

From Ideas to Action: How Vilnius Communities Build a Climate-Neutral City



Integrated Action Plan 2025

URBACT



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From Ideas to Action: How Vilnius Communities Build a Climate-Neutral City
Integrated Action Plan of the City of Vilnius

Prepared within the framework of the URBACT Action Planning Network “COPE – Coherent Place-based Climate Action” (2023–2025)

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– Association of Miglos street residents
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IAP Section 1: Context, needs and vision

I. Overall Theme

The COPE network, part of URBACT’s Action Planning Network, drives the green transition in cities through mindset shifts and small-scale, citizen-led actions. It addresses both institutional reforms and community-level change, testing new governance models to ensure equity and a just transition.

Using its “Cope Scope” approach—combining place-based governance, Asset-Based Community Development, and adaptive leadership—COPE empowers local communities to shape decisions, build on their strengths, and foster inclusive urban development. Aligned with the European Green Deal and international goals, COPE advances sustainable, digital, and participatory practices, positioning cities to lead the transition toward climate neutrality.

Vilnius is one of the eight European cities participating in the URBACT COPE (Coherent Place-based Climate Action) network, alongside cities like Copenhagen, Pombal, Saint-Quentin, Kavala, A Coruña, Korydallos, and Bistrița. Throughout the programme, we engaged in cross-network exchanges, where municipal representatives and local stakeholders (ULG members) came together during transnational meetings to share insights, local experiences, and challenges. These collaborative sessions played a crucial role in shaping our local climate action by providing valuable inspiration and practical ideas drawn from real-life examples across Europe.

Core Network Meeting #6 in Vilnius – Visiting Miglos Street community initiatives.



II. Urban Context and Governance

Vilnius, with a population of 610 699¹ is Lithuania’s capital and largest city. It aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2030², aligning closely with COPE’s vision for community-based climate action. The city is divided into 21 administrative units (elderships), which serve as both governance units and key contact points for residents on neighbourhood-level issues. Strengthening collaboration with elderships can significantly support the implementation of place-based sustainability initiatives.

III. Social Challenges and Inequality. Access to Services

Vilnius is the economic centre of Lithuania, contributing over 42%³ to the country’s national GDP. On the other hand, Vilnius faces significant social challenges, particularly around inequality and access to essential services. According to 2023 data, 13.1% of Vilnius residents live below the poverty risk line.⁴

To address these issues, local initiatives such as community gardens, tool libraries, and the community fridge network aim to promote more affordable and healthier living conditions. These projects seek to reduce economic disparities and enhance social well-being by providing residents with greater access to essential resources.

1 „Rodiklių duomenų bazė – Oficialiosios statistikos portalas“, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=4afc61cc-bdb7-435f-9041-f8ba09de5b24#/>

2 European Commission, “Press Corner – IP/22/2591,” accessed November 18, 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2591

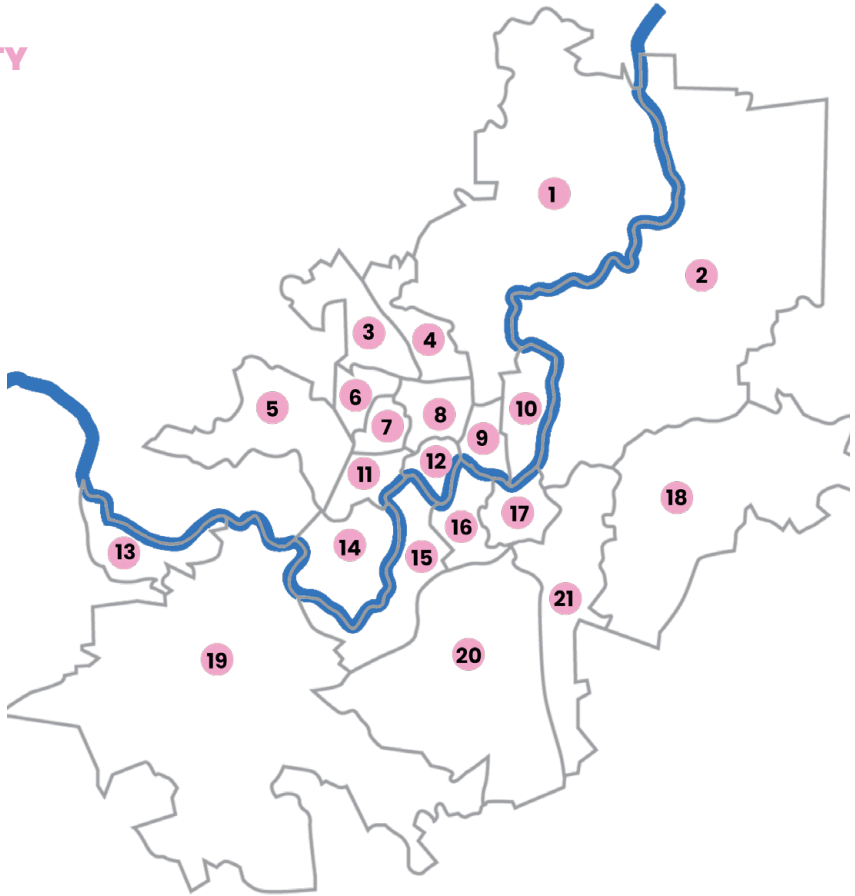
3 Go Vilnius, “Economic Overview,” accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.govilnius.lt/do-business-and-invest/economic-overview>

4 “Vilniaus miesto tikslinės teritorijos 2023–2027 m. vietos plėtros strategija,” Vilniaus miesto tikslinės teritorijos vietos veiklos grupė, accessed November 18 2025, page 22, https://miestobendruomene.lt/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Vilniaus-m-tikslines-teritorijos-2023_2027-m-vietos-pletros-strategija-tikslinta-20240527.pdf

VILNIUS MUNICIPALITY

Vilnius elderships:

1. Verkiai
2. Antakalnis
3. Pašilaičiai
4. Fabijoniškės
5. Pilaitė
6. Justiniškės
7. Viršuliškės
8. Šeškinė
9. Šnipiškės
10. Žirmūnai
11. Karoliniškės
12. Žvėrynas
13. Grigiškės
14. Lazdynai
15. Vilkipėdė
16. Naujamiestis
17. Senamiestis
18. Naujoji Vilnia
19. Paneriai
20. Naujininkai
21. Rasos.



IV. Relevant Existing Strategies and Policies

Vilnius is actively implementing sustainability-focused strategies aligned with EU and global frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 15 – Life on Land), the EU Green City Accord, and the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy 2030. These policies support biodiversity, climate neutrality, and citizen-driven urban initiatives.

Core Strategies & Policies:

Vilnius Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)⁵
Expands public transport, cycling infrastructure, and reduces car dependency.

Vilnius Green City Action Plan⁶
Encourages urban greening, biodiversity conservation, and community-led green initiatives.

Community-Led Sustainability Projects⁷
Supports urban farming, waste reduction, and circular economy initiatives. (Program developed to support COPE scope.)

Vilnius City Climate Neutrality Action Plan (2030)⁸
Targets climate neutrality through energy efficiency, renewable energy, and emissions reduction.

Smart City & Digital Governance Initiatives⁹
Uses digital tools to enhance transparency, citizen participation, and sustainability.

Citizen Engagement Platforms *Ensures early-stage community involvement in green space planning and supports local climate-neutral projects via the CITY Neighbourhood Programme.¹⁰*

In addition to these strategies, the city has overarching plans such as the Vilnius City Master Plan (2021–2030), the Air Quality Management Programme and Action Plan (2020–2050), and projects like the Green Wave initiative (since 2021), European Green Capital 2025, the Life Project GreenMe5¹¹ and Just Streets¹². These initiatives aim to enhance environmental monitoring, promote green spaces, and engage citizens in sustainability efforts.

V. Citizen Involvement and Place-Based Action

Vilnius places strong emphasis on citizen engagement in urban development, particularly in shaping green public spaces. From the earliest stages of planning, residents are actively involved through consultations and local initiatives. Recent initiatives such as the city’s first Citizens’ Assembly¹³ on sustainable mobility strengthen this approach by giving communities a structured way to propose ideas, co-decide priorities, and participate directly in municipal decision-making.

5 Innovations in Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (InnovaSUMP), Action Plan, Jūdu, June 2021, accessed November 18, 2025, https://judu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Action_plan_InnovaSUMP_final.pdf
6 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Vilnius Green City Action Plan, English Version 1.0, accessed November 18, 2025, https://www.ebrdgreencities.com/assets/downloads/Vilnius_GCAP_English_1.0.pdf
7 “Kvietimas dalyvauti 2025 m. Vilniaus miesto savivaldybės nevyriausybių organizacijų bendruomeninių veiklų rėmimo projektų atrankos konkurse.” Vilniaus miesto savivaldybė – Naujienos, accessed November 18, 2025. <https://vilnius.lt/naujienos/kvietimas-dalyvauti-2025-m-vilniaus-miesto-savivaldybes-nevyriausybinu-organizaciju-bendruomeniniu-veiklu-remimo-projektu-atrankos-konkurse>
8 Vilnius City Municipality, Vilnius City Climate Neutrality Action Plan by 2030, accessed November 18 2025, https://netzerocities.app/_content/files/knowledge/4680/ccc_vilnius.pdf
9 “Interactive Vilnius City Maps,” accessed November 18, 2025, <https://maps.vilnius.lt/en>
10 “Kaimynijų programa – Apie programą,” Amiestas.lt – Kiemų atnaujinimas, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://amiestas.lt/kiemu-atnaujinimas/kaimyniju-programa/apie-programa/95>
11 “LIFE GreenMe5 – Cooperative Project,” accessed November 18, 2025, <https://greenme5.frm.es/en/>
12 “City Transformations – JUST STREETS,” JUST STREETS Project, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.just-streets.eu/transformations>
13 “Pirmoji Vilniaus piliečių asamblėja spres, kaip judėsime mieste.” Vilniaus miesto savivaldybė – Naujienos. Accessed November 18, 2025. <https://vilnius.lt/naujienos/pirmoji-vilniaus-pilieciu-asambleja-spres-kaip-judesime-mieste>

As part of the COPE project preparation, the municipality launched a Climate Neutral Community call to identify local groups interested in sustainability. The aim was not only to spark grassroots interest but also to help define the thematic direction of Vilnius’ COPE activities based on real community needs and ambitions. In total, 21 communities across Vilnius responded. Representatives were invited to a joint session during Climate Week organised by the “Climate Neutral and Smart Vilnius” municipal entity.

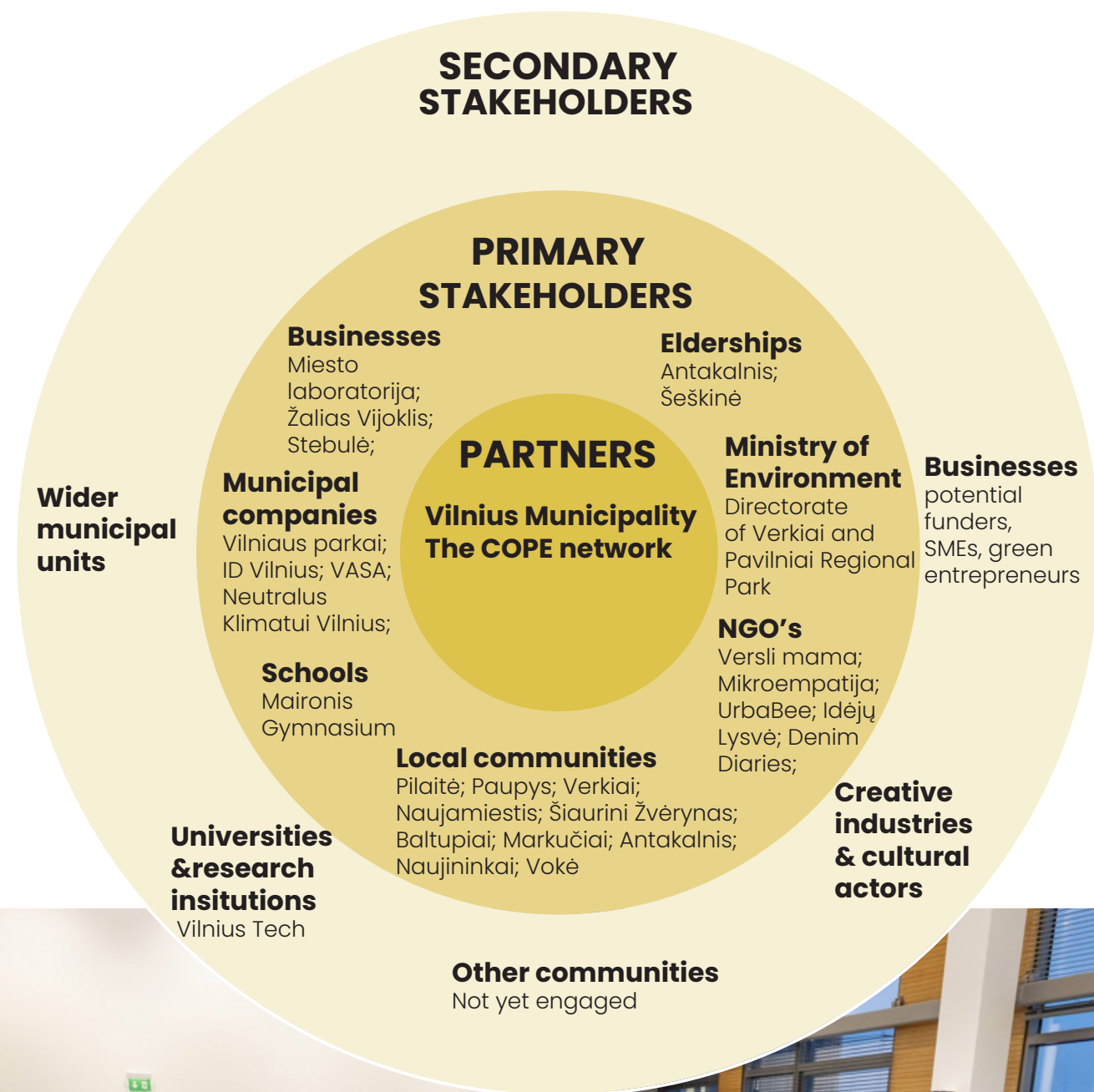
These communities represent a mix of active groups already involved in urban gardening, food-sharing or energy-saving projects and others interested in starting new initiatives. This process highlighted both the readiness and potential to create a learning network of neighbourhoods, enabling small-scale, place-based climate actions to be piloted and gradually scaled city-wide.

The IAP builds on this momentum by:

- » Strengthening cooperation between the city and active communities;
- » Piloting community-level initiatives that can later be scaled up;
- » Embedding local voices into broader urban strategies for a just green transition.

Stakeholder feedback clarified current issues and future potential.

Opportunities (Strengths)	Challenges (Weaknesses)	Local Priorities
Active Communities: Strong local groups driving sustainability projects	Infrastructure Gaps: Lack of water access and storage for urban gardening.	Biodiversity & Green Spaces: Expand gardens, bee habitats, wildflower meadows, green roofs.
Urban Greening: High interest in beekeeping, gardens, and green spaces.	Legal Issues: Land ownership disputes delay green space projects.	Waste Reduction & Circular Economy: Composting, Repair Cafés, sharing spaces.
Climate-Neutral Vision: 2025 European Green Capital status boosts action.	Vandalism & Security: Concerns discourage new community initiatives	Community Gardens & Food Production: Local food growth for sustainability & bonding.
Supportive Funding: Community funds prioritise climate projects.	Limited Environmental Education: Need broader sustainability awareness.	Sustainable Mobility: Better public transport, bike lanes, pedestrian pathways (SUMP).
	Community Resilience: Reliance on few individuals risks burnout; leadership needs to be shared.	Climate Awareness & Education: Workshops, school programmes, public campaigns.



First ULG meeting at the municipality on October 26, 2023.

VI Community Reflections & Survey Insights

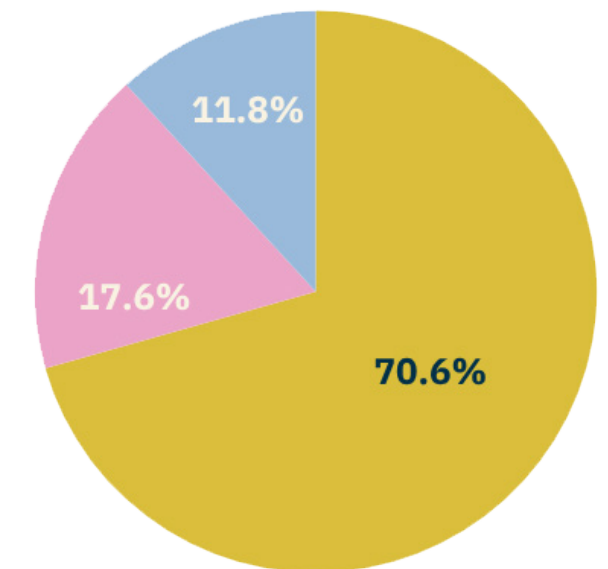
To shape the direction of Vilnius' COPE initiatives, a local survey was conducted in January–February 2024. Respondents were invited to indicate the thematic focus of their current or planned actions. Three key themes emerged.

In addition to these themes, respondents shared their skills, inspirations, and aspirations, ranging from wild plant knowledge to community organizing and architectural design. This provided valuable insight into local capacities and interests, helping shape the cross-network exchange and inspiring several ideas that are now being piloted in real life – as detailed in the following chapters.

VII Municipal Support Tool for Local Climate Action

Following the first COPE Urban Local Group meeting in February 2024, Vilnius Municipality launched an open call for communities, offering up to €5,000 to support small-scale climate-related initiatives. This tool helped align local needs with COPE priorities and proved an effective way to activate citizen-led, place-based actions across Vilnius.

Indicate which theme your ongoing or planned COPE initiative (to be implemented within the next 2 years) belongs to.



- URBAN BIODIVERSITY**
Community gardens, wild meadows, green roofs, insect hotels, urban beekeeping.
- CIRCULAR ECONOMY: REPAIR & REUSE**
Sharing, repairing, reusing through repurposing, repair cafés.
- FOOD WASTE REDUCTION**
Community fridges, composting.

Interest

– Wildflower meadow: It would be great to receive a consultation from a botanist (plant diversity, identification, help with preparing professional info signs). Possibly funding needed for preparing and producing info signs.
– Green roof structures: evaluation and project needed, skilled helpers for construction; funding for materials.

Experience / Inspiration

The community garden and sauna on railway tracks in Naujoji Vilnia's Dūmų Street district was inspired by the "Nordplus Adult" international GLOBUS project of good practices from Denmark, Estonia, and Iceland.

Experience / Inspiration

We've never created a community fridge before, though we've long talked about it and have knowledge from volunteers in Copenhagen. We can roughly imagine where the challenges and problem areas may arise.

Experience

Experience in constructing garden beds, preparing for sowing, efficient use of small beds, combining edible and insect-beneficial plants, enhancing soil biological activity.

"Local Know-how & Aspirations"

Interest

Opportunities for acquiring or renting premises in Markučiai–Paupys area; information needed about rental under preferential terms. Sometimes state-owned buildings could also be an option, etc.

Experience

I can help build a garden bed and share beginner-to-advanced gardening tips.

Experience

Since I grew up in the countryside and my mother is still a very active and successful gardener, I have extensive experience (and a free consultant). My husband is a scientific agronomist, so he can also help with gardening questions.

VIII. Vision

To nurture resilient, creative, and sustainable communities by ensuring greater access to shared spaces, resources, and food, while developing urban gardens, tool libraries, and network of community fridges.

IX. Main Integration Challenges

Challenge	Strategic Effort
Limited collaboration between communities and municipal bodies.	Establish formal frameworks for collaboration; create city-wide platforms for knowledge-sharing and resource pooling.
Infrastructure gaps (e.g. water access for gardens, space for repair cafés).	Invest in infrastructure to support community initiatives; secure annual funding for climate-neutral activities.
Burnout of few key leaders, limiting scalability.	Develop capacity-building and leadership training programs to widen participation.

Passive participation in some areas; limited citizen involvement.	Boost awareness through education campaigns, accessible communication, and incentives to engage.
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X. Current Approach to Key URBACT Cross-Cutting Themes

Overall goal is to have a better and more structured and consistent dialogue with the city’s citizens and a better support for future Climate action related decisions and policies. The aspiration of the Integrated Action Plan is to focus on an integrated approach that involves listening to citizen initiatives and ideas alongside the city’s needs. It includes a model to test and pilot new initiatives, ideas, and policies in the field of green transition before implementing them on a city-wide scale. It also establishes formalised collaborations among all stakeholders. The goal is to create a more formalised city development model, that could be used in the overall City planning process and become a standard practice.

The integrated approach also considers cross-cutting themes such as digital transformation, open calls for funding, and the use of municipal open data. These elements will ensure that community-led initiatives are supported by transparent funding, empowered through open access to information, and enhanced by digital tools for communication and participation.

Vilnius ULG members from three different communities are visiting local initiatives in Pombal during CNM #4.



XI. Vilnius Awarded URBACT Good Practice Label

Vilnius was recognised with the URBACT Good Practice label for its initiative “Communities Involvement into Climate Neutral Activities.” Out of 249 submissions from across Europe, only 116 practices received this label, following a rigorous evaluation by independent experts and the URBACT Monitoring Committee.

This recognition highlighted Vilnius’ commitment to citizen-driven climate action and strengthened its visibility at both national and European levels. The awarded practice was showcased at the URBACT City Festival in April 2025 in Wrocław, providing valuable opportunities for networking, learning, and inspiring other cities.

XII. COPE and Vilnius Green Capital: Growing a Greener City Together

The Green Capital title brought national and European attention to citizen-led initiatives—such as community gardens, tool-sharing hubs, and community fridges—positioning them as inspiring examples of grassroots climate action.

Throughout 2025, COPE activities directly supported the Green Capital goals by delivering tangible, place-based solutions that enhanced urban biodiversity, promoted circular resource use, and fostered community participation. This mutual reinforcement created valuable synergies: COPE provided a platform for piloting innovative actions, while the Green Capital status helped attract partnerships, funding, and wider public support.

Together, they contributed to building stronger community capacity, encouraging knowledge exchange, and advancing Vilnius’ leadership in sustainable urban development.



Local community and green initiative leaders in Vilnius at the European Green Capital Opening Event.

Urban Biodiversity

- » Urban Beekeeping: Installing beehives in community gardens to boost pollination, biodiversity, and environmental education
- » Greening Public Spaces: Expanding urban green areas by planting trees and flowers, enhancing aesthetics and ecology. Promoting community gardens.



Food Waste Reduction

- » Community Composting: Turning food scraps into compost for urban gardens, aligning with waste management goals.
- » Community Fridge: Public fridge for redistributing surplus food, reducing waste, and supporting those in need.



Circular Economy – Repair & Reuse

- » Repair & Sharing culture: Community events for borrowing or fixing household items, promoting reuse over disposal.
- » Fashion & Second-Hand Culture: Encouraging second-hand shopping through awareness campaigns, making reuse trendy and sustainable.



IAP Section 2: Overall logic and integrated approach

Strategic Objective 1 – Community Gardening: To promote local food production and green spaces by expanding urban agriculture and community use of municipal land.

Area of Intervention: Urban Agriculture and Community Engagement

Specific Objectives:

- Provide guidance on urban gardening practices to support communities.
- Create new community garden sites in collaboration with local residents.
- Raise public awareness and build community skills through campaigns and workshops

Action	Type	Timeline	Estimated Budget	Responsible
1. Raise awareness through a campaign on urban agriculture benefits	Short term	2025-2028	€11,000	Municipality in collaboration with ULG (Association “ Ideas Garden”; Antakalnis Community garden; “Daržas 2123” community garden;
2. Organise community workshops on sustainable gardening practices.	Short term	2026	€1000	Municipality in collaboration with ULG (Association “ Ideas Garden”: community gardens in Pialite and Verkiai)
3. Update urban gardening guidelines to clarify land use, garden design, community involvement, and setup steps.	Short term	2025	€0	Municipality in collaboration with ULG (Association “ Ideas Garden”)
4. Expand community gardens by inviting residents to suggest suitable local spaces	Medium term	2026-2028	€0	Municipality in collaboration with ULG
5. Strengthen community engagement by integrating Climate Neutral actions into the annual municipal “DALYVAUK” participatory budgeting programme.	Long term	2026-2030	€50,000	Municipality in collaboration with ULG, NGO
6. Within the framework of the “DALYVAUK” participatory budgeting programme, organise annual events such as harvest festivals or gardening competitions to strengthen community spirit.	Long term	2026-2030	€10,000	Municipality in collaboration with ULG, NGO
7. Integrate urban agriculture into planning: include it in the master plan and reserve municipal land for community gardens.	Long term	2030+	€10,000	Municipality, Ministry of Environment, external experts, ULG, legal advisors

Strategic Objective 2 – Resource Sharing: To promote resource sharing and sustainability by establishing tool libraries in local elderships.

Area of Intervention: Community Resources and Sustainability

Specific Objectives:

- Establish community tool libraries in local elderships.
- Build and maintain a shared inventory of tools for residents.
- Develop partnerships and volunteer support for operations.

Action	Type	Timeline	Estimated Budget	Responsible
1. Awareness building in municipality.	Short term	2026–2027	€0	Municipality, elderships;
2. Review municipal and grassroots tool library case studies and integrate relevant examples into the technical implementation procedures of the “DALYVAUK” participatory budgeting programme.	Short term	2026	€0	Municipality/ ULG;
3. Identify suitable locations within elderships, such as community centres, eldership’s premises or libraries, that can serve as tool lending hubs.	Medium term	2026–2029	€350	Municipality in collaboration with ULG network and elderships; Private business;
4. Partner with local businesses, hardware stores, and donors to secure an initial inventory of commonly needed tools. Tools can also be second hand tools collected from community members.	Medium term	2026–2028	€3,000	Municipality; Elderships; ULG; Local businesses; Volunteers;
5. Organise workshops to promote the tool library, explain how it works, and provide basic training on tool use and maintenance.	Medium term	2027–2030	€1,500	Municipality; elderships; ULG; Local businesses; Tool’s experts;
6. Create a simple borrowing system with clear guidelines on tool usage, return dates, and maintenance.	Long term	2026–2030	€1,200	Municipality, elderships, ULG;

ULG event on repair practices and repair policies in Europe.



Strategic Objective 3 – Food Sharing: To reduce food waste and improve access to free food for community members by establishing a network of community fridges across Vilnius.

Area of Intervention: Food Security and Waste Reduction

Specific Objectives:

- Create clear guidelines for community fridge use.
- Establish fridges in local elderships to support food sharing.
- Build volunteer support and business partnerships for fridge operations.

Action	Type	Timeline	Estiamted Budget	Responsible
1. Launch a campaign to inform residents about the community fridge program, emphasising food safety, usage rules, and the benefits of reducing food waste.	Long term	2027–2030	€1,600	Municipality, elderships;
2. Develop guidelines for fridge use, including safety protocols and rules for donating and retrieving food, and post them visibly on each fridge	Short term	2027	€1,500	Municipality/ ULG (“Miesto Laboratorija”)
3. Identify safe, accessible locations within each eldership (such as community centres, eldership’s premises or public buildings) to host the community fridges.	Medium term	2027–2030	€1,000	Municipality in collaboration with the ULG network and elderships, private businesses, schools, and kindergartens
4. Collaborate with local grocery stores, bakeries to regularly stock the fridges with surplus food.	Long term	2027<	€1,600	Municipality; Elderships; ULG; Local businesses; Volunteers;

Core Network Meeting #6 in Vilnius – Visiting Community Fridge in Antakalnis.



IAP Section 3: Action planning details

Strategic Objective 1 – Community Gardening				
Actions	1.Raise awareness through a campaign on urban agriculture benefits.	2. Organise community workshops on sustainable gardening practices.	3. Update urban gardening guidelines to clarify land use, garden design, community involvement, and setup steps.	4. Expand community gardens by inviting residents to suggest suitable local spaces.
Activities	1. Create communication material; 2. Publish press release; 3. Promote via social media; 4. Host Urban Gardening Forum;	1. Plan workshop content; 2. Involve gardening experts & ULG; 3. Promote locally 4. Host workshops in Pilaitė and Verkiai	1. Review existing guidelines; 2. Draft updated version; 3. Approve and publish;	1. Define criteria & setup process; 2. Draft and approve procedure; 3. Publish and promote to residents;
Timings	1. 2026 Q1-Q4 2. 2026 Q2-2028 Q4 3. 2026 Q2-2028 Q4 4. 2025 Q3	1. 2026 Q1-Q2 2. 2026 Q1-Q3 3. 2026 Q2-Q3 4. 2026 Q2-Q3	1. 2025 Q3 2. 2025 Q3 3. 2025 Q4	1. 2026 Q1 2. 2026 Q1-2026 Q2 3. 2026 Q2-2028 Q4
Responsibilities	Municipality (Landscape Architecture + Communication units): implement steps 1-3 ULG (Association“ Ideas garden”): organise Urban Gardening Forum (step 4)	ULG (Association“ Ideas garden”) in collaboration with the municipality.	Municipality Landscape Architecture subdivision in collaboration with ULG;	Municipality in collaboration with ULG;
Costs	Estimated cost €6,950-€10,450 Graphic design – €1,000-€1,500 Printing – €300-€500 Content creation – €500-€1,000 Promotion/ads – €200-€500 Urban Gardening Forum – €4,950	Estimated cost €550-€1,000 Promotion (posters, social media) – €100-€200 Expert honorariums – €200-€500 Materials & supplies – €50-€100 Refreshments – €200	Estimated cost €0	Estimated cost €0
Funding	Horizon Europe (planned) – Steps 1-3 State Budget / NGO Action Plan 2023–2025 – Step 4 (secured)	ULG; Municipal budget; Horizon Europe (planned).	Municipal budget; Horizon Europe (planned).	Municipal budget; Horizon Europe (planned).

Monitoring indicators	• Number of campaign materials distributed (posts; articles etc.) • Public engagement rate; • Participant number in Urban Gardening Forum;	• Participant feedback; • Attendance figures;	• Updated guidelines published; • Distribution to stakeholders quantities;	• Number of proposed community garden spaces • Number of new urba garden spaces created.
Risk mitigation	Low public interest Use varied channels; partner with schools, influencers, leaders Content delays Set early deadlines; assign project lead for reviews Insufficient funding Prepare scaled-down version; seek co-funding/in-kind support Low forum participation Promote early; use teaser content to engage	Low attendance Promote widely; open early registration No experts Confirm early; keep backup speakers Bad weather Arrange indoor/ tent backup Low engagement Use hands-on activities & Q&A	Approval delays Set deadlines; assign coordinator Low visibility Share via municipal/ULG channels & events	Low participation Promote widely; simplify submissions Poor proposals Provide clear criteria & examples Lack of capacity Prioritise feasible sites; use phased rollout

“Urban Gardening Forum,” September 2025
– Discussion: “Community Urban Gardens:
Today and Tomorrow.”
Photo: G. Pauraite.



Strategic Objective 1 timeline diagram														
ACTIONS	1.Raise awareness through a campaign on urban agriculture benefits.				2. Organise community workshops on sustainable gardening practices.				3. Update urban gardening guidelines to clarify land use, garden design, community involvement, and setup steps.			4. Expand community gardens by inviting residents to suggest suitable local spaces.		
	Create communication material;	Publish press release;	Promote via social media;	Host Urban Gardening Forum;	Plan workshop content;	Involve gardening experts & ULG;	Promote locally;	Host workshops in Pilaitė and Verkiai;	Review existing guidelines;	Draft updated version;	Approve and publish;	Define criteria & setup process;	Draft and approve procedure;	Publish and promote to residents;
	2025 Q3													
	2025 Q4													
	2026 Q1													
	2026 Q2													
	2026 Q3													
	2026 Q4													
	2027 Q1													
	2027 Q2													
	2027 Q3													
	2027 Q4													
	2028 Q1													
	2028 Q2													
	2028 Q3													
	2028 Q4													



Photo: L. Petruškė



Photo: L. Petruškė



Photo: "Idėjų Lysvė" archive



Photo: L. Petruškė

1M² BIODIVERSITY GARDEN PROJECT (COPE ACTION)

Target Group:
Local residents in six Vilnius districts (Pilaitė, Šiaurinis Žvėrynas, Rasos, Verkiai, Naujoji Vilnia).

Short Description:
In summer 2024, six biodiversity patches—each 1 square meter in size—were installed in different neighbourhoods. Maintained by nearby residents, these “gardens under the window” feature insect-friendly perennials like rudbeckias, echinaceas, yarrow, sedum, salvias, monardas, catnip, and lavender.

Goal:
To promote urban biodiversity, raise awareness of ecological value in micro-spaces, and engage citizens in hands-on environmental stewardship.

Stakeholders:
Local residents, “Idėjų Lysvė” NGO (coordinator), Vilnius City Municipality, Beepart creative workshop, SODAS 2123 community.

Key Learnings:
Even the smallest green space can foster biodiversity and community pride. Resident involvement strengthens care and continuity, while clear educational signage boosts ecological awareness. Municipal support and local partnerships were essential for successful implementation.

IDĖJŲ LYSVĖ – COMMUNITY URBAN GARDEN IN PILAITĖ (ULG)

Target Group:
Youth, families, seniors, vulnerable groups, local residents of Pilaitė.

Short Description:
Founded in 2019 next to the Beepart community and culture centre, “Idėjų Lysvė” is a bottom-up, volunteer-based urban garden that brings people together through gardening, DIY furniture making, and creative placemaking activities.

Goal:
To foster an inclusive, environmentally conscious community by activating public space, promoting local ownership, and encouraging ecological awareness and social integration.

Stakeholders: “Idėjų Lysvė” association (initiator), Beepart centre (logistics partner), Vilnius Municipality, local volunteers and community groups;

Key Learnings:
Hands-on, creative gardening fosters strong community ties, builds useful soft skills (teamwork, responsibility, problem-solving), and serves as a low-barrier engagement tool for diverse groups, including vulnerable youth. Collaboration with local hubs like Beepart is key for accessibility and continuity.



Photo: G. Pauraite.



Photo: G. Pauraite.



Illustration: L. Petruškė

URBAN GARDENING FORUM 2025 (COPE ACTION)

Target Group:

Community leaders, residents, urban gardeners, city representatives, and organizations promoting sustainability and green urban spaces.

Short Description:

The Urban Gardening Forum, brought together existing community garden initiatives and individuals interested in starting new ones. The event featured garden presentations, a panel discussion with city officials, practical workshops, and children's creative sessions, ending with a shared vegetarian paella dinner.

Goal:

To connect community gardens across Vilnius, exchange experiences, inspire new initiatives, and promote urban gardening as a tool for social connection, education, biodiversity, and sustainable city development.

Stakeholders:

Community gardens and associations (Idėjų lysvė Pilaitėje, Idėjų lysvė Verkiuose, Šiaurinis Žvėrynas, SODAS 2123, Naujamiestis. Su meile., Antakalnio daržas, Šilainių Sodai), Vilnius City Municipality, Vilnius City Parks, and Beepart Pilaitė.

Key Learnings:

Urban gardening strengthens communities and well-being. Clearer city guidelines and a shared garden map would support new initiatives, while collaboration helps small

URBAN GARDENING GUIDLINES (COPE ACTION)

Target Group:

Community groups, residents, NGOs, and municipal planners.

Short Description:

A practical guide for creating and sustaining community gardens in Vilnius — from finding a site and funding to engaging neighbors and collaborating with the municipality.

Goal:

To support community-led green spaces that strengthen social ties and contribute to a sustainable city.

Stakeholders:

Vilnius City Municipality, Vilnius City Parks, neighborhood associations, Idėjų lysvė.

Key Learnings:

Urban gardening builds community, fosters biodiversity, and thrives through clear city support and cooperation.



Photo: L. Petruškė



Photo: L. Petruškė



Photo: Šiaurinis Žvėrynas community archives



Photo: Šiaurinis Žvėrynas community archives

URBAN GARDEN VERKIAI (COPE ACTION)

Target Group:

Local residents of Verkiai eldership, especially those interested in sustainable gardening, biodiversity, and community-building.

Short Description:

The Verkiai Urban Garden was initiated in 2024 as part of the Community Support Programme aligned with COPE priorities. It marked the start of a new community gardening space, offering residents an opportunity to grow food locally, strengthen social ties, and contribute to a greener urban environment.

Goal:

To promote climate-neutral practices through community gardening, support local biodiversity, and foster civic participation in sustainable urban development.

Stakeholders:

Local residents, Vilnius City Municipality, Directorate of Verkiai Regional Park, and the "Idėjų Lysvė" association (project coordinator).

Key Learnings:

Small-scale gardens build community ownership and environmental responsibility. Municipal support is vital for grassroots action, while biodiversity plots boost public awareness and engagement.

CRANE GARDEN (ŽVĖRYNAS DISTRICT) (COPE ACTION)

Target Group:

Residents of Northern Žvėrynas, including families and teenagers.

Short Description:

Crane Garden is a transformed public green space in the Žvėrynas district. Initiated in 2024 through Vilnius Municipality's Community Support Programme aligned with COPE priorities, it involved residents in greening a previously underused area. The garden now features native plants, birdhouses, insect hotels, community art, and a children's sandbox.

Goal:

To enhance urban biodiversity, create a welcoming space for community gathering, and encourage environmental awareness through hands-on participation.

Stakeholders:

Local volunteers from Miglos Street and Northern Žvėrynas, Vilnius Municipality, Žvėrynas eldership.

Key Learnings:

Resident-led greening strengthens local identity and community bonds. Early youth involvement, clear communication, and visible outcomes like planting or art boost participation. Municipal funding was key to turning ideas into action.

Strategic Objective 2 – Resource Sharing			
Actions	1. Identify suitable locations within elderships, such as community centres, eldership’s premises or libraries, that can serve as tool lending hubs.	2. Create a simple borrowing system with clear guidelines on tool usage, return dates, and maintenance.	3. Review municipal and grassroots tool library case studies and integrate relevant examples into the technical implementation procedures of the “DALYVAUK” participatory budgeting programme.
Activities	1. Map potential sites in elderships; 2. Survey residents on tool needs; 3. Seek business/NGO support; 4. Select 1–2 pilot sites;	1. Draft borrowing process; 2. Define usage rules; 3. Train pilot eldership hosts;	1. Research tool library models; 2. Select 3–5 case studies; 3. Summarise key lessons;
Timings	1. 2026 Q1–Q4 2. 2027 Q1–Q2 3. 2027 Q3–2028 Q4 4. 2029 Q1–Q3	1. 2027 Q2–2028 Q2 2. 2027 Q2–2029 Q1 3. 2027 Q2–2030 Q4	1. 2026 Q2–Q3 2. 2026 Q2–Q3 3. 2026 Q4–2027 Q2
Responsibilities	Municipality in collaboration with ULG network and elderships; Private business;	Municipality and elderships, ULG;	Municipality;
Costs	Estimated cost €200–€350 Stakeholder meetings & site visits – €100–€200 Donor/sponsor communication materials – €100–€150	Estimated cost €500–€1,200 Drafting system & rules – €200–€300 Printing & materials – €100–€200 Training session – €200–€600	Estimated cost €300–€400 Research, case selection & summary preparation – €300–€400
Funding	Municipal budget – coordination, survey, communication materials; Private sector sponsorships – hardware/tool stores, local businesses (in-kind or financial); COPE network – in-kind (space, staff time, outreach); Horizon Europe (planned);	Municipal budget – system design, materials, training; Elderships (in-kind) – staff time, training venue, coordination; Horizon Europe (planned);	Municipal budget; Horizon Europe (planned);
Monitoring indicators	- Number of locations assessed; - Number of residents who completed the tool needs survey; - Number of sponsorships or partnerships initiated;	- Borrowing system and rules document completed; - User feedback on clarity and usability of the system; - Borrowing records tracked;	Number of case studies reviewed and documented;

Risk mitigation	Low survey response Promote via COPE, elderships, social media; Keep survey simple; Few suitable locations Apply clear criteria; consider shared/mobile options; No sponsor interest Prepare strong pitch; reach out to many businesses;	Confusing rules Use simple guides; Test with users; Low pilot engagement Involve early; Assign coordinator; Tool loss/damage Provide care tips; Track loans & returns;	Few case studies Broaden search; Use COPE/partner networks; Low local relevance Choose diverse examples; Adapt practices; No follow-up use Present findings clearly; Link to local planning;
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Photos: Šiaurinis Žvėrynas community archive



Strategic Objective 2 timeline diagram

ACTIONS	1. Identify suitable locations within elderships, such as community centres, eldership’s premises or libraries, that can serve as tool lending hubs.				2. Create a simple borrowing system with clear guidelines on tool usage, return dates, and maintenance.			3. Revise good case studies of tool libraries across Europe (Municipal and grassroots).		
	Map potential sites in elderships;	Survey residents on tool needs;	Seek business/ NGO support;	Select 1–2 pilot sites;	Draft borrowing process;	Define usage rules;	Train pilot eldership hosts;	Research tool library models;	Select 3–5 case studies;	Summarise key lessons;
2026 Q1										
2026 Q2										
2026 Q3										
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2030 Q2										
2030 Q3										
2030 Q4										



Photo: “Supa Ūkas, VšĮ” archive



Photo: “Supa Ūkas, VšĮ” archive



Photo: V. Ribokaitė



Photo: V. Ribokaitė

BOOK AND TOY LIBRARY INITIATIVE (COPE ACTION)

Target Group:
Residents of Markučiai and Paupis neighbourhoods, especially families with children.

Short Description:
The initiative began with a community swap event and the inauguration of a small, handcrafted book and toy sharing house. During a picnic-style gathering, neighbours exchanged books and toys while enjoying snacks and conversation. The idea of creating a permanent sharing point was realised with the help of “Vijoklis” – a local craftsman who repurposes materials into new items.

Goal:
To encourage a culture of sharing, sustainability, and social connection through the continuous exchange of books and toys within the community.

Stakeholders:
“Supa Ūkas, VšĮ”, local residents, community volunteers, and “Vijoklis” (upcycling designer and builder of the sharing house).

Key Learnings:
Small, resident-driven initiatives can create meaningful traditions, foster neighbourhood connections, and promote a more circular, caring lifestyle. Co-creation and informal gatherings help strengthen community ownership and participation.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FLEA MARKET BY “MIESTO LABORATORIJA”

Target Group:
Local Antakalnis residents of all ages, including families and children.

Short Description:
Since 2016, “Miesto Laboratorija”—a key COPE ULG member—has been hosting an annual neighbourhood flea market. Residents gather to sell, swap, or give away second-hand clothes, toys, furniture, and other household items. A small symbolic fee ensures accessible participation, and a designated kids’ area welcomes the youngest neighbours.

Goal:
To strengthen community ties through circular practices, reduce waste by reusing goods, and promote a culture of sharing within the neighbourhood.

Stakeholders:
Miesto Laboratorija, local residents, families.

Key Learnings:
Grassroots traditions like flea markets can activate public spaces, engage diverse community members, and foster environmentally conscious behaviours. Low-barrier, informal events help build trust and encourage long-term civic participation.

Strategic Objective 3 – Food Sharing			
Actions	1. Identify safe, accessible locations within each eldership (such as community centres, eldership’s premises or public buildings) to host the community fridges.	2. Develop guidelines for fridge use, including safety protocols and rules for donating and retrieving food, and post them visibly on each fridge.	3. Launch a campaign to inform residents about the community fridge program, emphasising food safety, usage rules, and the benefits of reducing food waste.
Activities	1. Consult ULG on fridge locations; 2. Draft clear setup guidelines; 3. Publish call for community hosts;	1. Consult existing fridge hosts; 2. Draft use guidelines (hygiene, rules, design, maintenance) 3. Guidelines review with ULG & hosts; 4. Publish user-friendly version online;	1. Draft campaign messages (benefits, waste reduction); 2. Design clear, friendly material; 3. Share via municipal, ULG, and local channels; 4. Engage NGOs, schools & community centres;
Timings	1. 2026 Q4–2027 Q4 2. 2027 Q4–2028 Q2 3. 2028 Q3– 2029 Q4	1. 2026 Q2–2027 Q1 2. 2027 Q1–Q2 3. 2027 Q3–Q4 4. 2028 Q1–Q2	1. 2027 Q1–Q4 2. 2027 Q3– 2028 Q1 3. 2027 Q2 –2029 Q4 4. 2027 Q4 –2029 Q4
Responsibilities	Municipality in collaboration with ULG; Eldershops, community centres, NGO partners, private sector;	Municipality in collaboration with ULG;	Municipality – Lead planning, content, dissemination; ULG – Support messaging, adapt to communities, share via networks; Eldershops / Community Centres –Distribute materials, engage residents; NGOs / Local initiatives – Outreach, storytelling, local promotion;
Costs	Estimated cost €600–€1,000 Stakeholder consultation – €0 (staff time) Guideline development – €200–€300 Design & promotion – €300–€500 Dissemination & follow-up – €100–€200	Estimated cost €800–€1,500 Consultation with fridge hosts – €0 (in-kind by ULG & municipality) Drafting guidelines – €200–€300 Shed prototype design manual – €300–€600 User-friendly guideline design – €300–€600	Estimated cost €850–€1,600 Content development – €200–€400 Graphic design – €300–€500 Printing – €150–€300 Promotion – €200–€400

Funding	Municipal budget- coordination, consultations, guidelines; Horizon Europe -implementation & equipment (expected source); Local business sponsorships -fridge donation, installation, maintenance; NGO partnerships (e.g. Food Bank, sustainability NGOs) – in-kind support, co-funding, operations;	Municipal budget; Horizon Europe (planned); ULG in-kind contributions;	Horizon Europe (planned) – content, design, printing, promotion, campaign visibility; ULG & community partners (in-kind) – dissemination & outreach; NGOs – storytelling, social media boosting, printing support;
Monitoring indicators	- Number of communities expressing interest; - Number of pilot sites selected and approved; - Operational guidelines prepared and published;	- Draft guidelines completed and validated; by ULG and fridge hosts - Number of downloads or shares of the online version;	- Social media reach and engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments, clicks); - Number of communication materials produced (flyers, posters, posts);
Risk mitigation	No host locations Engage elderships early; Show benefits; Low interest Promote via COPE/ municipality; Hold info sessions; Regulatory concerns Involve municipal departments; Ensure safety compliance;	Complex guidelines Test with hosts/ULG; Simplify & add visuals; Low visibility Require on-site posting;	Low visibility Use multiple channels; Add targeted ads; Misunderstanding use Share clear, visual messages with examples; Low engagement Involve leaders & hosts; Share user stories;

Community fridge in Copenhagen
Photo: L. Petruškė



Community fridge in Reykjavík
Photo: L. Petruškė



Community fridge in Reykjavík
Photo: L. Petruškė



Strategic Objective 3 timeline diagram

ACTIONS	1. Identify safe, accessible locations within each eldership (such as community centres, eldership’s premises or public buildings) to host the community fridges.			2. Develop guidelines for fridge use, including safety protocols and rules for donating and retrieving food, and post them visibly on each fridge.				3. Launch a campaign to inform residents about the community fridge program, emphasising food safety, usage rules, and the benefits of reducing food waste.			
	Consult ULG on fridge locations;	Draft clear setup guidelines;	Publish call for community hosts;	Consult existing fridge hosts;	Draft use guidelines;	Guidelines review with ULG & hosts;	Publish user-friendly version online;	Draft campaign messages;	Design clear, friendly material;	Share via municipal, ULG, and local channels;	Engage NGOs, schools & community centres;
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Photo: Community fridge in Sapiegos Park archive



Photo: R. Danisevičius

Photos: Community fridge in Sapiegos Park archive



A COMMUNITY FRIDGE TO COMBAT FOOD WASTE (COPE ACTION)

Target Group:
Local residents, low-income individuals, cafés, bakeries, restaurants, and food stores.

Short Description:
Community Fridge is a food-sharing station where residents, restaurants and stores can leave surplus food. Inspired by similar initiatives in Copenhagen and Helsinki, this project in the Antakalnis neighborhood aims to reduce food waste and promote community food redistribution.

Goal:
To reduce food waste, promote responsible food sharing, and provide support to those in need.

Stakeholders:
Antakalnis community, Vilnius City Municipality, Antaklanis eldership volunteers, and local businesses.

Key Learnings:
Even a small-scale initiative like a community fridge can meaningfully address food waste while building trust and solidarity within the neighbourhood. Municipal support and active volunteer involvement were crucial for maintenance and outreach. As the first project of its kind in Lithuania, it also inspired public conversations about food sustainability.



IAP Section 4: Implementation Framework

XIV. Governance

Overall coordination of the IAP will be led by Vilnius Municipality in partnership with the Urban Local Group (ULG). The Municipality's Subdivision of Landscape Architecture in collaboration with Climate Neutral Vilnius division will serve as the main responsible body. Elderships will play a direct role in piloting and hosting community-level actions (tool libraries, fridges). A Steering Committee composed of municipal representatives, eldership leaders, ULG delegates, and NGO partners will meet twice a year to review progress and adjust actions.

XV. Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

The ULG will remain active during implementation. This group will continue to connect communities, NGOs, businesses, and municipal departments. Engagement will be supported through quarterly coordination meetings, annual Urban Gardening Forums, and thematic workshops with local partners. Community volunteers and eldership staff will be central in ensuring delivery at neighbourhood level.

XVI. Funding Strategy

Implementation relies on a mix of sources:

- Municipal budget – for coordination, guidelines, infrastructure, and communication
- Horizon Europe project (hoped funding source in the future) – to co-fund content creation, pilot actions, and visibility.
- Private sector sponsorships and in-kind support – e.g., tool donations, fridge maintenance.
- COPE network contributions – staff time, outreach, and knowledge exchange.

XVII. Overall Timeline

Implementation spans 2025–2030.

- Short term (2025–2026): Awareness campaigns, updated guidelines, pilot gardens, first community fridge.
 - Medium term (2026–2028): Training sessions, expanded networks, multi-eldership rollout
 - Long term (2028–2030): Integration into city master planning, permanent designation of community garden land, sustained fridge and tool library systems.
- A visual Gantt chart is available on pages 32–33 to map detailed actions across phases.

CNM #6 in Vilnius
Photo: L.Petruškė



CNM #4 in Pombal
Photo: L.Petruškė



CNM #5 in Saint-Quentin
Photo: L.Petruškė



XVIII. Key Risks and Mitigation

- Low community participation – mitigated through wide promotion, incentives, and school/ NGO partnerships.
- Funding gaps – phased implementation, alternative co-funding, scaled-down versions if needed.
- Legal/land issues for gardens – early legal consultation, transparent procedures.
- Volunteer burnout – distributed leadership, training, and recognition of community champions.
- Operational challenges (e.g. vandalism, fridge maintenance) – regular monitoring, partnerships with local businesses, clear usage guidelines.

XIX. Monitoring and Reporting

- Progress will be monitored through both action-level and strategic indicators:
- Number of gardens created, tool libraries and fridges established.
- Participation rates in workshops and forums.
- Amount of food redistributed, waste reduced, and tools borrowed.
- Stakeholder satisfaction (via surveys).

Reporting will occur annually, coordinated by the Municipality and ULG Delivery Group, with results shared publicly through municipal and community channels.

CNM #6 in Vilnius — COPE team at Vilnius Municipality. Photo: Vilnius Municipality



Overall timeline diagram

ACTIONS	Strategic Objective 1												Strategic Objective 2									Strategic Objective 3													
	1.Raise awareness through a campaign on urban agriculture benefits.				2. Organise community workshops on sustainable gardening practices.				3. Update urban gardening guidelines.			4. Expand community gardens by inviting residents to suggest suitable local spaces.			1. Identify suitable locations within elderships, such as community centres, eldership’s premises or libraries, that can serve as tool lending hubs.				2. Create a simple borrowing system with clear guidelines on tool usage, return dates, and maintenance.			3. Revise good case studies of tool libraries across Europe (Municipal and grassroots).			1. Identify safe, accessible locations within each eldership to host the community fridges.			2. Develop guidelines for fridge use, including safety protocols and rules for donating and retrieving food, and post them visibly on each fridge.				3. Launch a campaign to inform residents about the community fridge program, emphasising food safety, usage rules, and the benefits of reducing food waste.			
	Create communication material;	Publish press release;	Promote via social media;	Host Urban Gardening Forum;	Plan workshop content;	Involve gardening experts & ULG;	Promote locally;	Host workshops in Pilaîté and Verkiat;	Review existing guidelines;	Draft updated version;	Approve and publish;	Define criteria & setup process;	Draft and approve procedure;	Publish and promote to residents;	Map potential sites in elderships;	Survey residents on tool needs;	Seek business/NGO support;	Select 1–2 pilot sites;	Draft borrowing process;	Define usage rules;	Train pilot eldership hosts;	Research tool library models;	Select 3–5 case studies;	Summarise key lessons;	Consult ULG on fridge locations;	Draft clear setup guidelines;	Publish call for community hosts;	Consult existing fridge hosts;	Draft use guidelines;	Guidelines review with ULG & hosts;	Publish user-friendly version online;	Draft campaign messages;	Design clear, friendly material;	Share via municipal, ULG, and local channels;	Engage NGOs, schools & community centres;
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