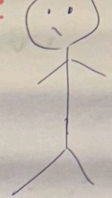


# Quarterly Network Report 3

July - September 2024

IMPROVE MATCHMAKING of  
TALENT - EMPLOYERS in order  
to MEET MUTUAL NEEDS



transparent criteria by an  
institution using established  
quality assurance standards

(1)

The use of micro-credentials  
is a response to changing  
models of education and  
labor market needs

(2)



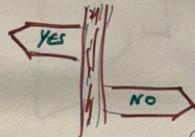
Micro-credentials are issued  
by schools, universities,  
educational institutions,  
NQOs, sports associations and  
clubs on criteria based on  
transparent criteria

(3)



TRY TO IMPLEMENT  
the "microcredentials" idea

- ↳ it requires cooperation  
between universities - local  
authorities and business
- ↳ it can also help with finding  
"middle ground" among  
stakeholders
- ↳ we can carry out survey about  
needs among stakeholders



TALENT  
INTERACTION

? HOW MIGHT WE... ?  
IMPROVE LEVEL OF COOPERATION  
BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTING  
BUSINESS for talents in order  
to retain talents in the city

(shaking hands!)

ONE DAY one-stop-shop event

- ↳ gather representatives of all institutions  
in one place with near attractiveness  
each institution will present  
their current offer for business  
and talents

- better recognition of the institutions
- networking

# Table of Content

Introduction

Page 3

Project  
Progress

Page 6

Highlights  
from TN  
Activities

Page 8

Local  
Activities &  
Progress

Page 12

Knowledge  
and  
Inspiration

Page 24

People and  
Insights

Page 29

Upcoming  
Activities

Page 45

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# Introduction

Welcome to the third issue of the Quarterly Network Report (QNR) of the C4TALENT URBACT Action Planning Network! If you're curious about how small and medium-sized towns across Europe are tackling brain drain and building thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems, you're in the right place. This quarterly bulletin offers an insider's perspective on the journey of our network and its 10 partner cities as they navigate shared challenges and create local solutions.

***In this issue, we dive into the highlights of our latest activities:***

- ➔ ***Relive the 3rd Core Network Meeting held in the stunning city of Alghero, Sardinia, and explore the key takeaways from this inspiring event. (Although this meeting took place already in Q4, we still cover it in this 3rd Report.)***
- ➔ ***Learn from the Talent Attraction and Retention Masterclass by Marcus Andersson, where we uncovered valuable strategies to strengthen our local talent attraction and retention ecosystem.***
- ➔ ***Discover local success stories and see the progress our partner cities are making as they bring the URBACT method to life.***

- ➔ ***Meet the changemakers: Hear from local politicians and city staff about their insights and experiences in the "People and Insights" chapter.***
- ➔ ***Look ahead: Get a sneak peek at the exciting activities and milestones we're planning for the next quarter.***



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# Project Progress



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# Highlights from transnational activities

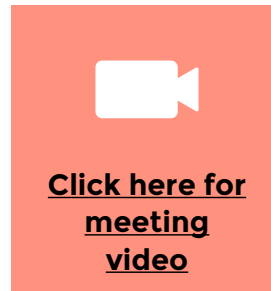
# 3rd Core Network Meeting - Alghero

**T**he C4TALENT network held its 3rd Core Network Meeting in the stunning coastal city of Alghero, Sardinia, from October 1-3, 2024. This three-day event brought together partners to deepen collaboration, exchange ideas, and reflect on progress midway through the project. With a mix of engaging sessions, practical workshops, and a taste of Sardinia's culture (including excellent food), the meeting set the stage for the next steps in our journey.

## → Day 1: Welcome and Talent Attraction Masterclass (Part 1)

The meeting began with a warm welcome from the host city and an introduction to Alghero's context, challenges, and opportunities. A guided tour followed, allowing participants to better understand the city's fabric and its approach to talent attraction.

The afternoon was dedicated to the Talent Attraction and Retention Masterclass led by Marcus Andersson from Future Place



Leadership. The first sessions explored key concepts, such as branding, reception, and integration, highlighting what makes a city attractive to talent. City teams then worked on real-world case studies to apply these insights in practice. The day ended with a joint dinner, offering participants a chance to connect informally and reflect on their learnings.

## → Day 2: Masterclass (Part 2) and Action Planning

Day 2 continued the masterclass with team pitches and collaborative discussions. Partners presented their ideas, incorporating lessons from the first day, before closing the session with a focus on practical applications.

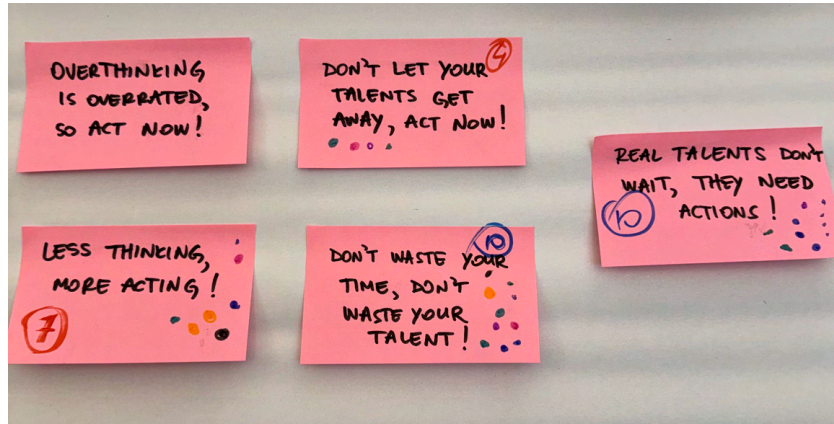
The second half of the day shifted to the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). Partners reviewed their draft plans through peer feedback and plenary discussions. Sessions also explored how well the plans integrated key elements of the URBACT method, helping cities refine their strategies. The





# 3rd Core Network Meeting

day ended with another shared dinner, fostering both professional and personal connections.



## → Day 3: Mid-Term Reflections and Future Steps

The final day opened with a Mid-Term Reflection session, where the results of the mid-term survey were presented and discussed. This was followed by a collaborative planning session to chart the remaining stages of the project. The meeting concluded with updates on finance,



administration, communication, and testing actions, ensuring all partners are aligned as we move forward.

By blending practical knowledge, collaborative exercises, and the inspiring setting of Alghero, the meeting provided partners with valuable insights, strengthened connections, and clear priorities for the next phase.



# 3rd Core Network Meeting - Alghero



# Masterclass 3 - Talent Attraction & Retention

**O**ur network organizes a series of **masterclasses** to help partners effectively tackle the policy challenges they face. According to the Baseline Study, “Masterclasses are longer sessions providing partners with deeper knowledge and more details.” To deliver these sessions, we bring in experts who are not just thought leaders but also experienced practitioners. The goal is to equip our partners with both sound theoretical foundations and practical tools they can adapt and use in their own cities.

The first masterclass was held in Vilanova i la Geltrú and focused on entrepreneurial ecosystems. The second masterclass took place in Alghero and provided a deep dive into Talent Attraction Management. The session was led by Marcus Andersson from Future Place Leadership,



combining expert insights with hands-on activities.

## **Key Themes of the Talent Attraction Management Masterclass:**

- Talent Attraction Management as a Method: WHAT and WHY?
- Branding and Attraction
- Reception and Integration

## **The Learning Journey**

Preparation for the masterclass began even before the event. Partners were assigned homework to:

- Familiarize themselves with the Talent Attraction Management Framework.
- Identify their most pressing challenges around talent attraction and retention.
- Frame one specific challenge using the “How Might We” (HMW) method.

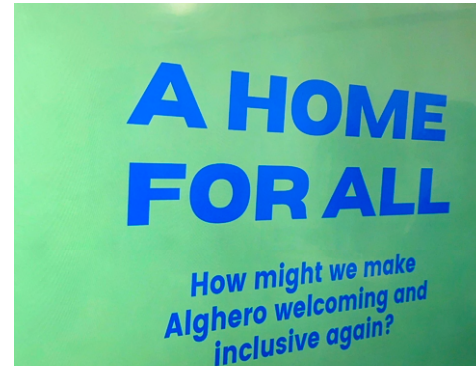
During the masterclass, partners brainstormed innovative solutions to their selected challenges, refined their ideas, and pitched them in just 5 minutes. The result? A burst of creativity,

# Masterclass 3 - Talent Attraction & Retention

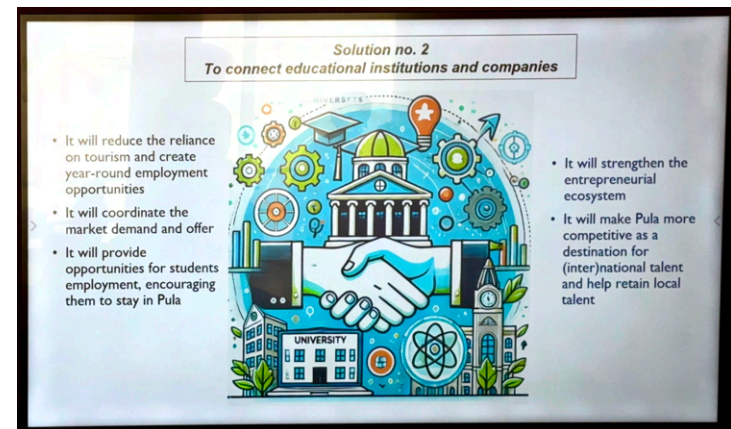


with partners delivering powerful—and often fun—presentations.

By the end of the session, participants not only grasped the concept of Talent Attraction Management but also learned how to apply it to their local contexts. They



gained inspiration from real-life examples of how other cities overcame similar challenges, leaving them better equipped to address talent attraction in their own communities.



# C4Talent Partners Corner

“In order to charm top talents we should start to build a city so irresistible that makes everyone wanting to stay!”

“Key elements of a strong brand for attracting talent: visibility, reputation, identity, authenticity and purpose.”

“Attracting talent to a city isn’t just a one-time effort —it’s part of a bigger system. It’s not only about bringing people in but also about helping them settle in, offering the right support and services, and connecting them with the opportunities the city and its businesses provide. To make it truly successful, cities should also collaborate with the talent they attract to draw in even more bright minds.”

“During the Masterclass on Talent Attraction we got new insights such as the role of branding in talent attraction and the development of a customer journey of talent. Markus also shared a useful model that will be integrated in our action plan.”

“The importance of place branding and identity, digital marketing tools and creative campaigns in talent attraction management.”

“I learned why attracting talent is becoming increasingly important for places and why we need to start focusing on managing talent in our future plans.”

“Leverage the city's unique strengths by highlighting its identity—its brand, heritage, and character—to create an authentic and compelling story that appeals to talent. Building a strong social network and nurturing a welcoming, inclusive culture are key to helping people feel at home. When these elements are in place, talent retention will naturally follow.”

To attract and retain talent, municipalities must shift from generic promotion to building a compelling narrative that highlights their unique lifestyle, career opportunities, and sense of belonging—turning residents into ambassadors and creating a magnet for skilled individuals.

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# Local Activities

# Alghero

**O**n September 18, 2024, the 5th Urbact Local Group meeting for the C4TALENT - URBACT IV project was held in Alghero. The meeting aimed to address the issue of brain drain by presenting proposals to retain young talent and promote sustainable economic and cultural development. Discussions focused on innovation, leveraging local resources, and creating an ecosystem conducive to entrepreneurship and creativity.

The meeting brought together representatives from the new elected municipal administration, research institutions, youth associations, economic and cultural organizations as usual.

Key points of convergence were identified between the administration's priorities and proposed actions, highlighting the need for integrated strategies to create opportunities for those choosing to stay or return to Alghero.

The group committed to develop an operational action plan in the coming months.

Meanwhile we were in the middle of the preparation for the next and third Transnational Meeting, scheduled in October: a three-day event that gave us the opportunity to host our partners in Alghero e keep on working on the project issues.

# Roeselare

During the summer, our efforts were focused on developing the **draft version of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)**. This process began with gathering essential data to understand the city's context and the core challenges, including key aspects such as demography, employment, and the local economy.

The next step involved creating the initial intervention logic, which laid the groundwork for the plan. This included:

- A concise summary of the **problem and challenges**,
- A clear and aspirational **vision**, and
- Specific **goals** to address the identified issues.

**On August 27**, the local team convened to review and discuss the draft. The meeting provided an opportunity to gather feedback, refine the intervention logic, and ensure the plan aligns with the city's needs and priorities.

# Alytus

**A**t the end of June, the procurement process for acquiring design services for the Alytus Hub was announced for the third time. Although a winner was expected to be selected in August, no participants submitted proposals. A new competition was launched in late August, and the winner is expected to be announced by December 20, 2024.

On July 31, 2024, the ULG (Urban Local Group) held its fourth meeting to discuss potential laboratories for the Alytus Hub. During the session, the core problem for the IAP (Integrated Action Plan) was presented and reviewed. Based on the ULG members' suggestions, the core problem was refined.

The group met again on September 26, 2024, to collaboratively map the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Alytus and review the first draft of the IAP. Following their input, the draft was revised accordingly.

During this reporting period, the Alytus City Municipal Business Support Program for young people was finalized and approved by the Alytus City Council. Applications for support were opened at the beginning of September.

On September 27-28, the city hosted a promotional event for

the program: “Innovation and Entrepreneurship Camp Night in Alytus”. This event aimed to publicize the support program and accelerate youth entrepreneurship through hands-on activities.





# Centar Sarajevo

**D**uring the third quarter of 2024, the Municipality of Centar Sarajevo achieved substantial progress within the framework of the C4TALENT project, focusing on key areas of entrepreneurial support, strategic planning, and international collaboration. Following five successful URBACT Local Group (ULG) meetings held in the previous period, the Municipality shifted its focus to drafting the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). The project team, in close cooperation with the IAP Coordinator, worked diligently to ensure the document reflects input from stakeholders and aligns with the project's overarching goals of creating a sustainable and attractive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In addition to local efforts, the project team, enhanced by the involvement of the IAP Coordinator, attended a transnational meeting in Alghero. This meeting provided an opportunity to exchange best practices, strengthen partnerships, and discuss strategies with other participating cities in the network. Such international engagement underscores the Municipality's commitment to adopting innovative and effective approaches to local challenges.

Locally, the Municipality continued its commitment to fostering entrepreneurship by organizing a public call to support business startups. This initiative provided entrepreneurship training to 30

individuals, resulting in the successful establishment of 12 new businesses, 8 led by women and 4 by men. These businesses received financial grants amounting to approximately €100,000, reflecting the Municipality's dedication to empowering local entrepreneurs and promoting gender inclusivity in economic development.

Through these activities, the Municipality of Centar Sarajevo demonstrated its active role in addressing local challenges, enhancing the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and contributing to the broader objectives of the C4TALENT project. This integrated approach aims to attract and retain talent while fostering sustainable economic growth and innovation in the region.

# Nyíregyháza

**T**he 5th ULG meeting in Nyíregyháza took place on July 3. At the meeting, members of the local team shared the most important learnings and inspirations from the Vilanova i la Geltrú Network Meeting and the accompanying study visits. Following the short introductory presentations, a round table discussion took place, in which the ULG Coordinator and the Managing Director of the local business support organization were asked to share insights from the Vilanova i la Geltrú network meeting and the corresponding study visits in Mataro (TecnoCampus) and Barcelona (Norrskén House) in May.

One of the key learnings shared?

“Municipalities should know their role - when to step in with dedicated support and when to step back and let other actors shine. Maintaining a healthy business ecosystem is like curating chaos or serendipity: finding the natural flow of an already existing community and go with it - or guide it in a desirable direction if and when necessary.”

This statement has really resonated with the ULG members - recognizing opportunities on the go and being flexible, however, are usually not a common characteristic of municipalities, although

ULG members have agreed that in Nyíregyháza we still have a long way to go to co-create such an ecosystem. Nevertheless, as a first step the local team is working on finding the best way to incorporate these learnings into the Integrated Action Plan. The first version is close to completion, but will be further refined until the next network meeting in October.



# Piraeus

The third ULG meeting was held as part of the Municipality's annual conference, titled “**Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Sustainability in the Blue Economy,**” at the **Piraeus Chamber of Commerce**. The event also featured the presentation of the seven finalists from the 9th Blue Growth Competition Piraeus.

We were honored to be invited by the Municipality to present our C4TALENT program to the competition's contestants during a dedicated workshop held in an adjacent room. The participants were enthusiastic about the program, and we hope this interaction will foster collaboration and contribute to our initiatives moving forward.

## Key Panels and Discussions

The conference included several noteworthy panel discussions, relevant to the key themes of c4TALENT network:

- “The Role of Universities in Strengthening Entrepreneurship and Sustainability in the Blue Economy
- “Blue Economy and Financial Instruments: From Theory to Practice”

These panels provided valuable insights into the current economic situation of businesses involved in shipping, tourism, fishing, and port activities, highlighting opportunities and challenges in these sectors.

## The 9th Blue Growth Competition

This year's competition attracted 27 teams from 12 universities, with 16 teams advancing to the mentoring phase. These finalists participated in two intensive training workshops designed to support and prepare them for success.



# Pula

## 4<sup>th</sup> ULG Meeting: Planning the Pula Innovation Center

The fourth ULG (Urban Local Group) meeting took place on September 19 at the Novo Gallery in Pula, a new and engaging location for participants. The meeting focused on defining the content and services of the future Pula Innovation Center in Vallelunga.

Using the OPERA tool, participants proposed and discussed ideas for the center's offerings. This structured decision-making method guided participants through four phases, enabling them to analyze challenges, explore solutions, and prioritize concrete, sustainable actions.

### Key Priorities for Vallelunga

- **Urban Infrastructure:** Promenades (4.5), bicycle paths (4.4), and improved public transport (4.4) ranked highest. Additional elements like Mediterranean parks (3.9) and sports facilities also stood out for enhancing community quality of life.
- **Economic Development:** Priorities included a multifunctional conference hall (4.1), meeting rooms (3.9), equipped laboratories (3.8), and a testing and innovation center (3.8), reflecting the

need for spaces that support collaboration, innovation, and education.



# Rzeszów

September marked the return to full activity for the C4TALENT project after the summer break, coinciding with the start of the school year. This included the resumption of regular URBACT Local Group (ULG) meetings, where members worked collaboratively with the Project Team to refine the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) and outline test actions to be implemented as part of the Action Planning Network.

One of the key outcomes of the September meeting was planning an event aimed at **connecting local business representatives—also ULG members—with students from one of Rzeszów’s high schools**. The meeting, titled “Not So Rosy...”, is scheduled for late October. Its goal is to provide students with practical insights into entrepreneurship through direct interaction with the business community.

Additionally, preparations were made for another planned initiative in partnership with the Department of Economic Activity and Permits at Rzeszów City Hall. This activity, also targeting high school students, involves a simulation of setting up a sole proprietorship, where participants will complete mock

applications for the Central Register and Information on Economic Activity (CEIDG).

These planned actions reflect **ongoing efforts to build entrepreneurial awareness among young people** while engaging local stakeholders in shaping a dynamic and supportive environment for talent development.



# Varberg

**D**uring this period, Varberg convened its Start-Up Group to discuss strategies for strengthening the local start-up ecosystem. The meeting explored a range of potential initiatives and activities aimed at fostering entrepreneurship, particularly among students. Ideas included organizing entrepreneurship boot camps, hosting hackathons, and sharing inspirational success stories from local entrepreneurs. These efforts are designed to inspire young people to consider starting their own businesses, creating a culture of innovation and enterprise in the community.

In September, representatives from Varberg attended the Future Now Forum in Linköping, a city recognized by the European Commission with the prestigious iCapital Award as the "European Rising Innovative City." The forum featured a dynamic program with keynote presentations, panel discussions, interactive workshops, and city tours, all aimed at sparking dialogue and sharing best practices.

This visit offered Varberg an opportunity to gain invaluable insights into Linköping's strategies for fostering innovation. Discussions focused on how to adapt and implement similar approaches to elevate Varberg's own innovative potential.



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# Knowledge and Inspirations

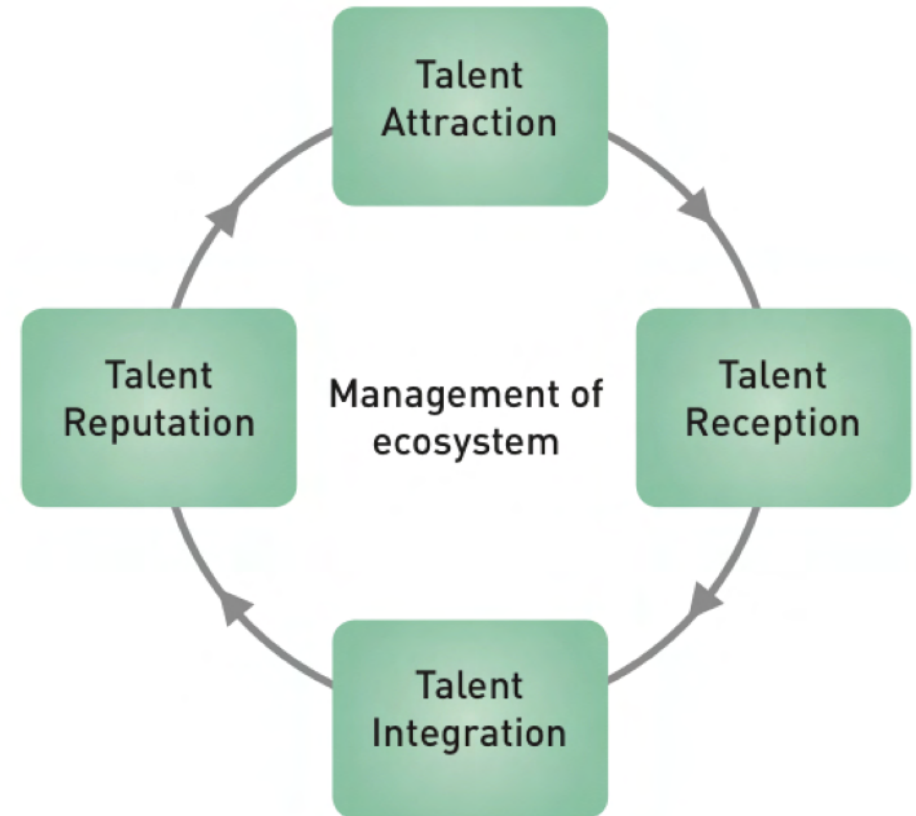
# Talent Attraction Management

## Introduction

**A**t our Alghero Core Network Meeting, the 2nd Masterclass of C4TALENT has been delivered. As presented, this masterclass focused on the topic of Talent Attraction and Retention, and our trainer was one of the top experts in the field, the excellent Marcus Andersson from Future Place Leadership. As a key part of the masterclass, he introduced to partners Talent Attraction Management - a strategic framework for cities. In this short article, we present the key elements of this framework, using content from the presentation of Marcus.

The framework is based on the concept developed by Tensensor, and has been adapted by Future Place Leadership.

Read this as a teaser for more to come: the Masterclass has been recorded and will be part of the final network product of C4TALENT partnership.





# Talent Attraction Management

## Why Talent Attraction and Retention Matters for Cities?

Cities today face mounting challenges in attracting and retaining talent. Addressing this issue is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Demographic Processes:** With low birth rates in many regions, population growth is stagnating or even declining, creating long-term challenges for workforce availability. Demographic changes take decades to reverse, making talent attraction a critical short-term strategy.
2. **Global Skills Shortages and Talent Mismatches:** Across sectors—beyond just technology—there is a global shortage of skilled workers. While some regions face surpluses, others grapple with significant deficits, exacerbating inequalities in economic opportunity.
3. **The Job Multiplier Effect:** Studies show that attracting high-skilled talent has a cascading impact on job creation. In the United States, for every high-skilled job, five additional jobs

are created in the local economy. In Europe, this ratio is slightly lower but still significant at 1 to 3 or 1 to 4.

4. **Diversity Drives Innovation:** Diverse teams are proven to enhance creativity and innovation, which are key drivers of economic growth. A city that fosters a diverse and inclusive environment is better positioned to compete globally.
5. **Attracting Investments:** Talent is a magnet for investment. Businesses prioritize locations with an abundant and skilled workforce. However, this creates a “chicken and egg” dilemma: should cities attract talent first to lure investment, or vice versa? The answer lies in addressing both simultaneously, building a dynamic ecosystem where talent and investment reinforce each other.

**Talent Attraction Management (TAM)** provides cities with a structured framework to address the challenges of attracting and retaining talent. This framework is built around four interrelated pillars: **Talent Attraction, Talent Reception, Talent Integration, and Talent Reputation.** Below, we explore these pillars in more detail.

# Talent Attraction Management

## 1. Talent Attraction

Talent attraction strategies are essential for making a city visible and appealing to potential newcomers. Cities can achieve this through:

- **Digital Campaigns:** Targeted online campaigns can reach specific talent pools effectively, leveraging platforms like LinkedIn or Instagram.
- **Events, Trade Shows, and Delegations:** Participating in international and regional events allows cities to showcase career opportunities, lifestyle benefits, and success stories.
- **Landing Pages/Info Portals:** User-friendly online platforms provide essential information for potential newcomers, such as job openings, housing options, and lifestyle details.
- **Matchmaking Talent with Employers:** Creating platforms or events where job seekers and employers can connect directly streamlines recruitment.
- **Support for Employers:** Providing guidance to local businesses on recruitment strategies and onboarding processes helps them attract and retain top talent.

## 2. Talent Reception

The reception phase focuses on ensuring a smooth and welcoming transition for newcomers, addressing practical and emotional needs:

- **Streamlined Paperwork:** Simplifying administrative processes, both digitally and in person, helps newcomers settle in quickly.
- **Welcoming Events:** Community events introduce newcomers to local networks and provide a warm welcome.
- **Support for Spouses and Families:** Tailored support, such as job search assistance for spouses and access to schools and daycare, ensures families feel integrated.
- **First Accommodation:** Assisting with temporary housing options helps newcomers establish a base in their new city.
- **Practical Needs:** Ensuring access to essentials like bank accounts, phones, and internet services supports a seamless transition.
- **Employer Onboarding Support:** Offering resources to employers to enhance the onboarding experience ensures new hires feel valued and supported.

# Talent Attraction Management

## 3. Talent Integration

Integration strategies are designed to foster long-term connections and help talent build meaningful lives in their new city:

- **Stable Housing Options:** Ensuring access to affordable, long-term housing is vital for retention.
- **Language Training:** Offering courses in the local language, particularly for international talent, enhances both professional and social integration.
- **Career Development Support:** Providing guidance on professional growth opportunities helps individuals see long-term potential in staying.
- **Social and Professional Networking:** Creating platforms for newcomers to build connections with peers, mentors, and community members strengthens their ties to the city.
- **Leisure and Community Engagement:** Encouraging participation in cultural, recreational, and community activities improves overall quality of life and belonging.

## 4. Talent Reputation

A city's reputation as an attractive place to live and work is a cornerstone of its talent management strategy:

- **Place Branding:** Developing a strong, authentic identity that reflects the city's unique strengths and values.
- **Promotion Campaigns:** Highlighting lifestyle benefits, career opportunities, and success stories through strategic marketing initiatives.
- **Emphasizing Quality of Life:** Showcasing the city's cultural richness, recreational options, and work-life balance to appeal to diverse talent groups.
- **Defining a Clear Value Proposition:** Clearly articulating why the city stands out as a destination of choice for talent and investment.

# Talent Attraction Management

## Enabling Framework Conditions

Active Talent Attraction Management is crucial but not sufficient condition. To ensure the success of talent attraction efforts, cities must be aware of, address or influence broader framework conditions at both national and local levels.

On strategic / national policy level, economic growth, regulatory frameworks, and immigration policies significantly influence talent attraction outcomes. If the national policy environment is not favourable, local talent attraction management efforts can easily fail.

There are also local factors that are outside the direct scope of Talent Attraction Management, but play a crucial role in making a place attractive for talent. Such factors (local and regional enablers) - include - among others - quality job opportunities, supporting entrepreneurship ecosystem, availability of affordable housing, well functioning infrastructure and public services, diverse cultural, entertainment and sports offer, and even accessibility, mobility and urban design.

## Conclusions

By aligning efforts across these four pillars and addressing enabling conditions, cities can develop a holistic Talent Attraction strategy and TAM structure that meets the demands of today's competitive global landscape.

Talent Attraction Management is not a one-size-fits-all solution, though. Each city must tailor its approach based on its identity, unique challenges, strengths, and goals. By strategically addressing the pillars of attraction, reception, integration, and reputation, local authorities can position their cities as vibrant, welcoming, and competitive destinations for talent and stand out from their peers nationally - and even internationally.

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# **People and insights - the Local Authority's Perspective**

# Bringing talent and innovation to Alytus

**Please introduce yourself. Who are you and what do you do for a living?**

My name is **Nerijus Cesliulis**, and I am the Mayor of Alytus city, Lithuania.

**What do you like most about your city?**

Well, as a Mayor I am supposed to love my city, aren't I? I am lucky, though, because Alytus is a great place, easy to fall in love with - it has a great community and soul!

To give you some more specific qualities, Alytus is a sustainably growing city of opportunities, with a long-term strategy focused on convenience for its citizens, young talents and investors. It is a city of a lot of cultural and sporting events, a wide range of leisure activities and opportunities for self-expression. The green environment and convenient infrastructure are particularly friendly to young families with children. A creative and forward-thinking approach and community spirit are

important to young people, where everyone who lives, comes or invests here can feel as a part of the city. The city is small enough to be comfortable, but big enough to offer a wide range of opportunities.

**What are the most important areas for improvement?**

Alytus, just like many other cities face a fundamental problem: young people leaving the city and an ageing population. We want to try different ways of attracting new residents and talent. As an industrial city, and as the industry of the future is unthinkable without innovation, we are working to expand the network of IT and technology professionals in the city.



### **Why do you think talent attraction and enterprise development are important for your city?**

I believe that talent attraction and enterprise development are very important for Alytus, as they lead to sustainable economic and social development. If a city wants to be vibrant - talented people, creators and visionaries are the key drivers. Industry is already facing challenges - there is less and less need for people who just do low-added jobs, and there is a growing need for people in high value-added professions. Talent can bring knowledge, experience and innovation to the city, contributing to the development of new ideas and the city's competitiveness.

Enterprise development is also important as it creates new jobs, stimulates investment and increases the city's income.

### **What has the local authority done so far to make the city a better place for talent and entrepreneurs?**

We are already actively working with schoolchildren to retain talent in the city. The Alytus Academy of Economics and Business, which aims to give students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of economics and business from school age, develop critical thinking, analytical and entrepreneurial skills, prepare young people for further studies in economics and business, and contribute to the economic development of the region. We also have an entrepreneurship

programme called Junior Achievement, which encourages students to think like entrepreneurs, develop business ideas and test them in practice.

We also keep in touch with our diaspora - the Alytus people who are scattered around the world and even in other Lithuanian cities. We are making it possible for them to return by advising them on services and ensuring the integration of their children.

We are also planning to build a TECH HUB for start-ups, individual entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs with small businesses, which would not only be a place for them to work, but by bringing talent together in one place, it would be a

### **Why did Alytus join the C4TALENT URBACT network?**

As I mentioned, Alytus is an industrial city, so both the local community and the businesses are looking ahead and recognise that talent, IT and technology careers will be key in the future. That's why we've joined the programme, not only to help attract talent, but also to learn more about the topic. We want to share our own practices, what works and what doesn't, and hear from other cities. We want to get better at attracting talent - it's not about waiting and hoping that talent will come without our efforts, it's about taking it and doing it!

### **How can the project contribute to your success?**

I think that expertise and collegiality will help us make the project a success. We hope that network experts will help us to assess whether the right measures are being planned and implemented to attract talent. The partner cities involved in the project will share their successes and failures, which can be great lessons and inspiration for Alytus.

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### **Any important message to other local authorities facing similar challenges?**

I would encourage other municipalities to look to other cities for best practices that have already been implemented. Sometimes all you need to do is apply them to your own city.

I am very pleased that our municipality is participating in its second URBACT project. The experts and partners we have met during the projects have shared their experiences and practices and helped us to develop a vision of how we can attract talent to our city.



# Alghero - not just a pretty face

**Please introduce yourself. Who are you and what do you do for a living?**

I am **Ornella Piras**, the Councillor for Economic Development, Tourism, and Relations with the Alghero Foundation for the city of Alghero.

**What do you like most about your city?**

My city, our city, undoubtedly possesses a beauty that I would describe as disarming: it is an incredibly beautiful city, overlooking the sea, with a temperate climate typical of a Mediterranean seaside town. Until now, this has been its strength and its most recognized characteristic, as it is truly evident. In addition to its stunning sea, it is a city rich in history and home to very important archaeological sites.



**What are the most important areas for improvement?**

Its beauty and richness, in a certain sense, currently represent its greatest weakness. Alghero is predominantly recognized as a seaside resort city, which means that our economy relies heavily on tourism, primarily concentrated in the summer months. As a result, for much of the year, the city's economy struggles, while the territory becomes heavily exploited. In the winter, we are unable to attract tourist flows, but in the summer, we experience over-tourism: we have a "concertina city" that cannot manage the influx in summer or provide adequate employment for its residents in winter.

In this specific context, our young people and talents, who may wish to delve into particular creative fields, often choose to leave the Sardinian region, frequently not returning. This represents a significant weakness for our city.

**Why do you think talent attraction and enterprise development are important for your city??**

Building on my previous response, I believe it is very important to focus on attracting talent and developing the city, so that both local talent and those from outside the urban fabric can recognize Alghero as a place where it is wonderful to live. Not just for the beauty I mentioned earlier, but also for the surrounding conditions: we have a port and an airport nearby. So, despite being on an island, we are well-connected – although there are some issues with airport mobility – but the connections exist and can be improved. Alghero is a human-scale city; it isn't the size of a village, but neither is it a large metropolis. With new technologies, the possibility of remote working, and the dematerialization of many services, Alghero could position itself as a city capable of attracting talent and becoming a hub of innovation and sustainable quality of life – not just in the realm of tourism.

**What has the local authority done so far to make the city a better place for talent and entrepreneurs? And why did you join c4TALENT?**

I would like to address these two questions together. Participating in the C4TALENT project was a deliberate choice aimed at reflecting on these issues and taking action. Therefore, one of the answers to the question “What is the administration doing?” is precisely this: participating in C4TALENT. It allows us to engage with other cities facing similar challenges to understand how they tackle them.

Beyond this, the administration is working on specific policies to address key issues, such as the difficulty of finding year-round housing. The dominance of short-term tourist rentals makes it very challenging for young couples or individuals to buy or rent homes in Alghero. This represents a significant obstacle for those who would like to live in Alghero and choose it as their home base.

Another area where the administration is active is strengthening other productive sectors, such as agriculture. We have fertile land, and Alghero is a leader in the wine and olive oil industries, achieving excellence in these fields.

However, this is still often seen as secondary and underappreciated. We believe that introducing new technologies and connecting our youth with broader entrepreneurial markets could allow them to find true fulfillment within our city.

Culturally, the Alghero Foundation is already working to expand cultural offerings. This would enable our talents to find satisfaction in cultural activities within the city and feel recognized while continuing to live here—whether through festivals, performances, or other initiatives. These efforts could help us achieve the elusive goal of extending the tourist season and creating a year-round tourism offering. Investments are already being made in this direction, but it is crucial to stabilize and expand the city's cultural programs so that cultural talent also feels at home in Alghero.

We have already had notable examples, such as **Antonio Marras** (fashion designer, costume designer and artist from Alghero) who, despite reaching the pinnacle of creativity, chose to base himself in Alghero, his hometown. We aim to work with mentors of this caliber to help young people find their path and understand how to develop their talents right here.

### **How can the project contribute to your success?**

As I mentioned earlier, first and foremost, the project has given us the opportunity to structure an analysis of the problem and develop a shared plan with all the stakeholders in the territory. Additionally, it has facilitated the exchange and blending of best practices, which we hope to learn from one another.

### **Any important message to other local authorities facing similar challenges?**

We are very pleased to work with our URBACT partners; it has been truly interesting to have the opportunity to engage in dialogue. As we now enter the more operational and planning phase, we sincerely hope that our interactions will become even more fruitful. Our aim is not just to have a single project to pursue but to develop as many project ideas as there are partners, enriching all our territories in the process.

# Roeselare: a growing city on a human scale

**Please introduce yourself. Who are you and what do you do for a living?**

**Bregt Vermeulen**, responsible for city marketing and city branding in the City of Roeselare.

**What do you like most about your city?**

The fact that it is a growing city, but on a human scale. It is a very interesting time to be working for Stad Roeselare and living in Roeselare at the moment. The city is at a tipping point between a medium-sized town to a real city with urban challenges. It is nice to help think about the city's image and brand at that moment.

**What are the most important areas for improvement?**

A big challenge for Roeselare is staying competitive with cities of a slightly larger scale and with more development opportunities and facilities in terms of higher education, experiential offerings, culture,.... to keep young people and talent in its own city and not see them leave for larger or more centrally located cities in Flanders.



### **Why do you think talent attraction and enterprise development are important for your city?**

Talent attraction and enterprise development are critical for Roeselare because they form the backbone of our city's long-term prosperity and vitality. As a dynamic city in West Flanders with a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a tradition of many medium-sized family businesses, Roeselare thrives on creativity, and collaboration. Attracting talented individuals ensures that we have the skills and expertise needed to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world, while enterprise development fosters economic growth, job creation, and innovation.

### **Why did you join c4TALENT?**

When I learned through colleagues that we would be embarking on a project with our city that would focus on attracting talent, I immediately saw the link with long-term image and brand of the city among specific target groups. The fact that we are working on this in an international context and also have the opportunity to learn from European authorities in this field and from other cities facing similar challenges was an extra motivation for me to participate in this project.

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# Upcoming Activities

# Upcoming Activities (2024 Q4)

**T**he period between October and December will be an intense one: partners will work on their integrated action plans, using feedback from their peers, local inputs as well as expert support from the LE and an experienced ad-hoc expert. We foresee that all partners will mark the end of 2024 with a fairly advanced IAP draft and a clear view about their vision, objectives and main areas of interventions.

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## IAP sprint 1

**Period:** October 7 - 18

**Activity:** Partners work locally with their stakeholders on their draft integrated action plan, incorporating comments and suggestions from the peer review session that took place in Alghero and from the LE:

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## Expert review of IAP drafts

**Period:** 21 - 31 October

**Activity:** our ad-hoc expert (Alison Partridge) reviews the IAP drafts of all partners, focusing on the overall logic, the integrated approach, and the interventions aimed at strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems.

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## Webinar 5

**Date:** 28. October, 09:00 - 11:00

**Theme:** This webinar fits in the series of webinars designed to help partners use the various URBACT methods and tools to design their Integrated Action Plan. The webinar will focus on monitoring and indicators.

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## One2One calls with partners

**Period:** October 4-7

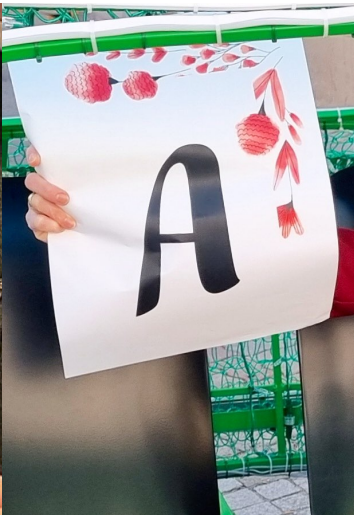
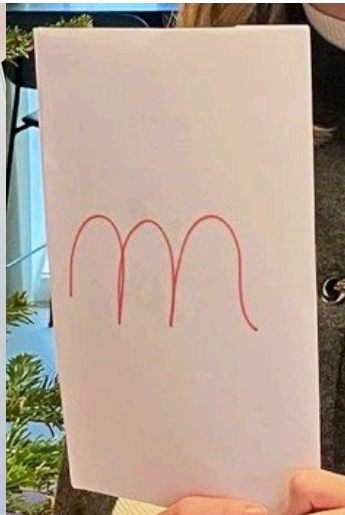
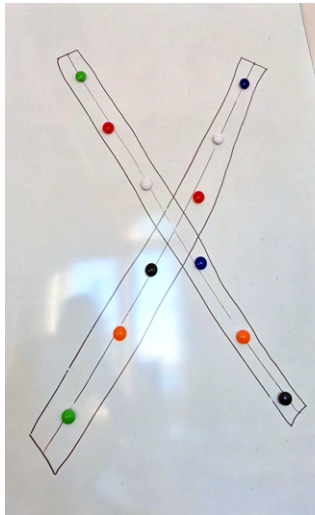
**Activity:** Partners receive feedback from the ad-hoc expert and the LE to their IAP drafts. Based on the comments they can complete their IAP draft3 before the end of the year.

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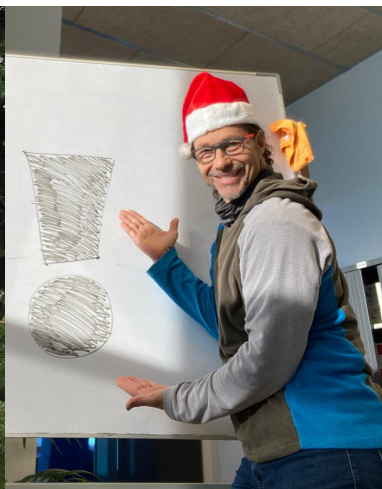
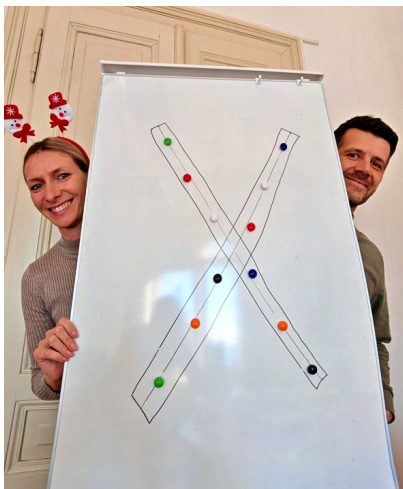
## 5th Regular Check-in Call

**Date:** Mid-December, TBD

**Theme:** At the last regular check-in call of 2024 partners will review activities and results of 2024 and review plans for 2025. The session will also be the “virtual Christmas event” of the network.







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