

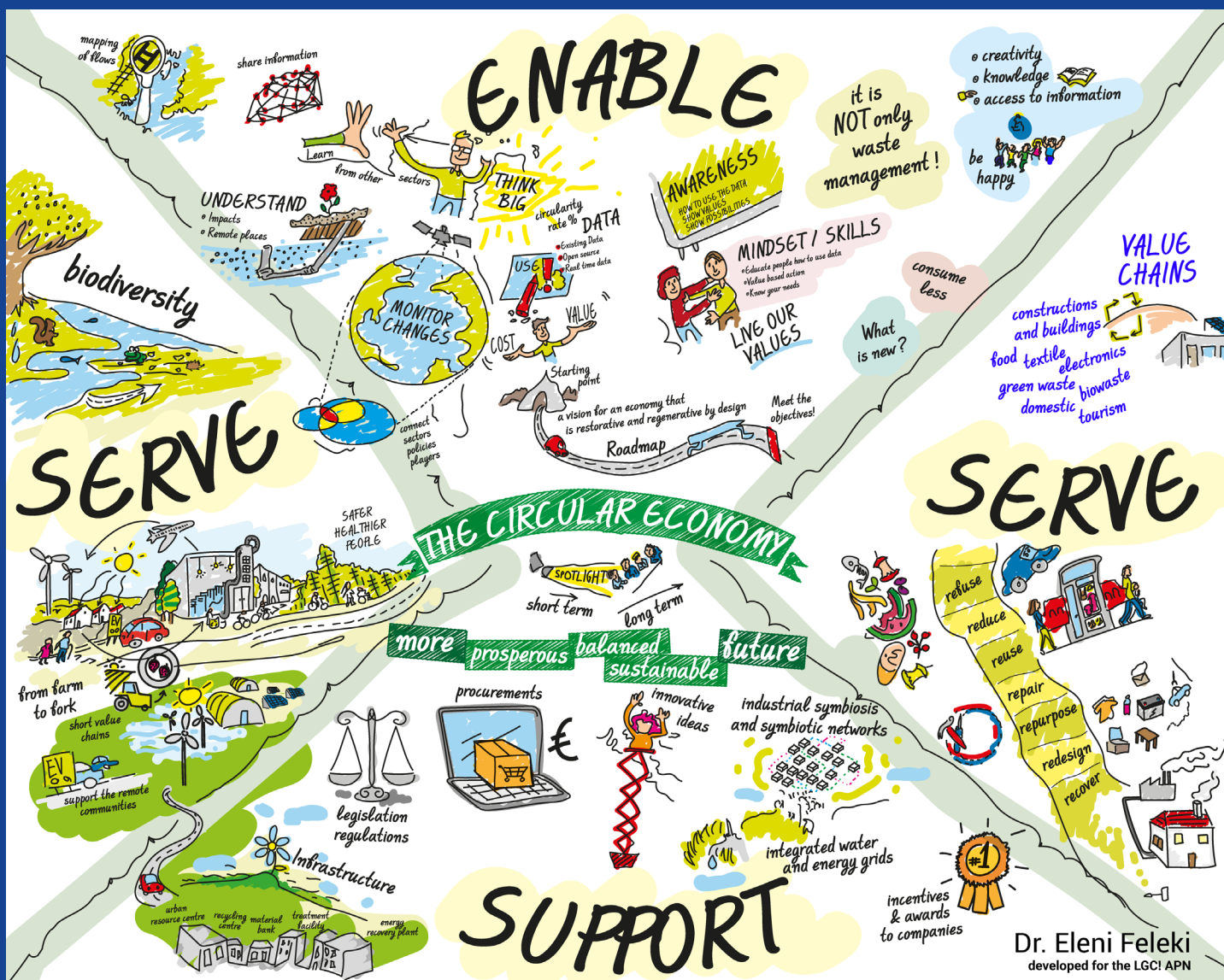
# LET'S GO CIRCULAR!

Paving the way for a circular transition of cities

May 2025

## 1<sup>st</sup> QUARTERLY REPORT

By Dr. Eleni Feleki, Lead expert



7<sup>th</sup> Transnational Meeting in Tirana. Themes discussed: circular economy commitments in Tirana, impacting consumer behaviours, testing reusable packaging systems & strengthening of the role of women in local circular economies.

Study visit at Hana Café, a nearly zero waste company, and at the Pyramid of Tirana, the largest innovation center in the Balkans, combined with a meetup with the partners of the REMOTE IT network.

8<sup>th</sup> Transnational Meetings will be held in May in Cluj - Napoca.

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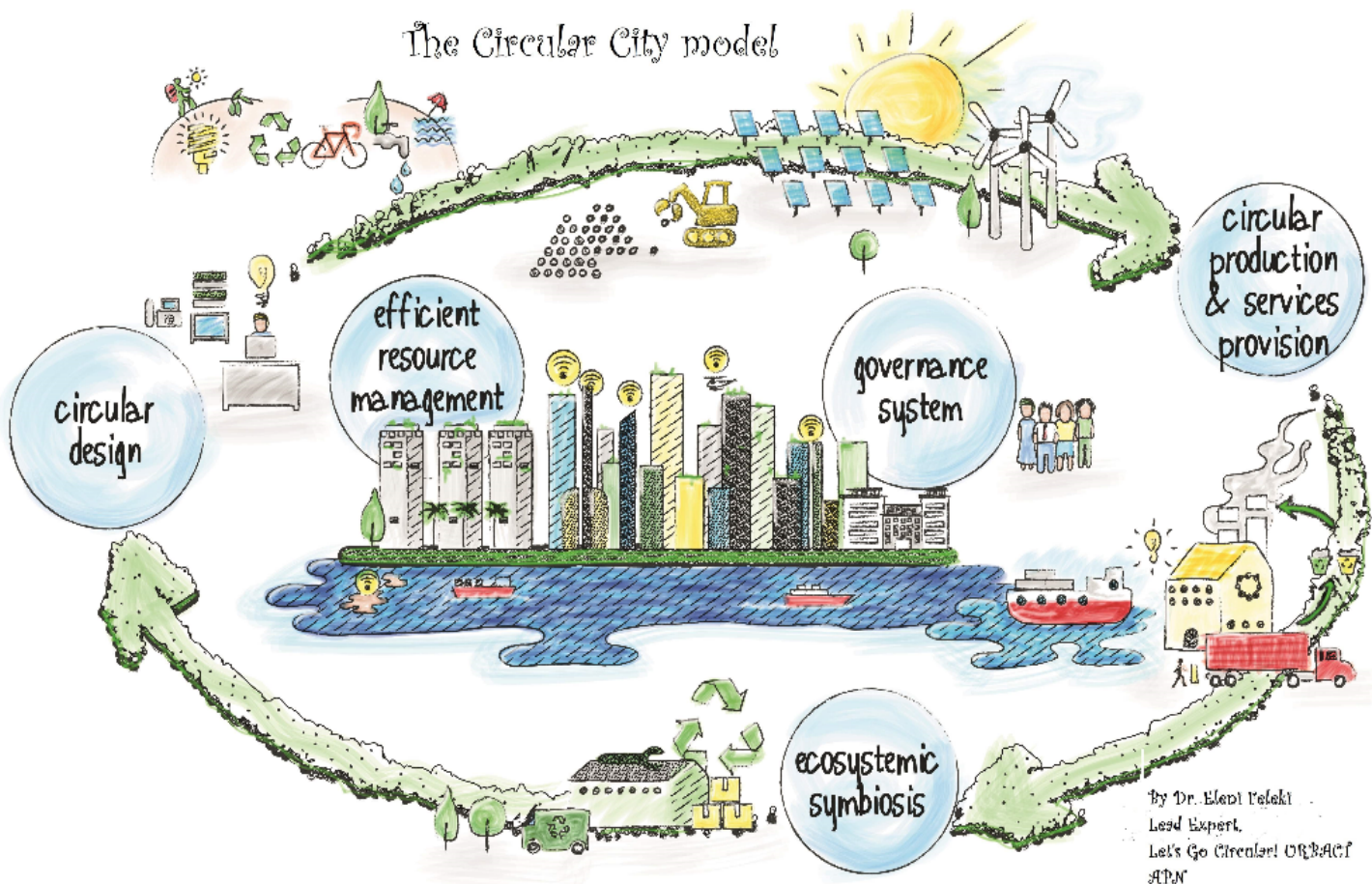
# LET'S GO CIRCULAR!

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## The network in a nutshell

With **Munich as Lead Partner**, the URBACT “LET’S GO CIRCULAR! – Paving the way for a circular transition of cities” Network started in **June 2023**.

The cities that take part in the network, apart from Munich, include Cluj-Napoca in Romania, the Greek island of Corfu, Granada in Spain, Malmö in Sweden, Riga in Latvia, Oulu in Finland, as well as Guimarães and Lisbon in Portugal and Tirana. Our understanding of the **circular city** is depicted here!



3. Development of methodologies and tools
4. Fostering innovation and entrepreneurship
5. Infrastructure



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## 7<sup>th</sup> transnational meeting in Tirana

### Message from the political representative

Circular economy is hard to push, due to many issues in Albania. In the past, due to communism, when the country and people were poor, nothing was wasted. **Nowadays, people tend to over-consume, as a sign of progress and prosperity**, making it difficult for the nation to pass the message that over-consuming is mainly linked to environmental implications. There are a lot of components that remain to be included in the sustainable development strategies, starting with the waste management plans. **However, there are a lot of second-hand shops in Tirana** and certainly, the city is eager to learn more through this transnational collaboration.

Source: Mr. Genci Kojdheli, Director General of Integration, Strategic Planning and Economic Development, Municipality of Tirana

### Our ice break

A new **pin** is added to our hat that will continue its journey from city to city, until our **final event in Granada, in December 2025**. This is an amusing activity that is taking place in every transnational meeting.



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## 7<sup>th</sup> transnational meeting in Tirana – Highlights

### Circular economy commitments in Tirana

The **Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan for the period 2020-2035** sets out **measures for the separate collection of waste and sets ambitious targets for the recycling and recovery** of various waste streams, including packaging waste.

70% recovery	Domestically generated packaging
60% recovery	Total packaging with specific material targets
60% recovery	Paper and cardboard packaging
50% recovery	Metal packaging
22.5% recovery	Plastic packaging
60% recovery	Glass packaging
15% recovery	Wooden packaging

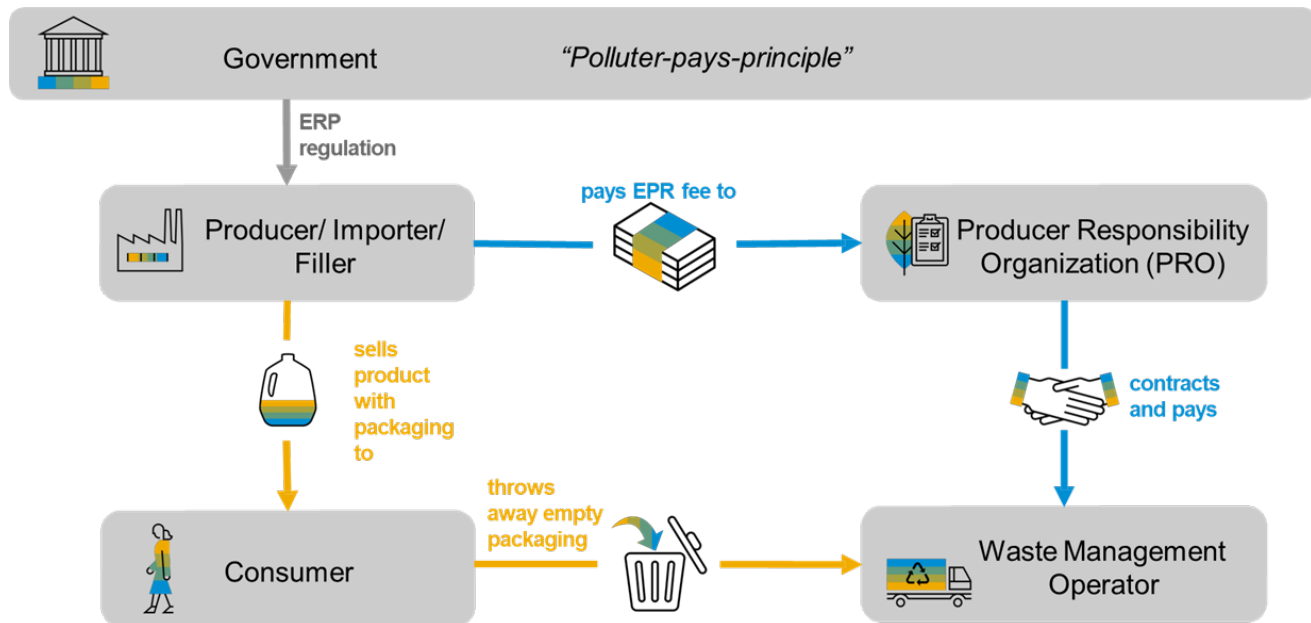
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## 7<sup>th</sup> transnational meeting in Tirana – Highlights

### Circular economy commitments in Tirana

The City acknowledges the importance of the **extended producer responsibility**.



For Albania, the **main working pillars for circular economy** are:

Pillar 1	The prohibition of single-used plastic bags (under 70 microns)
Pillar 2	The National Cleaning Program
Pillar 3	The 3R–s (reduce, reuse, recycle) Program, introduced in 37 Tirana schools
Pillar 4	Establishment of composting centers
Pillar 5	Law on “Integrated Waste Management”, drafted and under review
Pillar 6	Law on “Extended Producer Responsibility”, drafted and under approval
Pillar 7	4 key waste streams initially addressed by the law



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## 7<sup>th</sup> transnational meeting in Tirana – Highlights

### Tirana Circular Economy Park

A park that consists of 3 hubs and has a mission to turn waste into valuable resources through recycling, circular economy solutions, and waste reduction, creating a cleaner environment and driving sustainable growth.

#### Hub 1: Eco-Education Center

A space for trainings, workshops, retreats, business fairs, and career sessions related to sustainability. Constructed from biodegradable and recycled materials, with straw bale clay for natural temperature regulation.



#### Hub 2: World of Values

A “Circular Marketplace” that offers rare treasures, quality second-hand goods, and upcycled items. Soon, it will feature locally produced, sustainable culinary specialties.



#### Hub 3: Recycling Hall

This is where recyclable materials are processed, in particular plastic, glass, metal, and paper through partnerships with four municipalities and about 60 regional companies, preparing them for further processing.





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## 7<sup>th</sup> transnational meeting in Tirana – Highlights

### Impacting consumer behaviour

**Richard Laing**, introduced and led a **workshop** on dealing with ways in which consumer and **citizen behaviour** with regards to the **circular economy** can be **influenced and changed**.



Workshop delivered by Richard Laing

#### Conclusions emerging from the group discussions:

- **Storyline:** It is recommended that actions be presented alongside a descriptive storyline. This will help to best communicate the rich and complex system of factors which may come into play as actions are implemented.
- **User typologies:** It is important to consider potential end users of actions in terms of their life experience, their current economic and social context and what their own personal drivers might be in terms of adopting and participating in the circular economy.
- **Continuous evaluation:** A continuous and long-term support for an initiative is critical.
- **Political Context:** It is a critical aspect of whether actions may in fact be implemented at all, and certainly whether they could expect to be supported in the long term.



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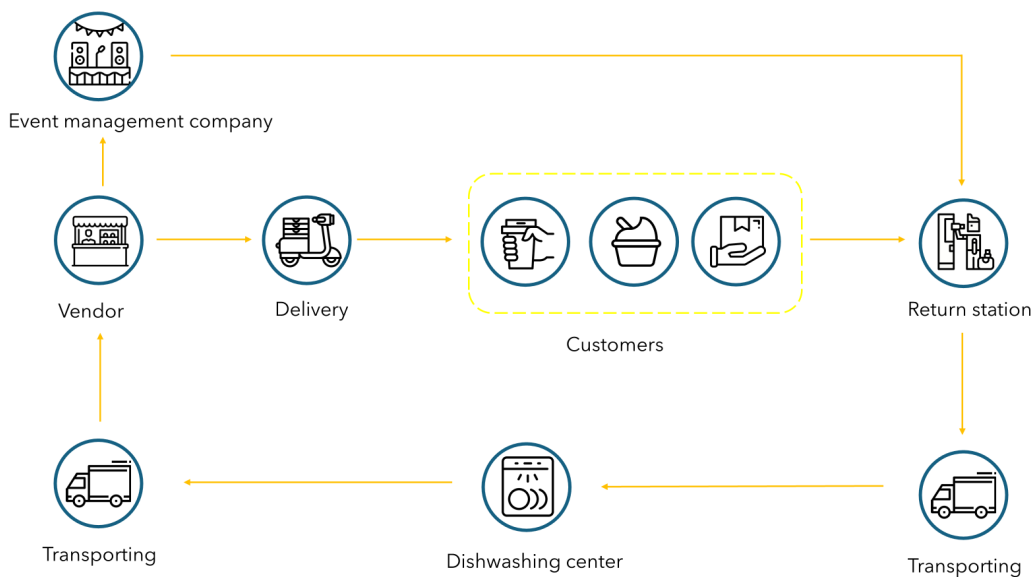
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## 7<sup>th</sup> transnational meeting in Tirana – Highlights

### Circular City Labs

Mr. Marcel Tomkins presented the **Circular City Labs** initiative in Tirana.





One goal of the initiative is to **reduce GHG emissions** through **waste prevention** and the focus is on **reusable packaging systems**. The selection of **sectors** of focus depends on the local demands and interest and varies from **take-away, to transport, e-commerce and retail**.



### Inclusion in local circular economies

Another focus of the Circular City Labs initiative is the **strengthening of the role of women** in local circular economies.

In total the grant funding available for the initiative were 287,500 euros. The **lessons learnt** out of this process are schematically depicted below.

Approach	Businesses	Gender	Cities
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include all relevant stakeholders</li><li>• Start with trainings (reuse, gender,...)</li><li>• Align goals</li><li>• Expert sessions</li><li>• Consider changes (drop outs)</li></ul>	 <p><b>Find enough:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open call</li><li>• Short list + reaching out</li></ul> <p><b>Workload:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider usual business</li><li>• Time too short for complex concepts</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Involve female networks</li><li>• Keep men included</li><li>• Gender workshop in the beginning</li><li>• Barriers? What's needed?</li><li>• Gender equality aspects in proposals</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Involve municipalities in all activities</li><li>• Reuse workshop for public sector</li><li>• Align with needs &amp; plans</li><li>• Consider ways for municipalities to support reuse business bases</li></ul>

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## 7<sup>th</sup> transnational meeting in Tirana – Highlights

### How did the partners profit from being part of the network?

As an exercise to show how their cities profited from being part in the network, partners shared some examples of what they learned from each other.

Oulu	Pop-up repair places (Malmö)
Munich	Benchmarking public procurement (Malmö, Lisbon), CircoFin Horizon Europe (Lisbon)
Corfu	A hub like Hanna Café (Tirana)
Riga	Vegeterian food in cantines (Tirana, Lisbon, Munich)
Tirana	Material flow (Lisbon), Green events (Guimaraes), Climate city contracts (Malmö)
Granada	Urban Co-Lab (Munich), Urban resource hub (Riga), Green brigades (Guimaraes)
Malmö	Indicators (Munich)
Lisbon	Indicators (Munich), CircoFin Horizon Europe (Munich)
Guimaraes	Circular Economy hubs (Tirana), Circular Cities Lab (Tirana)



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7<sup>th</sup> transnational meeting in Tirana – Inspiring examples

## Networking with REMOTE IT APN

In the **Pyramid of Tirana**, a meetup was scheduled with the partners of the **REMOTE IT** network that were having their transnational meeting on the same dates, in Tirana.

During which everyone played a quick Bingo game prepared by the Lead Experts of the two networks,, to boost networking and for people to get to know each other.





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7<sup>th</sup> transnational meeting in Tirana – Inspiring examples

## Study visit at Hana Café

**Hana Café is a nearly zero waste company**, operating by the entrepreneur, Uarda Begaj, at the heart of Tirana. The company apart from the café, includes an area **for workshops, second-hand clothes point** and a point of interaction between people of various age and background. Hana has been very warmly embraced by the people in Tirana and is now preparing to open a **nearly zero waste restaurant**, near the café.





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## Presentation of tools developed for participatory action planning

### Template provided for detailed actions

List of activities for action # 1	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing and resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
Activity #1 name xxx						
Description xxx						
Activity #2 name xxx						
Description xxx						
Activity #3						
Description xxx						
Total funds and assets needed						

Partners who do not wish to follow the template provided for the detailed actions, still are strongly suggested to cover all the points, below

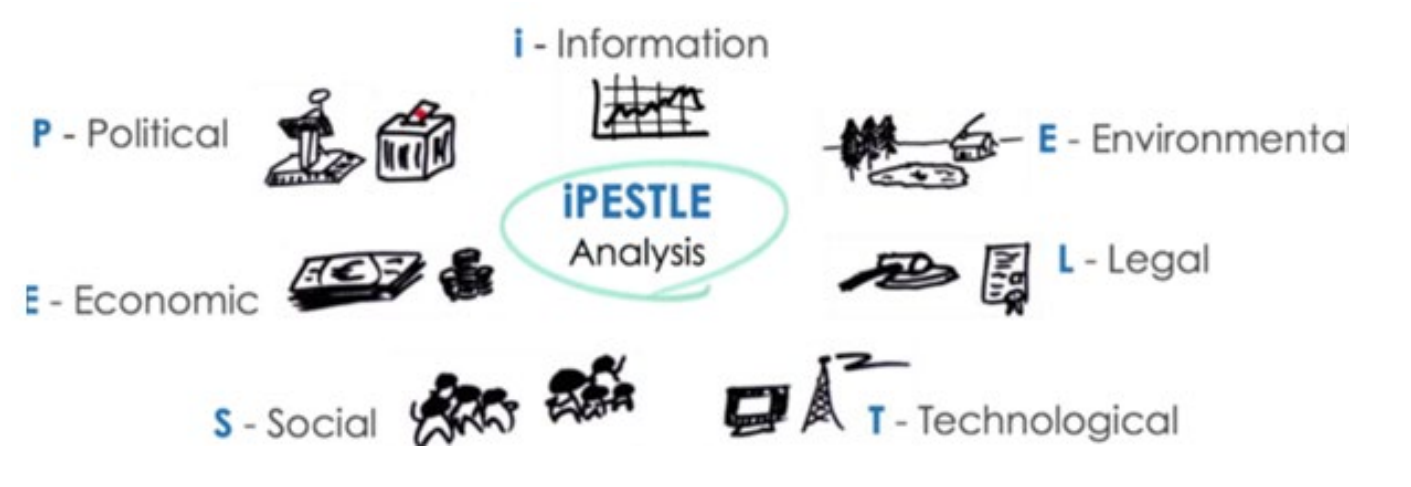
	Aspect	Description
1.	<b>Implementation steps</b> 	Breaking down each action into the distinct activities or steps/tasks that need to be undertaken to implement it.
2.	<b>Timings</b> 	Setting out when the actions/activities should be implemented
3.	<b>Responsibilities</b> 	Defining which body or bodies are responsible (and which involved) in implementing the planned activities
4.	<b>Costs</b> 	Providing a good estimate of the costs of implementing the actions
5.	<b>Funding</b> 	Identifying the specific planned (or hoped for) funding sources for the planned actions
6.	<b>Monitoring indicators</b> 	Defining output and results indicators which can be used to monitor implementation progress
7.	<b>Risk mitigation</b> 	Setting out measures the city/ULG intends to take to mitigate risks to implementation of the planned actions identified by a risk assessment.

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## Presentation of tools developed for participatory planning implementation

### i-PESTLE methodology & diagnostic tool (risks identification & mitigation)



By using this tool during planning implementation, implementation risks are categorized into the fields of information, political, economic, social, technological, legal, data-related and environmental.

After the short presentation of the framework, partners participated in a workshop. They were split in three groups and selected from a list of relevant actions, to analyse them in terms of risks and opportunities using the i-PESTLE methodology.

	Technological	Environmental	Economic	Social	Political	Data	Legal
Risks  -Identify which of these areas may raise implementation risks and talk about them							
Opportunities/ Mitigation  Which of these areas provide conditions that help you mitigate the effects and how?							



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## Brief presentation of tools developed and/ or used demonstrating integrated and participatory approaches

Participatory risks identification & mitigation by using i-PESTLE methodology (workshop with partners split into 3 groups)

### Group 1 - Action analysed: Design of a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the impact of Circular Economy initiatives

Fields	Risks	Opportunities/ Mitigation
Technological	1. Insufficient data collection tools 2. Obsolete IT software	1.1 More investments 1.2 Capacity building for the staff 2.1 Open source software
Environmental	1. High carbon footprint of IT systems	1.1 Energy efficient systems 1.2 Heat recovery 1.3 CO2 compensation measures
Economic	1. High initial investment costs 2. Uncertainty in ROI 3. Lack of incentives to share data for free	1.1, 2.1, 3.1 Develop cost-efficient models 3.2 Create data products
Social	1. Lack of trust to share data 2. Low public awareness of the benefits and purposes 3. Not representing everyone	1.1 Public awareness campaigns 1.2 Transparency of data reports 2.1 Motivation programmes 3.1 Inclusive data collection systems
Political	1. Lack of interest to share (inconvenient) information 2. Change of political priorities	1.1, 2.1, Create long terms obligatory systems 1.2, 2.2 Showcase good practices from other cites/ counties 1.3, 2.3 International standards
Data	1. Open source 2. Misinterpretation and manipulation of data	1.1, 2.1 Use of standardized and approved measures
Legal	1. GDPR 2. No regulation 3. IP	Clear legal definitions Protect personal data Create long terms obligatory systems Showcase good practices from other cites/ counties International standards

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Paving the way for a circular transition of cities

Brief presentation of tools developed and/ or used demonstrating integrated and participatory approaches

Participatory risks identification & mitigation by using i-PESTLE methodology (workshop with partners split into 3 groups)

Group 2 – Action analysed: Design of a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the impact of Circular Economy initiatives

Fields	Risks	Opportunities/ Mitigation
Technological	Platform to unify data	Responsible person/ position/ external?
Environmental	-	-
Economic	Reporting / investment costs	Economy of scale: standardized system leads to less cost by individual
Social	-	-
Political	Mindset: less doing, more measurement	Storyline: if we know what we are doing, it has bigger impact
Data	Baseline data availability How to measure initiatives?	Be aware that targets are assumed, projected, not on current status
Legal	-	-

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Brief presentation of tools developed and/ or used demonstrating integrated and participatory approaches

Participatory risks identification & mitigation by using i-PESTLE methodology (workshop with partners split into 3 groups)

Group 3: Raise the awareness of households about Circular Economy and its benefits

Fields	Risks	Opportunities/ Mitigation
Technological	-	-
Environmental	-	-
Economic	Real estate resistance that impacts eg space for bins	Inforce design regulation
Social	“Fake news” still in mind “Whataboutism” mentality	Enforce communication and education
Political	Concerned about obligations and regulations	Proofing statements amd convincing politicians
Data	Reliable data	Reliable resources
Legal	Enough waste management regulation but not enough on R-strategies	Be the first one to move: if here is no national, make a regulation



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Brief presentation of tools developed and/ or used demonstrating integrated and participatory approaches

## Guidelines for ULG coordinators for the planning implementation stage

### URBACT Local Groups Guides and Tools for the preparing implementation stage (stage 3)

Prepared by Dr. Eleni Feleki, lead expert of the Let's Go Circular! Network



JANUARY 2025

#### Introduction

The aim of the Guide is to provide an overview of the actions at the local level, covering the action detailing and planning implementation stages: Part 3 and Part 4 of the IAP.

- The planning for implementation stage will run from January 2025 to October 2025 and will lead to the completion of the IAP (Parts 3 and 4 and refinement of Parts 1 and 2 where needed).

Stage 4 implies the committed involvement of the ULG coordinator who will organize, execute and report the activities at the local level and the engagement of the ULG members.

The ULG member lists remain living documents and can be amended at any point, always reassuring that the integrated approach (local, national, regional levels represented, different policy actors and sectorial actors either from public or private sector represented, as well as academia, citizens and NGOs).

#### 1. Planning for implementation stage

The duration of this stage is from January to October (strictly) 2025 and reflects Parts 3 and 4 of the [IAP](#) (referring to the proposed template). Towards the end of this stage, a revisit and refinement of Parts 1 and 2 of the [IAP](#) is needed to be conducted by the ULG coordinator, to ensure consistency across all IAP Parts.

## Funding and financing presentation

Driving  
change  
for better  
cities

### Let's Go Circular!

#### Action Planning Network

Dr. Eleni Feleki, LE

Funding and financing of the IAPs  
IAP Part IV

What is included in this slide deck

1. IAP budgeting
2. Fundraising: 5 steps for successful funds raising
3. Overview of funding streams
4. Creation of the funding mix
5. Reminder of next steps

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## Local progress

Almost all partners have implemented between 7 and 10 ULG meetings since the beginning of the project.

All partners are either finalizing Part II or already detailing the actions in Part III of the IAP.

All partners have designed and are currently implementing their pilot actions. Some examples are depicted below:

- ❖ Wear the Shirt for Circular Fashion
- ❖ Circular Neighbourhoods
- ❖ Circular Tourism
- ❖ One day per week only vegetarian food served in the City of Cluj-Napoca Canteen
- ❖ Workshops for families to promote waste sorting
- ❖ Guide to sustainable procurement in the gastronomy sector in a museum
- ❖ Bike hospital
- ❖ Free of traffic street
- ❖ Awareness raising through waste removal in degraded plots
- ❖ Circular area , Circular Hub
- ❖ Installation of clothes' bins in schools

All partners have planned next ULG meetings to complete the prioritization of actions and plan implementation.

In terms of concerns, it is difficult to keep a consistent number of stakeholders attending and to keep their involvement high.



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## Tips shared

- Data and information you include in Part I should be up to date
- Always remember to refer to URBACT when you mention who has drafted the IAP – this is especially for cities that have outsourced to an external consultant
- Keep small number of strategic objectives 2-4 max and link them to relevant strategic documents
- During refinement: SMARTify operational objectives
- Clear alignment: (needs) - vision and strategic objectives-focus and lines of intervention-operational objectives – actions – outputs – resources
- Visuals as much as possible
- Consistency in use of terms (ie vision, objectives etc)
- Describe pilot actions and show how they feed the action plan

## Next steps

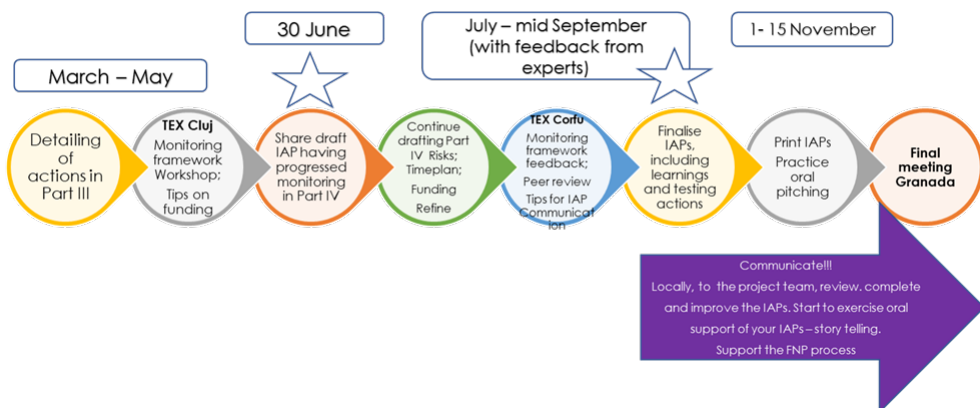
Steps since January and June 2025:

Partners need to work and finalise the detailing of the prioritised actions, and to reflect on how to fund them. Also, partners need to finalise their pilot actions by end of June latest.

Steps between July and end of September:

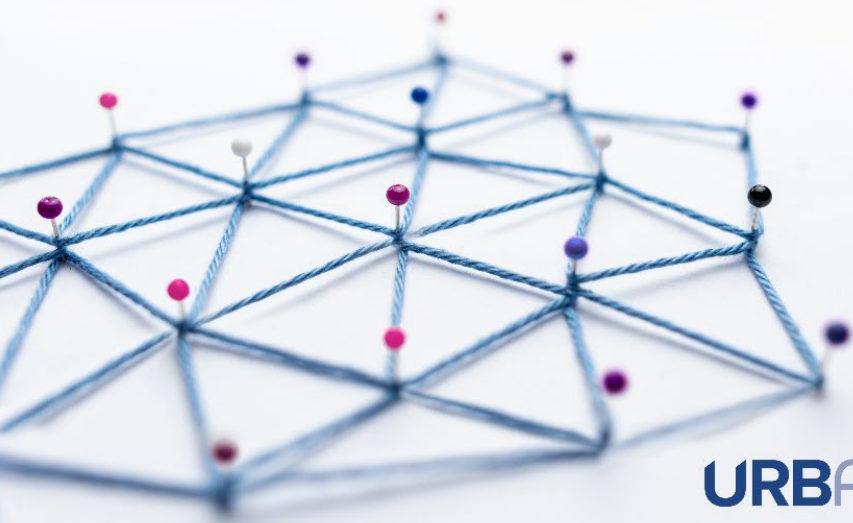
Partners need to work and finalise Part IV of the IAP:

- Define financing framework
- Present the timeplan
- Describe lessons learnt - Describe the testing actions
- Finalise all sections of the IAP, test intervention logic
- Finalise of monitoring framework
- Identify measures to mitigate the risks



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This report has been produced in the frame of the Let's Go Circular! APN, led by the City of Munich and financed by the URBACT Programme.

**Special acknowledgements to the local team of City of Tirana that hosted the 7<sup>th</sup> transnational meeting.**

Project website

<https://urbact.eu/networks/lets-go-circular>

Follow us on LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/let-s-go-circular/>

For more information please contact:

Barbara Buhler-Karpati, project coordinator, City of Munich, [lge\\_munich@muenchen.de](mailto:lge_munich@muenchen.de)

Dr. Eleni Feleki, lead expert, URBACT, [efeleki@hotmail.com](mailto:efeleki@hotmail.com)

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