

PUMA Quarterly Report

January - March 2025



On the move: kicking off 2025

The first quarter of 2025 marked a significant period for the PUMA project, as partners moved from planning into deeper implementation, knowledge exchange, and collective reflection. With the midterm point officially reached, this quarter was shaped by critical review, renewed commitment, and inspiring collaboration.

The highlight of the period was the 4th Transnational Meeting in Gdańsk, where partner cities gathered to assess progress, share local actions, and refine their Integrated Action Plans through hands-on workshops and thematic sessions. The meeting not only spotlighted the host city's innovative mobility practices but also served as a space to collectively identify challenges and co-design solutions for the months ahead. Alongside the Gdańsk meeting, two important webinars enriched the network's knowledge base: one focused on road safety and integrated planning - led by the PUMA team - and another organized by URBACT, exploring gender-sensitive approaches in mobility planning. These sessions continued the project's commitment to inclusive, sustainable, and locally relevant mobility strategies.

This report provides an overview of the key events, insights, and activities of the January–March period, including updates from all partner cities. As we move into the next phase of PUMA, the momentum is clear: cities are actively shaping smarter, safer, and more people-centred mobility systems - together.



Transnational collaboration in motion: PUMA Partners gather in Gdańsk

From January 21–23, the city of Gdańsk hosted the fourth transnational meeting of the PUMA project, bringing together mobility experts, city representatives, and international partners for three days of strategic reflection, on-theground exploration, and collaborative planning. Held at the Instytut Kultury Miejskiej in the heart of the city, the meeting marked a crucial midterm milestone for the project.

Setting the Stage: Gdańsk welcomes Europe's mobility thinkers

The event opened with a warm welcome from Deputy Mayor Piotr Borawski and senior mobility officials from the city, who underlined Gdańsk's commitment to innovative and inclusive mobility solutions.

Joined by Aldo Vargas-Tetmajer (National URBACT Point Poland) and Karolina Orcholska (PUMA Lead Expert), the session set a collaborative tone, highlighting the power of transnational exchange in tackling urban mobility challenges.

Taking stock: a midterm pulse check

Lead Expert Karolina Orcholska presented a comprehensive progress update, celebrating the network's achievements to date: over 140 ULG members actively engaged, more than 20 local meetings, and a growing catalogue of shared knowledge through meetings and webinars. But the session didn't shy away from tough questions - partners reflected openly on delays, political hurdles, and the complexities of aligning local priorities with strategic goals. The message was clear:

stakeholder engagement and local leadership remain key to success.





Sharing local realities: from success stories to stumbling blocks

Each city took the floor to present their local mobility actions. From creative approaches to public participation to overcoming financial constraints, the session offered a realistic, cross-country snapshot of what it means to make sustainable mobility happen on the ground. Common themes emerged: the importance of internal coordination, adapting to political cycles, and the need for flexibility in action planning.

Smart cities in practice: TRISTAR system

The second day took participants out into the city for a hands-on look at Gdańsk's traffic management ecosystem.

The guided tour of the TRISTAR system gave insight into how the city integrates public transport, dynamic traffic control, and real-time data to improve efficiency and safety. The visit sparked ideas on how such systems could inspire similar efforts in partner cities.

Workshops that moved the needle

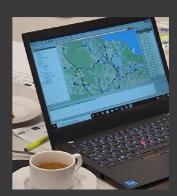
A series of thematic sessions followed, delving into everything from pedestrian safety to bikesharing and public space design. Presenters from Gdańsk's urban mobility team shared real-world initiatives like the Cycling May campaign, the Mevo 2.0 bike system, and the city's own street design standards—highlighting the value of practical, incremental action.

Hands-on workshops challenged participants to roll up their sleeves:

- Draft localized action plans tailored to current roadblocks
- Identify funding opportunities and stakeholder roles
- Role-play difficult scenarios like political resistance or budget cuts - to refine problem-solving strategies.

Looking ahead: strengthening the final stretch

As the meeting closed, participants committed to strengthening political engagement and fine tuning their Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) for the final phase of the project. Webinars on strategic themes are planned for the next quarter, alongside continued mutual support across the network. The Gdańsk meeting reinforced what PUMA is all about: learning from each other, grounding strategies in real city challenges, and moving together - step by step toward more sustainable, humancentred mobility systems across Europe.



Webinar spotlight: designing safer streets – from data to action

On March 13, 2025, PUMA hosted a focused webinar on road safety, led by project Lead Expert Karolina Orcholska. With cities across Europe striving to build more liveable, people-first spaces, the session delivered a powerful call to rethink how we design, manage, and experience urban streets.

Setting the scene: road safety as a shared responsibility

Karolina opened with a clear message: road safety isn't just about enforcement or rules—it's about shaping environments that protect people, especially the most vulnerable. Backed by sobering statistics from the EU's 2024 Road Safety Report, she showed that

while fatalities are slowly declining, the pace is too slow to meet Europe's Vision Zero target.

Vision Zero & The Safe System Approach

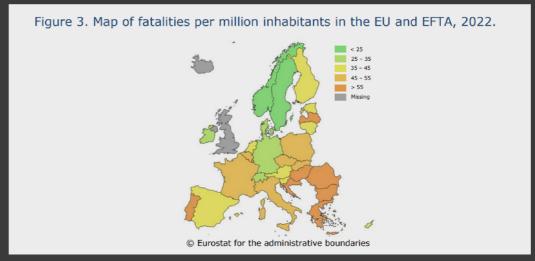
The webinar introduced participants to Vision Zero, a bold, systems-thinking approach that redefines road safety. Unlike traditional frameworks that place responsibility on individuals, Vision Zero emphasizes shared accountability between users and system designers. This ties into the Safe System approach, now embedded in the EU's 2021–2030 road safety policy, which reframes crashes as preventable outcomes of flawed systems—not human error alone.

From theory to asphalt: what safer roads actually look like

Karolina walked participants through a series of road design principles and traffic calming strategies pulled from global best practices. From narrower lanes and speed tables to shared streets and chicanes, the tools are already out there—what's needed is political will and community support.

Visuals and case examples made these ideas concrete:

- Barcelona's Superblocks:
 rethinking urban life by
 reclaiming streets for people, not
 cars.
- Amsterdam's 30 km/h policy: a massive speed reduction effort rolled out across 80% of city streets in late 2023



Source: Annual statistical report on road safety in the EU 2024

"Every step toward safer streets is a step toward more humane, resilient, and liveable cities. And every one of us has a role to play."

These real-world transformations demonstrated that cities can radically improve safety, mobility, and quality of life—if they commit to systemic change.

Interactive moments & practical takeaways

Participants engaged in a Mentimeter poll to reflect on what a "safe street" means to them, creating space for shared values and perspectives.

The session concluded with actionable insights:

- Rethink speed as a design element, not just a number
- Use data to identify risks and tailor interventions
- Design for everyone, especially those most vulnerable
- Build coalitions—road safety is political, technical, and social







Source: globaldesigningcities.org



Behind the scenes: Luca's creative lens on PUMA

This quarter, the PUMA network benefited from the support of Luca Arfini, our ad hoc expert whose role went far beyond traditional advisory work. Blending storytelling, design, and strategic communication, Luca helped the project sharpen its message and capture its identity-visually and narratively.

His work began with the Gdańsk transnational meeting, where Luca documented the event in real time - interviewing participants, capturing footage, and gathering reflections from across the network. The result? Two dynamic videos:

- A 7-minute highlight reel introducing the PUMA network, its people, and its shared mission.
- A short, fast-paced time-lapse showcasing moments from the Gdańsk meeting.

Both videos now serve as tools for internal reflection and external promotion—bringing PUMA's work to life for a wider audience.

Beyond video, Luca also delivered a well-crafted article summarizing key insights and milestones across the partnership, along with links to project content and visuals. He then created a 10-page communication guide, offering practical advice for PUMA partners on how to tell their stories using accessible, engaging formats. This guide, full of real examples and easy-to-use tools, is now a long-term asset for all partners as they continue to communicate their local actions.

With a mix of media know-how and strategic thinking, Luca has helped PUMA refine how it speaks—not just what it says, but how it connects. His work reminds us that behind every action plan or policy shift, there's a story worth telling.





PUMA Online: sharing our story, growing our community

Throughout the first quarter of 2025, the PUMA project has continued to strengthen its online presence, using LinkedIn as a key platform for visibility, connection, and shared learning. Our goal is simple but impactful: to make the work of our cities visible, inspire others, and grow a broader conversation around sustainable urban mobility.

People Behind the Project

One of our most engaging series this quarter introduced the people behind PUMA - local leaders, mobility experts, planners, and community builders across our network. These snapshots give a face to the work, highlighting both professional insights and the everyday motivation that drives our collective effort. Whether it's cycling through the city or pushing for structural change, the profiles reflect the diversity and passion of our team.

Highlights from Our Road Safety Webinar

After our March webinar on Enhancing Road Safety, we shared key takeaways online - covering topics like the Vision Zero approach, EU Safe System strategy, and traffic calming techniques from global cities like Barcelona and Amsterdam. The post also brought attention to the ongoing challenge of road fatalities in the EU, reinforcing why mobility matters - and why our work is urgent.

A Platform for Collaboration

Beyond updates, our LinkedIn feed is becoming a space for peer learning and exchange - where cities can celebrate small wins, share project milestones, and connect with others working on similar challenges. It's also a window into the broader ecosystem of sustainable mobility projects across Europe.

As we move forward, we'll continue using our online channels to tell the **PUMA story**, share resources, and build momentum for climate-neutral, people-friendly mobility - one post at a time.



Nova Gorica: leading the way in cross-border urban mobility

There are moments when a city doesn't just participate in a project - it sets the standard. This quarter, Nova Gorica, together with its Italian twin city Gorizia, has done exactly that. As they step into their role as **European Capital of Culture 2025**, the two cities are proving that culture, innovation, and sustainable mobility can thrive together - especially when borders don't get in the way.

What makes this partnership exceptional is not just the shared vision, but the implementation of a fully integrated, cross-border mobility network - a bold and tangible response to today's climate and urban challenges.

Residents and visitors can now:

- Ride a shared bike system that flows seamlessly between the two cities.
- Use cross-border public transport services, reducing car dependency and strengthening regional links.

This isn't a pilot. It's real. It's operational. And it's setting a precedent for how two cities - divided by history but united by purpose - can become one connected, sustainable urban space.

But the real power lies in how this transformation is being carried out: through collaboration, inclusivity, and shared ownership. Nova Gorica and Gorizia are involving everyone - municipal staff, civil society groups, students, transport providers, and everyday citizens. Their strategy isn't built in an office tower - it's co-created on the ground, in schools, community centres, and public squares.

Workshops and stakeholder consultations ensure that solutions are not only green, but grounded. Electric mobility, smart infrastructure, active transport, and shared systems are being introduced with the people who use them in mind. It's a bottom-up approach that combines climate goals with social equity-rarely easy, but absolutely essential.

As 2025 unfolds, Nova Gorica and Gorizia aren't just hosting Europe's cultural spotlight. They're offering a blueprint for borderless, human-centred, sustainable cities— and showing us what's possible when vision meets action.



GO! BY BUS

Larissa rolls out controlled parking for residents

In February 2025, the City of Larissa launched a new Controlled Parking System (CPS) in its historic city centre—a move that aligns directly with its SUMP and broader urban mobility goals. With this rollout, Larissa aims to strike a better balance between local accessibility and smart urban regulation.

The new system introduces seven dedicated residential parking zones—A, B, C, D, E1, E2, and E3—clearly mapped and signposted across the city. Residents holding a permanent parking card can now park in their designated zone freely and without time limits. An exception has been made for Zone A residents, who are also allowed to park in Zone B, offering a bit of added flexibility in one of the city's more densely used areas.

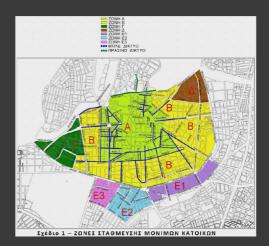
The system not only secures priority for residents, but also creates a clearer structure for special use parking, including spaces for delivery vehicles, people with disabilities, electric vehicles, and cargo transport. These are located along the blue and green network streets and will continue to operate under paid or regulated conditions.

Beyond the surface, this initiative highlights a crucial but often overlooked fact: parking policy is one of the most powerful tools in shaping urban mobility. How—and where—people are allowed to park directly influences car use, traffic volumes, air quality, and the overall feel of city streets. By managing parking more intelligently, Larissa is taking an important step toward a more sustainable, liveable urban future.

While this isn't the flashiest part of mobility reform, it's a key building block in reclaiming space for people, reducing unnecessary car circulation, and creating a more orderly and fair parking environment - especially in the busy urban core.







Viladecans doubles down on participation—and pedals

The first quarter of 2025 has been all about refinement and engagement for the city of Viladecans, as the team worked to shape and validate its Integrated Action Plan (IAP) through a series of carefully designed local meetings.

On January 16, the team kicked off with an enlarged Urban Local Group (ULG) session, bringing together representatives from various city departments. The session focused on evaluating 14 initial mobility actions, which were split into two groups: those aimed at discouraging private car use and those focused on promoting sustainable transport modes. In small groups, participants assessed the pros and cons of each proposal—laying the groundwork for a prioritised, consensus-based IAP.

As work on the IAP progressed, the team also paused to reflect on one of their key community initiatives: the Bike Bus. After identifying low participation as a challenge, a simple yet smart idea emerged—go straight to the source: the kids.

In late March, a new push for the Bike Bus was launched in the Martí i Pol primary school, with six interactive training sessions delivered to 5th and 6th graders. The workshops used hands-on activities to help students explore how they currently get to school, identify barriers to cycling, and brainstorm solutions. Each child left with a small gift bag and a leaflet inviting them to join the Bike Bus every Friday morning at 8:40 am. It's a fun, low-carbon commute—and a subtle exercise in changing travel habits early on.

Behind the scenes, the Mobility Department and external consultants kept the IAP momentum going through four internal working sessions throughout February and March. By March 24, the third enlarged ULG meeting took place, this time with a sharper framework: actions were now organised into three thematic pillars:

- 1. Reducing car use
- 2. Encouraging sustainable transport
- 3. Embracing digital mobility as well as two cross-cutting lines focused on public awareness and activating public space.

Viladecans' strategy is clear: get people involved, act early, and keep things moving - on foot, by bike, and with purpose.







Dienvidkurzeme: quiet quarter, but ideas are gaining speed

While the first quarter of 2025 has been relatively calm in Dienvidkurzeme, it's been anything but idle. Beneath the surface, planning work is in full motion, and the building blocks for future activities are steadily taking shape.

The Latvian team kicked off the year by taking part in the PUMA transnational meeting in Gdańsk (22–24 January), and quickly followed it with local communications—sharing highlights from the event across Facebook, the municipal homepage, and even in the local press. Though light on visuals, the messages helped connect the local audience to the broader European effort around sustainable mobility.

Much of the team's energy this quarter went into refining the first draft of their Integrated Mobility Action Plan (IMAP). Through a series of targeted online sessions with their external expert (focusing on public transport, mobility points, and micromobility), they've worked to shape a realistic, locally grounded strategy. Their upcoming ULG meeting on 31 March will be key for gathering stakeholder feedback and turning these discussions into actionable steps.

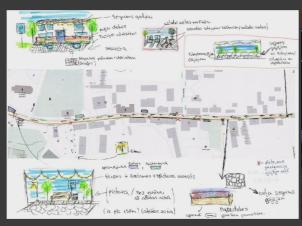
One of the more promising initiatives is the VeloBus, a school-based cycling program first piloted last autumn. The concept is now gaining traction: the project was presented to all school principals in the region on 4 March, and a new round of VeloBus activities is planned for May—this time in up to three schools. Inspired by Poland's "Cycle May," the team is exploring fun ways to boost participation, including reward systems, class challenges, and even new bike racks for participating schools.

Meanwhile, conversations continue around two potential pilots:

- A one-way street trial in Grobina a project that's generating interest, but also political hesitation due to upcoming local elections in June.
- A micromobility pilot in Pāvilosta, with early-stage discussions around electric scooter rentals and shared cars.

While there's still uncertainty about implementation timelines, the enthusiasm is there—and so is the curiosity. Drawing inspiration from both Polish and Spanish partners, the team is exploring creative ideas like portable cafés and dynamic street design to make public spaces more active and multifunctional without compromising traffic flow.

As the region continues to shape its vision for mobility, one thing is clear: even a "quiet" quarter can be a crucial part of long-term change.





Cento takes mobility conversations to the classroom—and the streets

The Italian city of Cento has spent the first quarter of 2025 laying the foundation for change—balancing community engagement, testing activities, and cross-city collaboration as it prepares to launch its most ambitious pilot yet.

The city's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) is well on track, with the draft set to be completed by May 10. In the same month, the next Urban Local Group (ULG) meeting will bring together municipal staff, local associations, and educators from Renazzo—a nearby hamlet—to co-develop ideas and refine priorities. The goal: ensure the plan is deeply grounded in community insight.

One of the most exciting developments is a series of school-based activities planned for June, involving around 150 students aged 9–13 from Renazzo's elementary and middle schools. Over three days, young residents will engage in learning workshops on road safety, green mobility, and the co-design of public space. These workshops will feed directly into a bold pilot project: the creation of Cento's first "no-car zone" in a school district.

The idea is to turn asphalt into a safer, more welcoming place for children—a physical and symbolic shift in how the city defines mobility.

Meanwhile, Cento has already tested the waters with two early actions:

- A public survey on mobility needs, which will be followed up in June with a more targeted survey focused on residents of the historic centre, aimed at gauging support for new pedestrian zones.
- A mobility help desk to assist citizens with public transport subscriptions. This practical intervention has proven highly useful, and there's now discussion about turning it into a permanent service.

Cento also stepped onto the European stage this quarter, with a municipal representative joining a cross-network dialogue on gender and mobility alongside Ferrara and Strasbourg—both members of the URBACT "SMALL" network. The meeting focused on how cities can adapt mobility systems to better meet the needs of women, and sparked ideas for future cooperation between Cento and Ferrara.

With strong connections to schools, a readiness to test ideas on the ground, and a growing network of allies, Cento is clearly committed to shaping a safer, more inclusive urban future - one step (and one street) at a time.



Gdańsk: hosting, educating, and inspiring local action

As the host of the 4th Transnational Meeting in January, Gdańsk played a central role in shaping the midterm milestone of the PUMA project. Beyond coordinating logistics, the city curated a well-structured and engaging experience—ensuring that every session, workshop, and site visit reflected both the network's goals and Gdańsk's own commitment to sustainable urban mobility.

The meeting offered participants not just a review of progress, but a chance to experience real-life solutions firsthand—like the city's TRISTAR traffic management system, inclusive cycling strategies, and human-centred street design standards. Gdańsk's planning team ensured the content was meaningful, the atmosphere collaborative, and the agenda adaptable enough to allow for spontaneous dialogue and shared learning.

But their contribution didn't stop there.

Gdańsk also hosted a Mobility Mosaic workshop in the Oliwa district—an innovative, climate-education-inspired event that helped local residents connect their everyday travel choices with broader environmental impacts. Modeled after the popular Climate Fresk approach, the session explored the carbon footprint of mobility, fossil fuel dependence, and what both individuals and institutions can do to accelerate change.

The workshop served as both an awareness-raising tool and a platform for dialogue—highlighting actions like cycling, low-emission transport, and smart intersection management as local levers for a global goal.

Through both high-level coordination and grassroots engagement, Gdańsk continues to lead by example within the PUMA network—proving that sustainability isn't just about policy, it's about participation.



Liepāja builds momentum for an ambitious IAP

The first quarter of 2025 saw Liepāja step firmly into the strategic phase of its mobility transformation, with a focus on political alignment, stakeholder engagement, and sharpening its Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for real-world implementation.

Discussions kicked off early in the year, as municipal experts held intensive internal meetings to shape proposals around public transport and micromobility. These debates paved the way for a major milestone on February 17, when the draft IAP was formally presented to the city's top leadership—including the mayor, vice mayor, CEO, and members of the core Urban Local Group.

A key focus of the meeting: how to align the proposed IAP actions with Liepāja's upcoming public transport procurement for 2025–2035. The conversation marked a turning point, as political leaders gave conceptual approval to explore a long-envisioned idea: a common A-B-C-D zone ticketing system across Liepāja and the broader Dienvidkurzeme region. This would allow for seamless travel between city and regional services—an ambitious leap toward integrated mobility.

Steps toward this vision are already underway. Negotiations with the Ministry of Transport, questions around financing and technology integration, and even ideas for a shared transport authority have entered the long-term discussion.

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The momentum continued on March 12 with a large online ULG meeting, bringing together around 40 participants—from municipal departments and transport providers to active citizens and local stakeholders. The session added new depth to the IAP conversation, especially around mobility needs linked to industrial zones and tourism, which had been underrepresented in the initial draft.

To turn conversation into clarity, participants are now reviewing and rating proposed actions across three categories:

- Priority to be implemented regardless of funding conditions
- Conditional to proceed if external funding becomes available
- Discarded actions deemed unrealistic or irrelevant to the core goals

In parallel, Liepāja has begun translating its IAP into English, focusing on a concise summary and detailed descriptions of priority actions. Based on community and expert input, a list of 10–15 high-impact measures will be developed to lead the city into its next phase.

This quarter wasn't just about planning - it was about getting the political green light, refining focus, and preparing for action. Liepāja is now well-positioned to enter the next phase with both direction and determination.



From surveys to cycling routes: progress in Jurbarkas and Pagėgiai

In February 2025, VšĮ "Žaliasis regionas" brought together municipal representatives from Jurbarkas and Pagėgiai to discuss sustainable urban infrastructure development and potential mobility measures tailored to each municipality. The meeting highlighted a shift in urban planning priorities—moving away from car-centric approaches and towards better conditions for pedestrians and non-motorised transport.

During the session, Smart Continent consultant Aurelijus presented the results of a local mobility survey, forming the basis for a forthcoming Sustainable Mobility Action Plan. At the same time, the director of "Žaliasis regionas" shared good practices from project partners, focusing on successful sustainable mobility initiatives.

The Jurbarkas District Municipality was invited to plan new bicycle storage facilities near schools, activity centres, and other key locations. Further proposals included updating the VIA Lietuva cycling route map, installing bike racks on public transport, and initiating plans for a new regional cycling route connecting Jurbarkas, Pagėgiai, Tauragė, and back to Jurbarkas.

These discussions and decisions reflect growing momentum in the region to align infrastructure investments with sustainability goals and promote active mobility.



Zagreb gears up for Student Campus and mobility shifts

In the first quarter of 2025, the University of Zagreb's Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences focused on the final stages of the PUMA project, with significant efforts dedicated to shaping the upcoming URBACT PUMA Student Campus. This interdisciplinary workshop will bring together 20-25 students to work on real mobility challenges faced by partner cities. Coordination with other partners began early in the year to ensure smooth integration of their local case studies into the workshop agenda.

Work on the Integrated Action Plan progressed steadily. Building on discussions from the late-2024 ULG meeting, the Faculty refined the plan's structure—particularly in aligning proposed actions with national mobility priorities, EU objectives, and clearly defined indicators.

Meanwhile, the City of Zagreb continued rolling out sustainable mobility innovations. Early 2025 saw the delivery of the first of 40 new low-floor trams, a long-awaited update to the fleet. The procurement process for the city's first electric buses also kicked off, with a focus on routes serving green recreational areas. A new bus line was introduced in the city's western area, alongside ongoing fleet expansion. Other developments included progress on a comprehensive traffic model, smart traffic management upgrades, and the launch of Zagreb's first Park & Ride system near Rebro hospital—an initiative aimed at relieving congestion and supporting intermodal travel during nearby construction works.

Together, these activities reflect a clear shift towards decarbonisation, digitalisation, and smarter urban mobility planning.





OUR NEXT STEPS

With the energy from Gdańsk still fresh and road safety insights circulating through the network, the next stretch for PUMA is all about focus, testing, and deeper collaboration.

Draft IAPs: time to polish Plans

May is our big milestone - all nine Integrated Action Plans are due, and they'll take centre stage during our upcoming Transnational Meeting in Larissa, Greece (28–29 May). This isn't just a boxticking moment: it's a real opportunity to refine our strategies, get hands-on feedback, and prepare for implementation. I'll be reviewing all the drafts personally - so send them early if you want feedback before we land in Greece!

One-on-one support? Absolutely.

Stuck? Uncertain about what to include in your IAP? Want to bounce ideas around? Individual support is always available, just reach out.

Double review = stronger Plans

After Greece, we'll bring in Claus Köllinger (Schoolhood) for a second round of IAP reviews. His fresh perspective and sharp eye will help make Plans stronger, clearer, and more actionable. Think of it as the final quality boost before we head into testing.

Let's talk money: Financing session coming up

At the end of April, we'll host a session on financing opportunities to help our partners identify how to support your actions with real funding. Whether it's local, national, or EU-level - we want every idea to have a shot at becoming reality.

More connections, more impact

In the spirit of URBACT, we're also opening the door to collaboration beyond our network. This is the moment to explore synergies with other cities, projects, or thematic networks working on similar challenges. Let's make our work visible - and amplify our influence.

