEARNING BEYOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS

PLS7 - SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

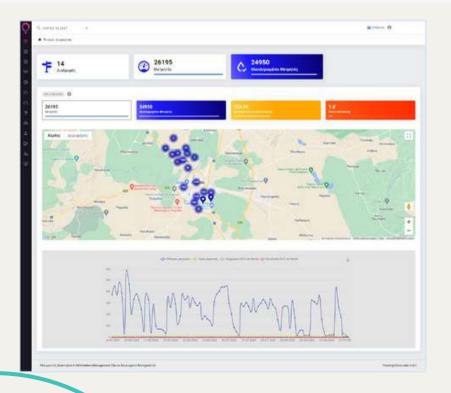
Larissa: Telemetric metering - DEYAL

What?

The general objective of this good practice is to protect and sustainably manage water resources through accurate monitoring of water consumption and the detection of leaks in the water network. The installation of digital water meters aims to reduce Non-Revenue Water (NRW), improve customer billing and service, and enhance efficiency in drinking water management.

Lessons learnt.

The main success of this good practice will depend on the smooth implementation of the project, the effective management of data, and the participation and training of DEYAL personnel. The key lesson highlights the importance of technological upgrades in public services and the need for continuous monitoring and adaptation of resource management in real time. Despite the challenges that may be phased during implementation, the anticipated reduction in operating costs and improvement in service quality make this good practice a model for similar actions in other areas.





EXCHANGE & LEARNING BEYOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS

PLS7 - SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

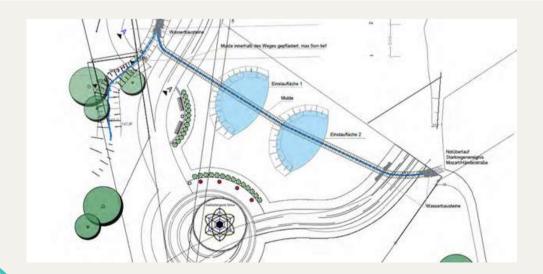
Solingen: Flood and torrential rain management

What?

Due to the development of urban drainage in recent years, much more realistic simulations (coupled runoff simulation) are available for sewer network verification but also for flood simulation, which meets the challenges of heavy rainfall. Following the development of new water management methods, the focus is now on implementing measures. From a technical point of view, water-sensitive measures such as infiltration, drainage and receiving water are part of the core business of urban drainage.

Lessons learnt.

The implementation of flood protection measures is a joint task. It is important to strengthen this awareness among colleagues in other departments, although they naturally rarely understand drainage concerns as part of their own task. Therefore, it is ultimately essential to convince the city leadership of the broad responsibility and to obtain the "political power of attorney" to demand areas for flood protection. If at all, municipalities have only reacted after their own flooding experiences. Only then were interdisciplinary working groups or integrated planning approaches organized and procedures adapted. The aim must be for the municipalities to clarify responsibilities and the distribution of tasks, to recognise the risk and, ideally, to have developed measures before the next event.





EXCHANGE & LEARNING BEYOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS

PLS9 - CITY CENTRE REVITALISATION

Avilés: Regeneration of Historic City Centre

What?

The primary objective of the urban regeneration of Avilés' city centre was to revitalize its historic district, enhancing its appeal as a space for community living, tourism, and economic activity, while preserving its heritage and promoting sustainable development. The goal was to transform the historic centre into an economic driver by reclaiming its historical and symbolic value and improving its tourist appeal.

Lessons learnt.

The keys to success have been the active involvement of the local population in the design and effective execution of the projects, the comprehensive vision that combined cultural, social, and economic development, and the efficient use of funding, whether European, national, regional, or from the local taxpayers of Avilés.





EXCHANGE & LEARNING BEYOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS

PLS9 - CITY CENTRE REVITALISATION

Navan: Integrated Public Realm and Movement Plan

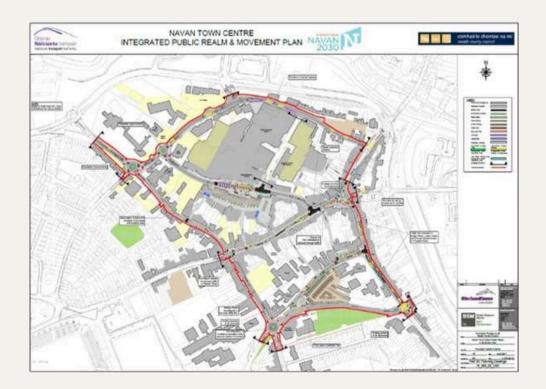
What?

Navan 2030 is about the future of Navan. It begins now, with plans to rejuvenate the heart of the town. It will deliver a revitalised and accessible town centre, making Navan a better place to live, work and visit. It will strengthen economic growth in the town, supporting business, retail and tourism.

Lessons learnt.

Ongoing communication and consultation with the public and stakeholders have been key in the successful delivery of the project to date, which commenced construction works in 2019.

Planning Consent (Part VIII) was required, process required further communication and consultation in advance of the works and during the construction phase has achieved majority support from both the public, businesses and elected representatives.





EXCHANGE & LEARNING BEYOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS

PLS9 - CITY CENTRE REVITALISATION

Salerno: Ex Chiesa Monte dei Morti

What?

Our work concentrated on the Church of San Sebastiano al Monte dei Morti, a rare example of late Renaissance architecture, probably built on the basis of an early Christian church, dating back to at least the year 994. The Church was located in a strategic position, serving as a crossroads for the roads that anciently led to nearby towns.

The goal of intervention was to restore the Church in order to highlight the traces of the different eras that the walls of the structure have imprinted on them, and at the same time to give the City of Salerno a place that can serve as a hub for cultural activities.

Lessons learnt.

We have seen that it is possible to renovate historic buildings while maintaining their historical and cultural integrity and at the same time making them fully usable to the public. We have seen that the citizenship is happy to use these places, and respects them, especially if they are used for everyday activities for the citizenship, such as services and dissemination of culture. We learnt that such interventions can be an asset for the local community if they are well planned and then returned to the community.

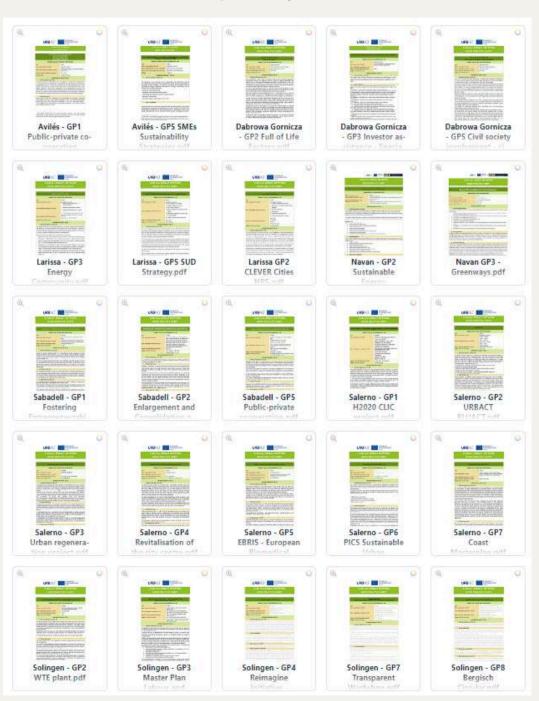




EXCHANGE & LEARNING BEYOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS

GOOD PRACTICES REPOSITORY:

Up to 38 Good Practices Sheets have been already produced by partners and stored in the repository. Available for consultation.





EXCHANGE & LEARNING BEYOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS

BESPOKE SUPPORT MEETINGS

Individual follow up meetings between partners and Lead Expert. 12 meetings were organised during the fourth quarter of 2024, finishing the second round of meetings with partners and starting the third one.

Participants feedback:

- "The Lead Expert has put a lot of work into the bespoke meetings with us and helped us with our ideas (particularly around for testing actions)".
- "The meetings have been very useful since we tackled specific difficulties and challenges from each partner".
- "The Bespoke Support has been very useful, especially for testing activities".
- "We are interested in having more of these meetings as the process of IAP development becomes intensive".
- "Meetings are helpful for the constant exchange on the current status and questions about the methodology".
- "They provide an exchange of ideas and allow us to evaluate the current status of our local project".
- "I find the Bespoke Support Meetings with the Lead Expert to be extremely valuable. These individual sessions provide tailored guidance that addresses our specific challenges and needs, making the advice highly relevant and actionable".
- "They help to focus attention and get useful advice".
- "Meetings allow us to summarize previous activities and outline the path for further activities as part of the implementation of the assumptions of the network".
- "The Bespoke Support Meetings are an excellent opportunity to tackle the challenges we face in our In4Green journey at local level, with the support and guidance of our Lead Expert".



EXCHANGE & LEARNING BEYOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS

GENDER EQUALITY SESSIONS

In order to incorporate the gender perspective in the design and implementation of the local IAPs, the organisation of online sessions on the cross-cutting theme of gender equality is planned. The second Gender Equality Session was organised during the fourth guarter of 2024 with the following content:

Content:

- · Review of the previous session.
- Bridging gender gaps. Good practices from Europe.
- Defining actions. Potential actions to be taken.
- Group discussion.



TESTING ACTIVITIES BY IN4GREEN PARTNERS

Starting small but thinking big







Brief description:

We needed to know more about circular economy challenges and potential of SMEs in our region. So we organised different events to have discussions with SMEs about circular economy (individual interviews, workshops, group interviews).

Stakeholder engagement:

We primarily involved partners from science and regional intermediaries to carry out and plan the various formats. The interviews were developed in particular by the university and other research institutes. For the World Café, we also worked together with various stakeholders in order to be able to present and moderate the various topics in the event.

Target groups:

SMEs from Solingen, Remscheid and Wuppertal.

Results:

The insights were interesting because we learned a lot about the companies themselves and their production processes. The different formats led to different results. In formats in which several companies were involved, general, organizational and regulatory challenges/solutions were discussed.

Evaluation:

We evaluated the testing activity with a qualitative analysis matrix.

IAP connection:

Information gathered will be use for the development of the IAP.



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Brief description:

The participants were divided into three focus groups using the typical World Café methodology. The process included joint exploration to identify challenges and different needs from the perspectives of all stakeholders. Each group discussed the proposed actions, focusing on what they found useful about each action and, if not, why they didn't find it useful. They also examined whether they believed the action was feasible, and if not, the reasons for this.

Stakeholder engagement:

A World Café Workshop toolkit was created to encourage interactive participation. The toolkit includes evaluation sheets for six proposed actions, assessing their usefulness, applicability, contribution to improvements, interest, and results. Additionally, the toolkit provides a blank sheet for participants to suggest other related solutions.

Target groups:

The World Café Workshop was addressed to a wider range of In4Green stakeholders, including representatives from the quadruple helix, that is, public sector, private companies, research & academia and citizens' associations.

Results:

These diverse stakeholders provided useful inputs on the proposed actions, which will contribute to the better implementation of the project's Integrated Action Plan.

Evaluation:

Based on the foreseen indicators of the Testing Action Canvas in terms of the event, that is, number of participants, sectors and satisfaction level through the event evaluation sheet (format & methodology, content, timming, tools, facilitation & moderation) and the number of proposed solutions tested and evaluated.

IAP connection:

We plan to connect the Testing Activity with the Integrated Action Plan, as improvements to the proposed actions have emerged through the suggestions and synergies of the participants in the World Café.



Brief description:

We celebrated a workshop focused in one of the industrial areas of Sabadell: Can Roqueta. We designed an agenda to allow university students to explore in depth the industrial area: territorial framework, challenges, barriers, opportunities, current actions, stakeholders, new solutions, etc. After the talks, the visit and the fieldwork, the students had the opportunity to start working in groups about the problems identified and their possible solutions. The workshop was the triggering point for the students to start working on future actions on sustainable industry.

Stakeholder engagement:

In order to engage academy and young students we contacted with the Department of Geography of the UAB.

Target groups:

Academy and future young professionals (students) involved in city planning.

Results:

It was a great experience and we hope to repeat it next year in a different study area. The students will present their actions (16 actions are expected) by the end of the course. Local team will attend to the presentations at the UAB.

Evaluation:

During the final presentation the students will showcase their findings and proposals. The quality of them will be evaluated.

IAP connection:

We will consider the integration of some of the actions in the IAP.



COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS DURING IV QUARTER OF 2024

Published articles:



Digitisation and industrial innovation: How to get ready?



18 months in a wrap-up: our progress so far

As we close the year, it's a great moment to reflect on how the In4Green network has progressed so far. Let's take a look back at what we've achieved together in these last 18 months

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TOGETHER FOR GREEN TRANSITION: STAKEHOLDERS UNITE!

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In4Green

ACTION PLANNING NETWORK





IV QUARTERLY
NETWORK REPORT
October - December 2024

STAY TUNED, THE BEST IS YET TO COME!