



INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN ORMOŽ

GREEN TRANSITION IN SMALL CITIES ALONG TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

Integrated Action Plan Ormož – Green transition in small cities along transport corridors

Authors

Polona Kukovec Lakota, RRC Ormož

Tina Koler, External expert

Nina Prelog, RRC Ormož

Contributors

Eileen Crowley, Lead expert

Matej Rogač, RRC Ormož

Matjaž Kosi, RRC Ormož

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Executive Summary

Research and development centre RRC Ormož, in partnership with Municipality of Ormož and including local stakeholders, has developed an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) to support the city's transition towards a green, innovative, and resilient economy. The Integrated action plan is a result of the EcoCore project, programme URBACT VI. With that plan and activities Ormož aims to transform into a frontrunner in sustainable business zone development in Slovenia.

Ormož faces challenges typical for small towns, such as high car dependency, brain drain, limited business opportunities and environmental pressures. At the same time, Ormož holds significant potential with its strategic location along transport corridors, natural and cultural assets, and a motivated community.

The vision of Ormož is to create green business zone that drive innovation, reduce environmental impact, and strengthen community well-being. Inspired by the European Green Deal, the IAP aligns with Slovenia's national and regional strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote circular economy practices, and foster climate resilience.

It aims towards:

- 30% reduction in car dependency through sustainable mobility measures, improved infrastructure, and a Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) platform.
- 35% community engagement in green initiatives, achieved through workshops, digital platforms, and quarterly "Green Living Days."
- 30% of businesses engaged in circular economy practices, supported by waste reduction programmes and certification schemes.
- 25% increase in green business creation, through a Green Innovation Hub, Green Business Accelerator Network, and targeted mentoring for startups.

Integrated action plan contains 4 actions that are flagged as key actions and are planned into details.

- **Green Innovation Hub** – providing spaces, development support, and access to sustainable technology resources for 20 local entrepreneurs
- **Green Business Accelerator Network** – connecting local startups with investors, mentors, and international partners and supports 20 new green startups through mentorship and access to green business zones
- **Organizing 3 annual sustainability workshops** – practical training and awareness-raising for residents, entrepreneurs, and schools with aim to engage 35% of Ormož's population in green initiatives by 2030 through annual sustainability workshops
- **Green initiatives organizing quarterly "Green Living Days"**– community-wide events promoting eco-friendly lifestyles and citizen engagement with aim to increase community

awareness and active participation in sustainable practices, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility

The Integrated action plan was planned through participatory approach, including URBACT Local Group (ULG) with important stakeholders and ensured integration across policy levels, different sectors, territory and addressing important themes. It aligns with local, regional, and national priorities and ensures collaboration between local administration, businesses, education, and civil society. It was planned in cooperation with neighbouring municipalities and cross-border learnings from partners in EcoCore project. It addresses economic, environmental, social, and digital dimensions in a balanced way.

By 2030, Ormož will reduce emissions, diversify its economy, and increase resilience to climate change. The creation of green business zones will attract investment, generate skilled jobs, and position Ormož as a model of sustainable urban development. Community engagement will ensure long-term ownership and cultural change.

1 City context and vision

1.1 Overall topic

Research and development centre RRC Ormož, in partnership with local stakeholders, developed an integrated action plan to support the transition to a green and sustainable economy. The project focused on creating a green business zone by identifying opportunities and implementing concrete activities that promote sustainability and economic growth.

A key aspect is addressing car dependency and encouraging sustainable transport solutions. By fostering the adoption of green energy, EcoCore aims to stimulate new economic activities, enhance skills development, and create job opportunities for the local community. The project also strengthens regional cooperation to align policies on reducing carbon footprints in business zones, improving infrastructure, and attracting investment.

Inspired by the EU Green Deal, EcoCore contributes to the collective effort of reducing GHG emissions by 55% and increasing the share of renewable energy to 40% by 2030, supporting both local and European sustainability goals.

The IAP in Ormož has three key aims:

Firstly, it will seek to promote increased collaboration between existing businesses and stakeholders to promote symbiosis, green transition, innovation and up-scaling.

Secondly, it will identify actions focussed on supporting the sustainable development, maintenance and management of two new green business zones in the city namely the centrally located 3-hectare zone in the short term and the larger 67-hectare landbank in the longer term.

Thirdly it will identify strategic actions to influence the supporting sustainable business environment in Ormož including for example, rail connectivity with surrounding cities, affordable housing, developing the skills pipeline, financial support for the upfront costs of installing renewable and efficient energy solutions, and regulatory and bureaucratic barriers.

Ormož wants to become a frontrunner in Slovenia when it comes to the development and management of green business zones. RCC Ormož will build on work already undertaken with businesses in its incubation programme.

The ultimate objective is to decrease greenhouse gas emissions, address climate change, limit environmental damage, and encourage the efficient utilization of resources. The goal is to create a more sustainable economy in our local environment that benefits both people and the local economy.

1.2 The network topics

The green transition in business zones

Ormož is addressing the challenges of a green transition in business zones, recognizing the importance of environmental protection and carbon footprint reduction. Sustainable mobility improvements in transport corridors and business zones are essential for creating a cleaner environment, lowering business costs, and ensuring long-term economic sustainability.

The municipality is actively promoting greener transport options such as cycling, walking, and flexible mobility solutions for businesses. A key initiative is the development of Slovenia's first green business zone, designed to attract eco-conscious investors and support local entrepreneurs committed to sustainability.

Infrastructure upgrades, modern technology adoption, and awareness campaigns play a crucial role in encouraging sustainable transport and reducing emissions. Local government involvement is vital in shaping policies and supporting the transition. Through collaboration between authorities, businesses, and residents, Ormož is working towards a cleaner, more sustainable future for all.



Figure 1: Main point of green transition in Business Zones

1.2.1 The challenges that are being addressed

A major challenge will be changing the traditional approach towards new industrial development and actively promote a transition to a low-carbon business model. Another challenge is engaging existing businesses in industrial areas to develop collaborative actions that strengthen the local energy transition process. It will be necessary to convince local businesses that an energy transition will not only benefit the environment and support climate change mitigation objectives but will also strengthen their brand by being part of a greater territorial energy transition strategy.

Learning Needs:

- Supporting businesses with the green transition and boosting CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) including assessing environmental impacts, implementing green technologies, and engaging in socially responsible practices.
- Identifying skills gap and job opportunities within the green and just economy
- Improving women's participation in business and the workforce and how to overcome barriers to women's participation in the workforce and entrepreneurship, including gender biases, lack of access to finance, and work-life balance challenges.
- Identifying factors that attract green and sustainable businesses with high-quality jobs, such as favourable regulatory environments, access to skilled labour, and sustainable infrastructure.
- Learning through best practices on how to maintain and manage the green business zone once operational, including sustainable facility management, green space preservation, and community engagement.
- How to develop criteria for procuring goods and services in a way that minimizes environmental impact and supports sustainable production practices.
- Understanding how collaboration between businesses, academia, and government can drive innovation, particularly in developing new sustainable technologies and business models.

Main challenges where effort is most needed strategically

1. **Brain drain and lack of skills pipeline** – Ormož faces the challenge of retaining talent and developing a skilled workforce. The outflow of young, educated individuals depletes the local talent pool necessary for innovation and sustainable development.
2. **Lack of local jobs that can compete with higher salaries in Austria** - this poses a challenge for local employers to attract and retain workers.
3. **Lack of critical mass** - a small population can limit market size, reduce the diversity of ideas and innovation, and make it challenging to achieve economies of scale.
4. **Lack of collaborative strategy to drive competitive advantage in the area** - this can hinder the region's ability to compete effectively and maximize its strengths.

5. **Lack of business awareness** of the importance of the green transition and its implementation in day-to-day business operations

1.3 Key facts about the region and Municipality of Ormož



Image 1: The Area of Slovenia and the Podravje Region

General information: Slovenia is located at the crossroads of the Alpine, Mediterranean, Pannonian, and Dinaric worlds. The diversity within such a small space is complemented by preserved nature. More than half of Slovenia is covered by forests, and more than a third of the territory falls within the Natura 2000 areas. Slovenia borders four countries: Austria to the north, Croatia to the south, Hungary to the



Image 2: Location

east, and Italy to the west. The capital city of Slovenia is Ljubljana.



Image 3: Adapted from PISO, 1:120960

The Municipality of Ormož is part of the Podravje region. The municipality borders Croatia. A large part of the municipality is agricultural landscape. The area of the municipality measures 142 km². Ormož is geographically and culturally rich, with vineyards of terraced appearance giving the landscape a special character. The topography of Ormož and its surroundings is marked by its diversity, stretching from the lower areas along the Drava River to somewhat elevated areas around the city. The area along the Drava River is suitable for agricultural activities such as arable farming. On the other side, the terrain gradually rises, creating a hilly landscape with vineyards.

Climate change: In the last decade, we have witnessed increasingly frequent climate changes, manifested as alternating periods of rainy and dry weather, more frequent floods, and spring frosts. Summers are increasingly marked by extreme precipitation accompanied by hurricane winds and hail. Heatwaves are becoming more common, with temperatures exceeding 35 degrees Celsius. Air pollution, particularly PM10 levels, remained an issue, with exceedances mainly in winter due to temperature inversions and emissions from traffic and small combustion sources.

Environmental conservation is a priority, with the Ormož Basins Nature Reserve, a Natura 2000 site, protecting diverse bird species. The municipality promotes renewable energy and energy efficiency, exploring geothermal energy and solar PV systems for energy communities.

Connectivity: Ormož is strategically located at the junction of the A5 and A4 motorways. The main events are taking place in the centre of Ormož. Due to the short distances between areas of activity, everything is accessible within a timeframe of 15 to 30 minutes. But on the other side, connection of the town of Ormož with the countryside, which consists of 61 settlements that are scattered and sparsely populated, is not adequately served by public transport.

Demography: The municipality of Ormož had a population of approximately 11.813 in 2024, a slight decrease compared to 11.912 in 2023. The municipality's population is quite evenly distributed between the sexes, with 5.992 males and 5.821 females in 2024. The average age of the inhabitants is 45.7 years, which indicates a gradual ageing of the population. According to the age structure, the share of young people (0-14 years) is slightly decreasing, but in terms of labour force participation, with around 6.900 people in employment is staying stable.

Unemployment rate is 3.4% for men and 4.8% for women, with 11.6% of Podravje's workforce commuting to Austria for higher wages. In 2023, Ormož's average net salary was 1.309,37 EUR, lower than Slovenia's national average (1.445,12 EUR) and significantly below Austria's (2.300,00 EUR).

Economic situation: The economy of Ormož is characterised by a diversified structure of mainly small and medium-sized enterprises, with an emphasis on agriculture, viticulture and industrial production. The municipality remains attractive for investment, as demonstrated by new investments such as the construction of a technology park.

The success of economic organisations largely depends on entrepreneurs who are willing to put their ideas into practice and contribute to local prosperity. Each year, the municipality grants 50.000 – 60.000 EUR through a public tender to promote small businesses. To boost innovation, Ormož supports entrepreneurship through a business incubator and infrastructure investments. The new technology park, which was set for completion in 2025, will attract businesses by integrating green technologies and accessible infrastructure. Research and development centre RRC Ormož plays a key role in supporting business and economic development.

Although the municipality is experiencing stable economic activity, certain challenges remain, such as improving transport links with other regions, which could further strengthen Ormož's economic potential.

The strategic objectives of the municipality are:

- To ensure that gross domestic product (GDP) in Ormož grows faster than the national average.
- To encourage the development of quality human resources.
- To develop the physical entrepreneurial infrastructure.
- To increase openness and internationalisation.



Image 4: Ormož basins

1.4 Existing Strategies & Policies

Local and regional strategies play a crucial role in shaping local strategies that can effectively impact the development of local communities in Ormož. Local policies are designed to address the specific needs and challenges of an individual area, while regional policies target a larger area and more comprehensive integration among different local communities.

At the regional level, the Regional Development plan and the Renewable energy strategy are ensuring a high quality of life and environment for citizens and to reduce carbon footprint with sustainable transport. Locally, the Integrated transport strategy of the municipality of Ormož with key objective to change travel habits of population to more sustainable modes such as walking and cycling, while Strategy for the location and management of business zones is related to sustainable development and expansion of business zones and management of business zones and investment in existing facilities. There is also Digital strategy under development.

There are also strategies at national level which are relevant to this topic, such as Roadmap towards the circular economy in Slovenia, Smart specialisation strategy (S4), National Energy and climate plan (NECP) and Slovenian Development strategy.

Several high-level strategic European policies aim to accelerate the green industrial transition across Europe. The aims and objectives of EcoCore seek to implement these policy objectives on the ground in partner cities. Those strategies and policies are The European Green Deal, Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age (Feb 2023), Circular Economy Action Plan, Clean Energy Package, Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, European Industrial Strategy, EU SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe, The Zero Pollution Action Plan, The European Skills Agenda and The EU Gender Equality Strategy.

1.4.1 Relevant Operational (funding) Programs

Programs that support the financing of sustainable economy practices include Horizon, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund, Interreg, LIFE Program, National Funding Programs, and URBACT. One of main policy programmes is Slovenia's EU Cohesion Policy Programme¹ which aligns with our aims through Priority 1: Digital connectivity, Priority 2: Green transformation for climate neutrality, Priority 4: Sustainable urban mobility and other priorities.

¹

https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fevropskasredstva.si%2Fapp%2Fuploads%2F2024%2F02%2FProgram-EKP-2021-27_SI_Razlicica-4.2.2_1.12.2022-eng-celota.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

1.5 URBACT Local Group and Stakeholder map

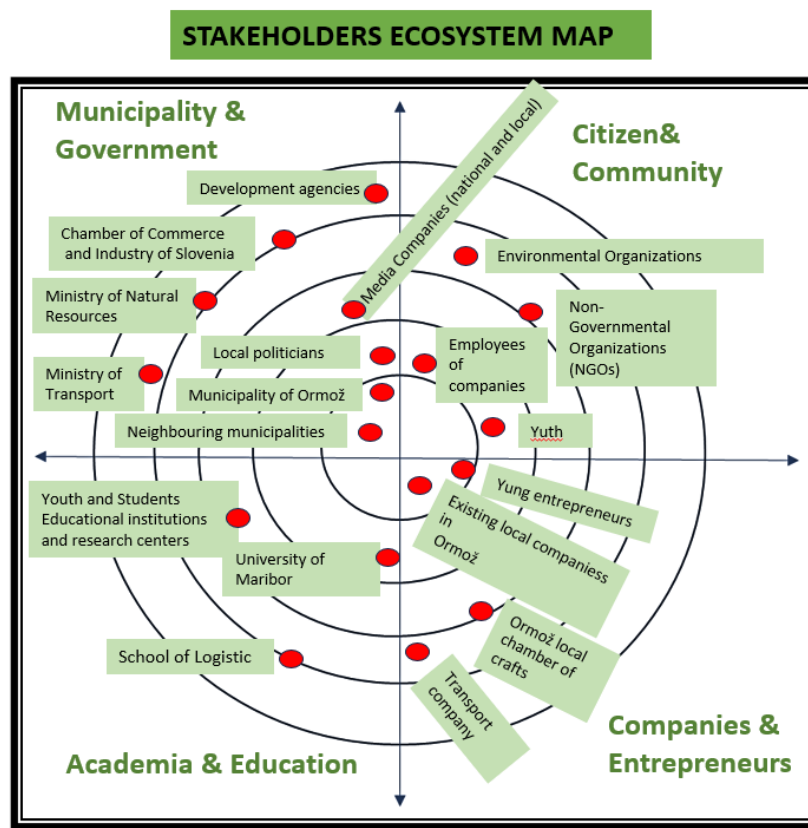


Image 5: Stakeholder map

Urbact Local Group (ULG)

The Urbact Local Group (ULG) in the City of Ormož, led by Matjaž Kosi, is structured into four groups of stakeholders representing various sectors and communities in the city. The ULG consists of a core team pulled from a variety of different stakeholder groups with representatives from the public, private and civil society sectors.

Stakeholder Group/Sector 1: The Public Sector includes the Municipality of Ormož and neighbouring municipalities, as well as development agency from Ptuj. This group is crucial in the formulation and implementation of policies and measures for green transition in the city.

Stakeholder Group/Sector 2: The private sector is a representative of the economy and of the young entrepreneur, which is crucial for the transfer of knowledge on the green transition to the private sector and learning about needs of private sector need in order to transition.

Stakeholder Group/Sector 3: NGOs in the field of nature conservation represent a very important component in the co-creation of the legal framework in the field of nature conservation and the design of new policies themselves.

Stakeholder Group/Sector 4: The youth representative represents the views and perspectives of the younger population, who will be most affected by climate change.



Image 6: ULG members

When establishing ULG we have taken care that all different stakeholder groups were covered. But even though that the core group consisted of 10 members, other stakeholders were consulted when needed.

Table 1: ULG Membership

ULG Membership		
NAME	GENDER	ORGANISATION
Sandra Kumer	F	Youth representative
Dominik Ozmec	M	A representative for Young Entrepreneurs
Mitja Mar	M	Representative of the Municipality of Ormož
Ana Vaupotič	F	NGO representative
Jelka Zidarič Trstenjak	F	Director of the municipality Središče ob Dravi
Sebastjan Šimon	M	SME representative
Tjaša Glažar	F	Representative of ZRS Bistra Ptuj - Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj
Peter Kirič	M	Representative of media
Barbara Podgorelec	F	Representative of culture organizations
Blanka Raušl	F	Representative of the Municipality of Sveti Tomaž

1.5.1 Planning Process

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) represents a key structure in the EcoCore project. The role of the ULG is central to the design, implementation, and monitoring of IAP in the field of the green transition.

The first key task of the ULG is to ensure coordination among all involved parties, as it connects and aligns the activities and interests of various stakeholders in the project. This leads to a better understanding of, and support for, green transition solutions and ensure that projects are tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the Municipality of Ormož and its surroundings.

Active involvement of residents enables a better understanding of the green transition in business zones and how it affects all residents. The ULG also plays an important role in promoting green transition, incorporating sustainable mobility in Ormož and creating more sustainable environment for all residents by attracting entrepreneurs with green business ideas and a new mindset. In addition, the ULG collects and analyses data and prepares reports on achieved results and progress. This enables a continuous process of improvement and ensures that projects are aimed at achieving the set goals.

During the planning process, ULG met 12 times in the last 2,5 years to co-create this action plan. During these meetings, the ULG members shared valuable information, ideas, and opinions about actions that could address the defined problems. At the beginning the ULG group discussed and developed a problem tree to identify our challenges and their causes. Later, the ULG members actively conducted a SWOT analysis, which is presented in this IAP. Their main role was to help co-design actions and being voice of different residents' groups.



Image 7: ULG members working on Problem tree

1.6 Emerging topics (Problem Definition)

1.6.1 SWOT analysis of local context in relation to addressed topics

Early in the process a SWOT analysis of the local context helped us to identify emerging focus areas to be addressed in the IAP.

Table 2: SWOT



1.7 Local challenges, project vision and interlinkages

Local Challenges



Brain drains and skills shortage

The relocation of skilled labour to other regions reduces the local talent pool, affecting the municipality's capacity for innovation and sustainable growth.

Lack of critical mass

A smaller population limits the size of the market and the diversity of ideas, which is key to fostering innovation and sustainable practices.

Lack of local jobs to compete with higher wages elsewhere

This exacerbates the brain drain as the municipality cannot retain the workforce without competitive pay.

Lack of business awareness of the green transition

They may not be aware of the benefits of integrating sustainable practices, missing opportunities for innovation and market differentiation.

Lack of a collaborative strategy

Without a unified approach, exploiting the area's competitive advantages remains challenging, hampering economic development and sustainability efforts.

Interlinkages

- From challenges to potentials - the challenge of brain drain can be turned into an opportunity by developing local education programmes and promoting entrepreneurship in green technologies, taking advantage of strong community cohesion.
- A collaborative strategy for competitive advantage - by fostering a collaborative strategy between local businesses, government and educational institutions, Ormož can harness its cultural and natural heritage for sustainable tourism, environmentally friendly agriculture and the production of local handicrafts. This unified approach can attract investment, increase market access and strengthen the municipality's competitive edge.
- Business awareness as a catalyst for innovation - raising awareness among local businesses of the benefits and importance of the green transition can stimulate innovation in sustainable products and services and attract skilled workforce interested in sustainable development.
- Exploiting the geographical location - the strategic geographical location can be exploited for economic activities and to establish Ormož as a model for cross-border environmental initiatives that will show how local challenges can be transformed into regional opportunities.

By strategically addressing local challenges and harnessing potential, Ormož aims to create a sustainable, resilient and vibrant community. The interlinkages between these aspects underline the

importance of integrated approaches that consider economic development, social cohesion and environmental sustainability as interlinked components of regional planning and development.

1.7.1 Project Vision

The vision of the Municipality of Ormož within the EcoCore initiative embodies a pioneering approach to integrating sustainability and green practices into the local community and its economy. Ormož, with its unique blend of cultural heritage and natural beauty, is at a pivotal moment. It is time to adopt innovative strategies that reduce our carbon footprint, increase energy efficiency and promote the use of renewable resources.

The vision of the Municipality of Ormož is:

- The Municipality of Ormož will develop as an attractive economic, tourist, and residential area, providing a high quality of life for its inhabitants, entrepreneurs, and visitors.
- It will strengthen its position as an economic centre in the border area. It will realise its opportunities based on knowledge, with enterprising and innovative projects that will attract domestic and foreign investors.

1.7.2 Key areas of development

- Energy transition - the transition to low-carbon energy sources and Ormož being a model city where the first green business zone will be created.
- Green economy and innovation – creating strong ecosystem that supports sustainable business practices, fosters innovation and creates employment opportunities. T
- Sustainable transport - development of a sustainable transport network which includes promoting electric vehicles, improving public transport options and developing infrastructure that encourages cycling and walking.
- Community engagement and education - working closely with residents, businesses and local stakeholders to raise awareness of sustainability issues and promote sustainable lifestyles.
- Climate resilience and adaptation - making Ormož more resilient to the impacts of climate change

1.7.3 Integration Challenges

Ormož is addressing the complexities of a green transition through integrated planning, ensuring social, economic, and environmental challenges are tackled holistically. The URBACT Local Group (ULG) plays a key role, engaging stakeholders to shape policies and contribute to decision-making.

Types of Integration:

- **Policy & Sector:** The project aligns economic, environmental, and social goals, fostering inclusive solutions and minimizing negative impacts. Active ULG participation ensures a bottom-up approach.
- **Horizontal integration:** Collaboration between public, private, academic, and civil sectors enhance problem-solving and innovation. While all sectors are represented, a stronger environmental focus is needed.
- **Vertical integration:** Cooperation with regional municipalities strengthens policy alignment and resource allocation. Though national organizations are not directly involved, Ormož coordinates with Slovenia's URBACT point and the Ministry of Spatial Planning.
- **Territorial integration:** Cross-municipal cooperation prevents shifting negative impacts elsewhere and enhances funding opportunities for regional challenges.
- **Hard & Soft Investments:** Ormož integrates infrastructure projects (ERDF) with social and economic development (ESF). By leveraging CLLD strategies, the municipality aligns investments with community needs for sustainable outcomes.

Through these approaches, Ormož fosters a cohesive and sustainable transition despite its small size, leveraging territorial cooperation to address challenges at regional scale.

1.7.4 Approach to URBACT cross-cutting principles

All URBACT cross-cutting principles were considered in the design of actions. A gender perspective and a non-discriminatory perspective are fundamental to the preparation of the Integrated Action Plan.

One of the driving principles of the EcoCore project is the focus on supporting women's entrepreneurship. A gender-sensitive approach was adopted in the design and subsequent implementation of these actions. We ensured that gender equality and non-discrimination were considered at all levels of project implementation. We involved all stakeholders in all activities, regardless of their background or gender.

We also used digital technologies as a lever to raise awareness of the green transition in business zones and to promote sustainable modes of transport.

1.8 First Ideas How to Test Actions

Testing the actions included in the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) gave us a great insight into real needs and acceptance of those actions among residents.

The ULG worked on ideas and was able to propose additional testing actions to address local challenges.

The first test aimed to promote sustainable mobility and reduce the carbon footprint of the business zone among employees and entrepreneurs. The planned test action involved renting bicycles that were

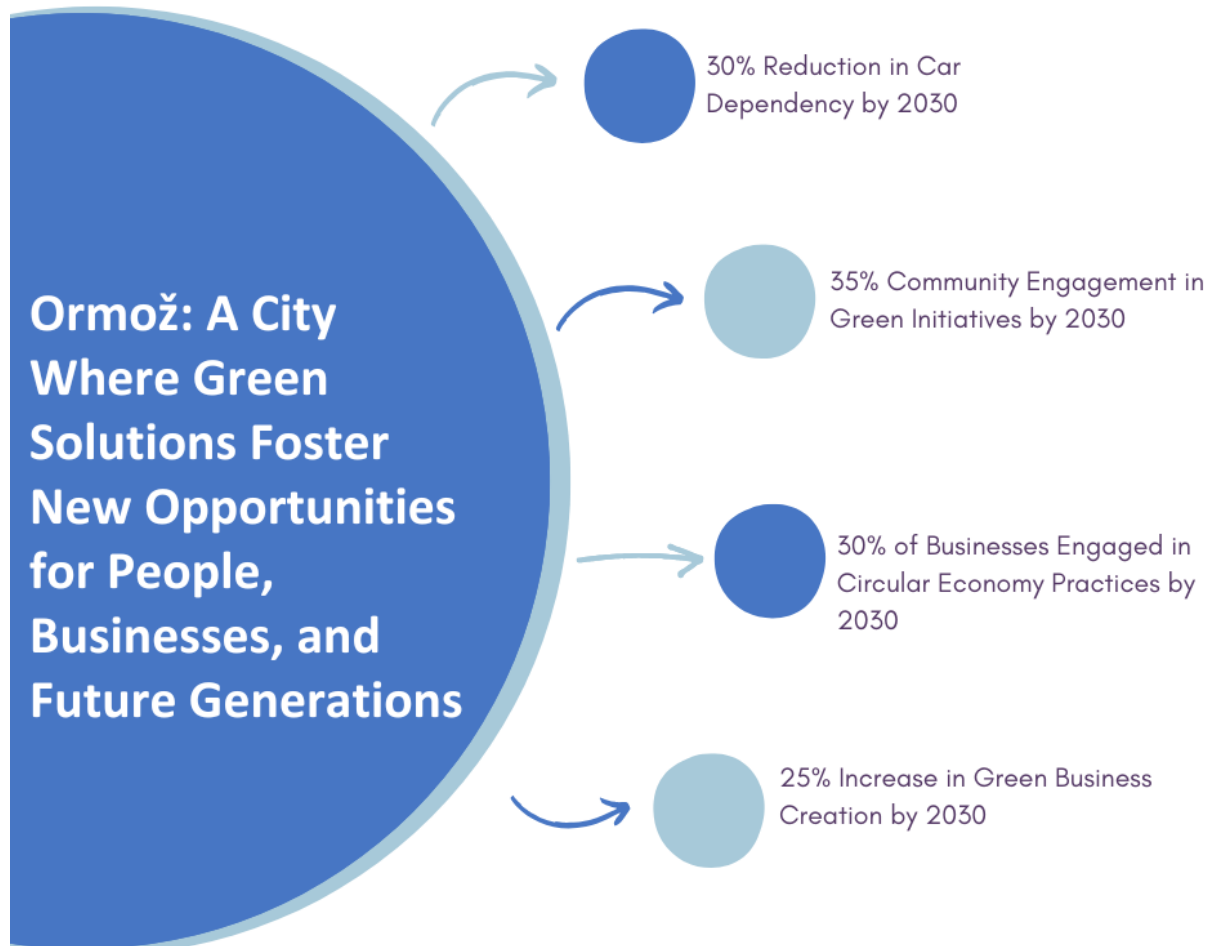
made available for various business needs, such as dealing with bureaucratic procedures at administrative units or municipal offices, attending meetings or attending medical check-ups. This approach aims to provide an efficient, environmentally friendly alternative to traditional means of transport for travelling from the business zone to the city centre.

As part of the pilot project, a thorough analysis of bicycle use was conducted, including the collection of data on the number of users, the purpose of use, the gender distribution of users, and an assessment of the CO₂ savings resulting from substituting car trips with cycling. This analysis served as a basis for assessing the impact of the project on the promotion of sustainable mobility and the reduction of the carbon footprint, which is in line with our long-term objectives of sustainable development and improving the quality of the living environment.

2 Areas of Intervention

2.1 SMART Strategic objectives

Figure 2: SMART Strategic objective



For Ormož to reach its goals, it is important to set clear, actionable, and measurable objectives to achieve long-term positive impacts. We have established a set of S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) goals that will help us achieve intended results.

These objectives focus on reducing environmental impact, fostering community involvement in green initiatives, and encouraging businesses to adopt sustainable practices. By 2030, we aim to achieve the following strategic targets:

- 30% Reduction in Car Dependency
- 35% Community Engagement in Green Initiatives
- 30% of Businesses Engaged in Circular Economy Practices
- 25% Increase in Green Business Creation

Each of these objectives is designed to align with our vision statement: "Ormož: A City Where Green Solutions Foster New Opportunities for People, Businesses, and Future Generations".

2.1.1 30% reduction in car dependency by 2030

Ormož aims to reduce car dependency by 30% through various actions, including expansion of cycling infrastructure, an increase in electric vehicle charging stations, bikes available and others supporting measures. The goal is to encourage residents to shift towards more sustainable transportation options and decrease transport-related emissions.

We plan to track reduction in the number of private car trips, the number of kilometres of expanded cycling paths and new bicycles available. To reach this goal, we will combine different actions.

Reducing car dependency is essential to achieving Ormož's broader sustainability goals, including lowering greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality, and enhancing the overall quality of life by promoting healthier and more sustainable modes of transport.

Our goal is to reduce car dependency by 2030. Progress will be assessed biannually, with reviews conducted in 2027 and 2029 to evaluate effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.

2.1.2 35% community engagement in Green Initiatives by 2030

One of our aims is to achieve a 35% participation rate of residents in sustainability programs and initiatives. This includes increasing community involvement in activities such as workshops, launching a digital platform and organising "Green Living Days". These actions and goal reflect importance of involving the community and stakeholders in the green transition and ensuring that environmental goals are supported by residents, using bottom-up approach.

The purpose of those actions is to raise awareness among citizens, which also complements other planned measures.

Enhancing community engagement in green initiatives aligns with Ormož's broader environmental goals. It is especially important because it is not just increasing community engagement but also raising awareness about importance of cities to become "greener".

The target date for achieving this objective is 31 December 2030. Progress will be assessed biannually, with reviews conducted in 2027 and 2029 to evaluate effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.

2.1.3 30 % of businesses engaged in circular economy practices by 2030

By 2030, Ormož aims to have 30% of local businesses implementing circular economy practices. This includes various practices, depending on each business, such as waste reduction, reuse of materials, encouraging employees to act more sustainable etc. To achieve this, we are planning B2B exchange platform and Zero Waste Business Certification programme.

We want to encourage businesses to become more sustainable and to engage in circular economy practices to achieve Ormož's sustainability objectives, as this has a significant effect on economic resilience and supports long-term growth by optimising resource use and minimising waste. Employees will also become more aware of the importance of green practices. The target date for achieving this objective is 31 December 2030. Progress will be assessed biannually, with reviews conducted in 2027 and 2029 to evaluate effectiveness and make the necessary adjustments.

2.1.4 25% increase in green business creation by 2030

Ormož aims to have 25% increase in green business creation by 2030. We will support this with various activities such as starting Green Business Accelerator, Green Innovation Hub and connecting businesses in Green Business Accelerator Network.

The planned actions are structured in a way to support this objective to make it achievable and by providing support to future entrepreneurs to create new green businesses.

The target date for achieving this objective is 31 December 2030. Progress will be assessed biannually, with reviews conducted in 2027 and 2029 to evaluate effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.

2.2 Areas of intervention

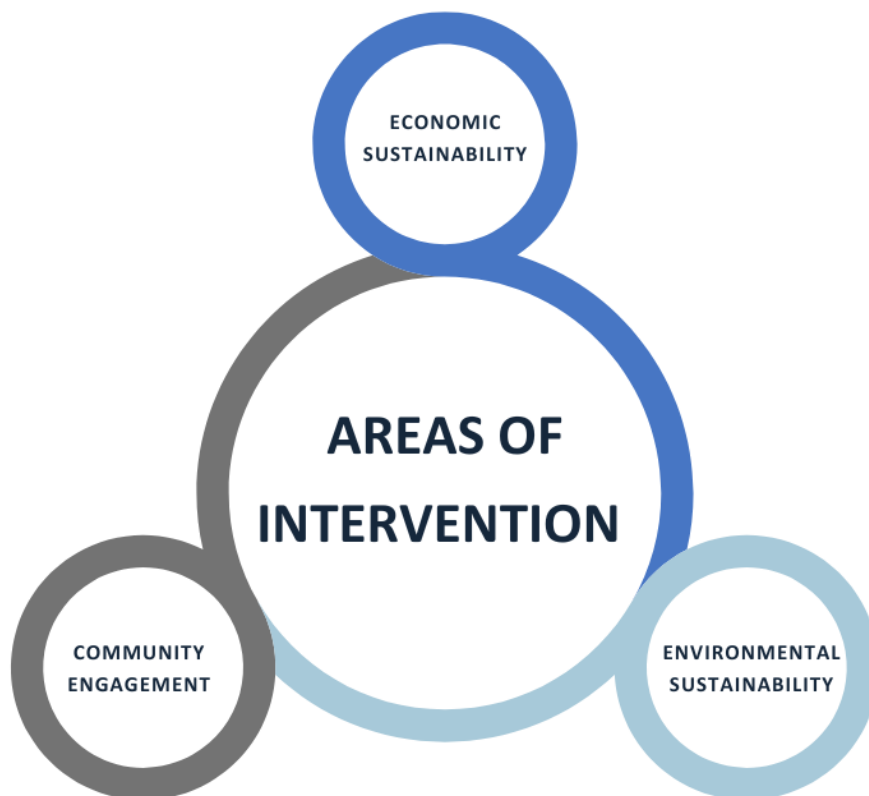
Through the exchange of knowledge and good practices, we are developing opportunities for local stakeholders and citizens to transition towards greener and more sustainable ways of living with emphasis of development of actions to support our Green Business Zone. Our primary focus is on developing integrated actions for our Integrated Action Plan that support the establishment and growth of the Green Business Zone. This is closely connected to three interconnected areas of intervention: economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and community engagement.

The main area of intervention is economic sustainability, followed by and closely connected to environmental sustainability and community engagement. The main focus is moving towards more green and sustainable economy to support development of Green Business Zone which involves encouraging businesses to adopt circular economy practices to minimize waste and make the most of

resources and other practices of circular economy and to support creation of new green businesses. But since there are always people behind businesses it is crucial to develop activities to include citizens and working towards people adopting greener and more sustainable ways of living and work on community engagement as area of intervention. Both areas are also closely linked to environmental sustainability which is crucial for the long-term health of our community.

By integrating these areas of intervention, we created an Integrated Action Plan that supports the development of Green Business Zone while also promoting greener and more sustainable ways of living for our citizens. This approach will help us achieve our vision of "Ormož: A City Where Green Solutions Foster New Opportunities for People, Businesses, and Future Generations."

Figure 3: Areas of intervention



2.3 Specific Objectives

As outlined in the previous chapter, our strategic SMART goals focus on:

- Reducing car dependency
- Increasing community engagement in green initiatives
- Promoting circular economy practices among businesses
- Fostering the creation of green businesses

To support these goals, we have identified specific, measurable objectives that align with each strategic priority and contribute to our Integrated Action Plan, which integrates economic and environmental sustainability with strong community engagement. These strategic objectives are supported by specific objectives such as developing new cycling paths, increasing electric vehicle charging stations, organizing sustainability workshops, and launching platforms for sustainable living and business practices. By integrating economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and community engagement, we aim to create an Integrated Action Plan to support our vision. Specific objectives are connected to strategic objectives as following:

Strategic objective: 30% reduction in car dependency by 2030:

- New cycling paths and increase in electric vehicle charging stations and more bikes available
- Implementing a comprehensive sustainable mobility strategy
- "Mobility-as-a-Service" (MaaS) platform.

Strategic objective: 35% community engagement in green initiatives by 2030

- Increase community engagement in green initiatives to 35% of Ormož's population by organizing 3 annual sustainability workshops
- Engage 35% of Ormož's population in green initiatives by launching a digital platform for sustainable living
- Engage 35% of the city's population in green initiatives organizing quarterly "Green Living Days"

Strategic objective: 30 % of businesses engaged in circular economy practices by 2030

- Engage 30% of businesses in Ormož in circular economy practices by implementing a waste reduction program that incentivizes businesses to reduce waste
- Engage 30% of businesses in Ormož in circular economy practices by launching a "Zero Waste Business Certification" program

Strategic objective: 25% increase in green business creation by 2030

- Increase the number of green businesses in Ormož by 25% by launching a "Green Business Accelerator
- Increase green business creation in Ormož by 25% by establishing a "Green Innovation Hub" providing co-working spaces, research and development support, and access to sustainable technology resources
- Increase green business creation in Ormož by 25% by establishing a "Green Business Accelerator Network," connecting local green startups with regional and international investors, facilitating business mentorship programs

2.4 Related high level actions

2.4.1 Action Area: Environmental Sustainability

The following summary table represent actions that are tackling environmental sustainability with a main goal of 30% reduction in car dependency by 2030. It contains three activities such as expanding cycling infrastructure, enhancing electric vehicle accessibility, implementing comprehensive sustainable mobility strategy and MaaS.

30% Reduction in Car Dependency by 2030 Area: Environmental Sustainability					
ACTION	Intended result	Resources / assets	Lead Agency	Key partners	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 kilometers of new cycling paths• 20% increase in electric vehicle charging stations• Fleet of 20 bikes available for shared use by businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Reduction in car usage by 30%* Improved cycling infrastructure* Increased access to electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Financial resources*Policy support infrastructure	Municipality of Ormož	National government agencies, Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development, local businesses....	2026-2030
Implementing a comprehensive sustainable mobility strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Reduce car dependency* promote eco-friendly transportation options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Human resources*Policy and regulatory support*Financial resources	Municipality of Ormož	transport operators, urban planning experts	2026-2030

"Mobility-as-a-Service" (MaaS) platform.	Provide seamless, user-friendly access to multiple transportation options such as public transit, bike-sharing, car-sharing, and electric vehicles—through a single, integrated digital platform.	*Technology infrastructure *Customer support infrastructure *Financial resources	Municipal department for development planning, economic activities and legal affairs	Public transport operators, technology companies	2028-2030
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2.4.2 Action Area: Community engagement

Community engagement is crucial in overall success of Integrated Action Plan since people are those making changes also in businesses. Their accountability and being informed about importance of being "green" is an important element for success of all listed actions.

The following table outlines activities such as organizing sustainability workshops, working closely together with local organizations and educational institutions, and using marketing and promotion to reach community.

35% Community Engagement in Green Initiatives by 2030 Area: Community Engagement					
ACTION	Intended result	Resources / assets	Lead Agency	Key partners	Timescale
Organizing 3 annual sustainability workshops	To engage residents to be part of green initiatives and adapting greener approach	*Marketing and communication tools, *Educational resources, *Community networks	Local organizations, educational institutions, community groups	People's University of Ormož, RRC Ormož, Primary school Ormož, Gymnasium Ormož	2026-2029
Launching a digital platform for sustainable living	Easy access to resources, tools, and information on eco-friendly practices, ultimately increasing awareness	*Data and analytics tool *Content and educational materials	Municipality of Ormož	Web developers, community groups and volunteers, educational institutions.	2026-2029

Green initiatives organizing quarterly "Green Living Days"	Increase community awareness and active participation in sustainable practices, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility	* Educational materials * Human resources * Marketing and promotion	Municipality of Ormož	People's University of Ormož, RRC Ormož, Primary school Ormož, Gymnasium Ormož	2026-2029
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2.4.3 Action Area: Economic sustainability

For action area of economic sustainability, we are following two strategic objectives connected to businesses. One is 30% of businesses being engaged in circular economy practices by 2030 and 25% increase in green business creation by 2030. Both are supporting businesses in becoming greener and adopting circular economy practices, with emphasis on supporting green startups

30 % of businesses engaged in circular economy practices by 2030					
Area: Economic sustainability					
ACTION	Intended result	Resources / assets	Lead Agency	Key partners	Timescale
B2B material exchange platform to recycle and reuse materials	Facilitate the recycling and reuse of materials among businesses	Data and analytics tools, * Platform developers, * Marketing and outreach	Public utility company Ormož	Municipality of Ormož, Re-use centre	2028-2030
"Zero Waste Business Certification" program	Encourage businesses to minimize waste generation, improve resource efficiency, and adopt sustainable practices	* Certification framework, * Human resources, * Educational materials	Municipality of Ormož	Web developers, community groups and volunteers, educational institutions.	2026-2029

25% increase in green business creation by 2030					
Area: Economic sustainability					
ACTION	Intended result	Resources / assets	Lead Agency	Key partners	Timescale
"Green Business Accelerator"	Supports 20 new green startups through mentorship and access to green business zones	* Mentors and experts, * Physical space, * Financial resources, * Educational resources	RRC Ormož	Municipality of Ormož, sustainability experts and consultants, Universities and research institutions	2026-2030
"Green Innovation Hub"	Providing spaces, development support, and access to sustainable technology resources for 20 local entrepreneurs	* Mentors and experts, * Physical space, * Financial resources, * Educational resources	RRC Ormož	Municipality of Ormož, sustainability experts and consultants, Universities and research institutions	2026-2030
"Green Business Accelerator Network"	Connecting local green startups with regional and international investors	* Financial resources, space, * Networking platform, * Marketing	RRC Ormož	Investors	2026-2030

3 Action Planning Details

3.1 "Green Innovation Hub"

Activity Number	Activity Name							
1	Green Innovation Hub							
Description of specific tasks necessary complete this activity								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design support programs (training, mentorship) • Equip space with digital & green technology tools • Recruit and select 20 local entrepreneurs • Launch operations and monitor usage 								
Link to overall visions	Supports local green entrepreneurship and innovation; aligns with the vision of Ormož becoming a frontrunner in green transition							
Related area of Intervention	Economic Sustainability							
Responsibilities								
Lead	Why		Partners			Role		
RRC Ormož	Key institution supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in the municipality		Municipality of Ormož			Funding & policy Infrastructure		
			Sustainability Experts and Consultants			R&D collaboration		
			Universities and Research Institutions			R&D collaboration		
Contact details	info@rrc-ormoz.si							
Implementation time frame: 2026 - 2030								
Q1 start date: January 2026					Q8 end date: December 2027			
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Specific task	Planning and partner engagement	Program design	Equipment installation and call for entrepreneurs	Program launch and mentoring starts	Full operation, workshops, monitoring, adjustments if needed. From 2028 on – full operation			
Costings								

Cost category	Amount	Total cost	Resources secured		Resources needed
Equipment	20.000 EUR	75.000 EUR	0 EUR		75.000 EUR
Training & Mentoring	20.000 EUR		Founding source(s)		Founding source(s)
Staff & Operations	30.000 EUR		ERDF, Municipal budget		Horizon Europe, National Entrepreneurship Funds
Communication /Promotion	5.000 EUR				
Monitoring of delivery					
Output indicator		Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)		Target (Date)
20 entrepreneurs engaged		Registration, attendance records, business support logs	0 (Q1 2026)		20 (Q4 2030)
100 mentorship sessions held (20 per year)		Mentorship reports	0 (Q1 2026)		100 (Q4 2030)
Result indicator		Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)		Target (Date)
Number of green business models implemented		Companies self-report form confirmed by RRC Ormož mentor review	0 (Q1 2026)		10 (Q8 2027)
Satisfaction rate of supported entrepreneurs		Annual feedback surveys (more than 80% satisfaction)	Q4 2026		More than 85% (Q4 2030)
Risk assessment					
Implementation risk/challenges		Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen	
Low engagement		Low	Medium	Early promotional campaigns, attractive mentorship program	
Lack of funding		Medium	Medium	Securing funding in advance, in constant search for fundings	

3.2 "Green Business Accelerator Network"

Activity Number		Activity Name						
2		Green Business Accelerator Network						
Description of specific tasks necessary complete this activity								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Map and engage local green startups and SMEs fostering green technologies or engaging in circular economyOrganize regular matchmaking and investment-readiness eventsPromote the network regionally and internationallyMonitor business growth and new collaborations								
Link to overall visions		Supports 25% increase in green business creation by 2030; aligns with goal to develop Ormož as a green economic hub						
Related area of Intervention		Economic sustainability						
Responsibilities								
Lead		Why		Partners			Role	
RRC Ormož		RRC Ormož has experience in entrepreneurship support and international networking		Municipality of Ormož			co-financing, policy support	
				Investors			funding	
				Universities			research and monitoring	
				Digital platform providers			technology set up	
Contact details		info@rrc-ormoz.si						
Implementation time frame: 2026 - 2030								
Q1 start date: January 2026				Q8 end date: December 2027				
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Specific task	Stakeholder mapping and concept design	Platform development and testing	Network launch and local onboarding	First matchmaking event; feedback collection	Regional outreach and international promotion	Training for investment readiness	Network expansion; partnership development	Final evaluation and sustainability planning
Costings								

Cost category	Amount	Total cost	Resources secured	Resources needed
Events and networking	10.000 EUR	50.000 EUR	0 EUR	50.000 EUR
Staff and coordination	20.000 EUR		Founding source(s)	Founding source(s)
Training and expert support	15.000 EUR		ERDF, Municipal budget	National Entrepreneurship Funds
Communication and promotion	5.000 EUR			
Monitoring of delivery				
Output indicator		Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)	Target (Date)
3 investor-match events organized		Event reports, attendance lists	0 (2026)	3 (2027)
30 green startups or green businesses engaged		Registration, platform analytics	0 (2026)	30 (2030)
Result indicator		Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)	Target (Date)
Satisfaction rate of startups and investors		Annual feedback surveys	- (Q4 2026)	More than 80% (Q4 yearly)
10 new partnerships or investments		Follow-up survey	0 (Q1 2026)	10 (Q4 2030)
Risk assessment				
Implementation risk/challenges		Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Low investor interest		Medium	High	Engage international investor networks early; define co-financing incentives
Limited participation of startups		Low	Medium	Provide startup visibility, targeted promotion, clear value proposition

3.3 Organizing 3 annual sustainability workshops

Activity Number		Activity Name						
3		Organizing 3 annual sustainability workshops						
Description of specific tasks necessary complete this activity								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify relevant green themes each year (e.g., energy, mobility, circularity)Partner with local institutions and experts for contentDevelop communication and promotion strategyOrganize and deliver 3 workshops annually (2026–2029)Collect feedback and evaluate impact								
Link to overall visions		Promotes awareness, education, and behavior change toward sustainable living; supports strategic goal of 35% community engagement in green initiatives by 2030						
Related area of Intervention		Community engagement						
Responsibilities								
Lead		Why		Partners			Role	
Local organizations, Educational institutions, Community groups		Key facilitators for events and with high possibilities for stakeholder engagement		People's University of Ormož			Educational content	
				Schools (student engagement), NGOs (interactive methods), Municipality (logistics & co-financing)			Student engagement	
				RRC Ormož			Overall organization	
Contact details		info@rrc-ormoz.si						
Implementation time frame: 2026 - 2029								
Q1 start date: January 2026					Q8 end date: December 2029			
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Specific task	Workshop planning and partner engagement	First workshop: Circular economy	Evaluation and preparation for second topic	Second workshop: Sustainable mobility	Evaluation and preparation for third topic	Third workshop: Energy efficiency at home and work	Final review	Planning for continuity

Costings				
Cost category	Amount	Total cost	Resources secured	Resources needed
Speakers and content development	10.000 EUR		0 EUR	29.000 EUR
Venue and logistics	3.000 EUR		Founding source(s)	Municipality, partners, organizations through their own human resources and other resources
Promotion and materials	8.000 EUR			
Coordination and organization	6.000 EUR			
Catering (optional)	2.000 EUR	29.000 EUR		
Monitoring of delivery				
Output indicator		Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)	Target (Date)
Number of workshops		Attendance records, event reports	0 (Q1 2026)	9 (Q4 2028)
Number of participants		Sign-in sheets	0 (Q1 2026)	200 (Q4 2029)
Result indicator		Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)	Target (Date)
Increase in sustainability awareness		Pre/post surveys of participants	TBD	+25% increase (Q4 2029)
Satisfaction rate of participants		Post-event feedback forms	-	More than 80% (Q4 yearly)
Risk assessment				
Implementation risk/challenges		Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Low attendance		Medium	Medium	Strong promotion via schools, local media, and incentives
Lack of relevant speakers		Low	Medium	Partner with national NGOs and universities early

3.4 Green initiatives organizing quarterly "Green Living Days"

Activity Number				Activity Name				
4				Green Living Days				
Description of specific tasks necessary complete this activity								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan and organize 4 themed sustainability events per year (waste, energy, mobility, food)Involving schools, NGOs, and local businessesProvide interactive content (workshops, games, DIY corners)Promote events in the communityEvaluate participation and satisfaction after each event								
Link to overall visions		Supports 35% community engagement in green initiatives by 2030; fosters a culture of sustainable living in Ormož						
Related area of Intervention		Community Engagement						
Responsibilities								
Lead		Why			Partners		Role	
Municipality of Ormož		Municipal leadership is essential for wide public visibility and coordination across sectors			RRC Ormož		Organization and logistic	
					People's University		Educational role	
					Primary school Ormož, Gymnasium Ormož		Youth engagement	
Contact details		info@ormoz.si						
Implementation time frame: 2026 - 2029								
Q1 start date: November 2025					Q8 end date: November 2027			
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Specific task	Plan 4 seasonal themes and stakeholder/partner engagement	Organizing spring edition – Possible theme: Urban gardening/food waste	Organizing summer edition (e.g. sustainable mobility and outdoor living	Organizing autumn edition (Energy-saving tips for homes, food preserving)	Winter/holiday edition – Circular/Sustainable gifts and local economy	Review content and integrate school activities	Repeat and improve events based on feedback	Final evaluation and planning for post-2027 continuation

Costings				
Cost category	Amount	Total cost	Resources secured	Resources needed
Event materials and equipment	15.000 EUR		0 EUR	31.000 EUR
Coordination and staff	4.000 EUR		Founding source(s)	Founding source(s)
Promotion and visibility	4.000 EUR			
Workshop leaders and facilitators	8.000 EUR	31.000 EUR		Municipal budget, ERDF, Interreg, national environmental funds, private sponsors
Monitoring of delivery				
Output indicator		Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)	Target (Date)
4 (Quarterly) Green Living Days organized		Event reports and attendance sheets	0 (Q1 2026)	4 (Q4 2026) and yearly
Number of partners engaged		Registration data, on-site counters	0 (Q1 2026)	30 (every quarter – per event)
Result indicator		Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)	Target (Date)
% of participants reporting lifestyle change		Follow-up survey month post-event	0% (Q1 2026)	25% (Q4 2029)
% of participants who return to future events		Event registration tracking	0% (Q1 2026)	growing up to min. 30% (Q4 2029)
Risk assessment				
Implementation risk/challenges		Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Limited community engagement		Medium	Medium	Early marketing, use schools, contests, and incentives
Insufficient feedback collection from participants		Medium	Low	Use digital forms, QR codes, small rewards

4 Implementation Framework

4.1 Governance process to ensure IAP implementation and oversight

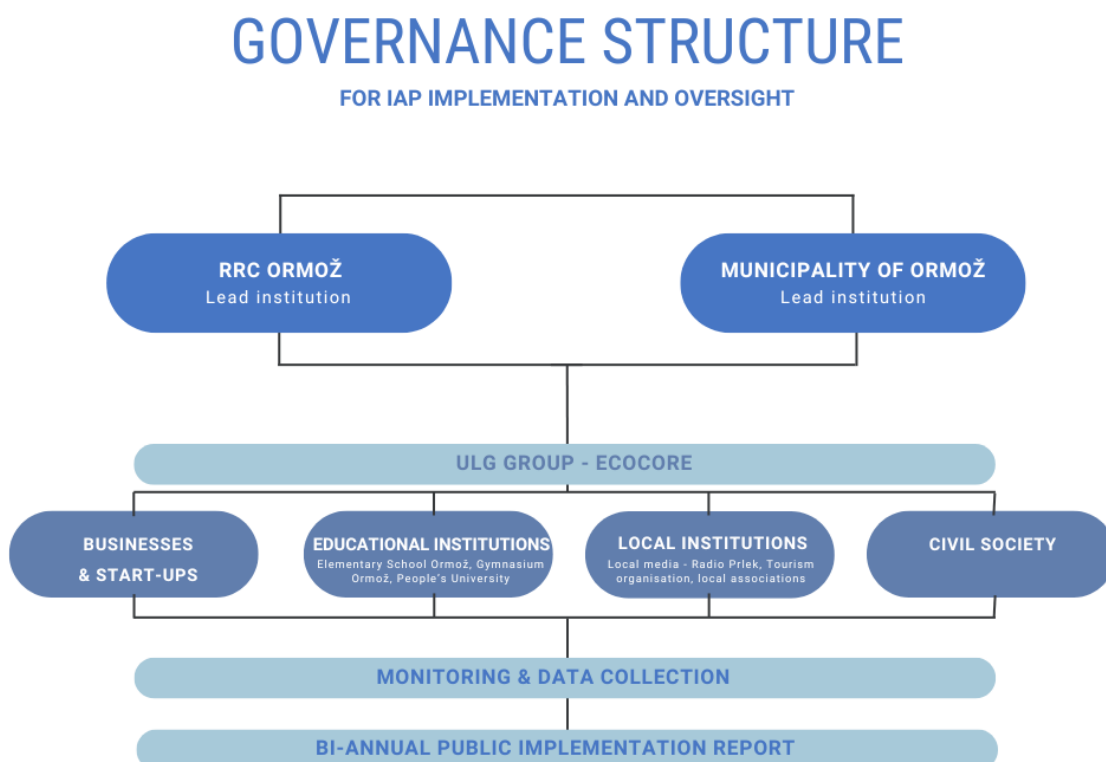


Figure 4: Governance structure

The successful implementation of the EcoCore Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Ormož requires a coordinated governance structure that ensures clarity of roles, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. The lead implementation body will be the Research and Development Centre RRC Ormož with support of Municipality of Ormož. It will be responsible for coordinating all activities, monitoring progress, and maintaining strategic oversight.

Municipality of Ormož will play a central policy and financing role, supporting actions with integration with municipal plans and co-funding where possible. Local partners such as People's University Ormož, schools (Primary school Ormož and Gymnasium Ormož), green entrepreneurs and other entrepreneurs willing to adopt at least some of the green initiatives and civic organizations will be engaged in the delivery of specific actions.

The existing URBACT Local Group (ULG) which was formed during the EcoCore process, will evolve into a permanent EcoCore Local Group and it will ideally meet twice per year and will oversee progress, support coordination, and propose adjustments based on changing circumstances. Sub-groups may focus on specific themes, such as circular economy, sustainable entrepreneurship, education, and digital tools. There is also the possibility that we will form a Local Group that will have a role in overseeing all URBACT projects and other projects and planned activities. ULG has a crucial role in adopting bottom-up approach and tailor activities in local community for people.

Leadership is shared due to numerous activities plans and each activity has a lead that corresponds best to the planned actions and has resources or knowledge. Consistent communication with stakeholders is also one of the reasons why ULG must continue. It makes communication easier, and stakeholders have overall overview to the planned activities and incorporating Integrated action plans.

Transparency and accountability are ensured through:

- Event-based feedback loops, including post-workshop surveys and citizen engagement tools.
- An annual report done by RRC Ormož summarizing activities.

4.2 Future role of the ULG

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) was a key mechanism for stakeholder engagement within the EcoCore project, playing a central role in the design and implementation of Integrated Action Plan of Ormož. Through regular meetings, workshops, and consultations, ULG members ensured an integrated approach based on the needs of the local environment, particularly addressing the challenges of sustainability. The future of the ULG is closely tied to the continued implementation and monitoring of the Integrated Action Plan. The ULG needs to maintain its role beyond the end of the project. In the future, the ULG will:

- Ensure continued involvement of residents and stakeholders in the development of activities for greener Ormož
- act as a promoter of changes for more sustainable living,
- broaden acceptance of new sustainable ways in business and living,
- finding new ways to support reduction in car dependency,
- foster community engagement in green initiatives,
- support activities to engage businesses in circular economy practices and increase new green businesses,
- serve as a platform for inter-municipal cooperation.

The ULG will thus remain a key connecting link between the local community, the municipality, and other stakeholders on the path toward a greener, more connected, and inclusive future for Ormož.

4.3 Monitoring framework

Overall progress of the EcoCore IAP will be monitored through a structured system of indicators (outputs and results), regular reporting, and participatory evaluation. Monitoring will be based on output and result indicators defined for each action in Chapter 3, with each activity having a dedicated lead responsible for data collection.

Each activity will have designated responsible persons and will be tracked using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. RRC Ormož will lead the development of an annual implementation report in collaboration with stakeholders and/or ULG.

Monitoring tools include:

- internal tracking system coordinated by RRC Ormož, showing progress on startup support, partnerships, event attendance, and satisfaction levels
- Pre- and post-event surveys to measure awareness and knowledge gains
- Biannual ULG reviews to reflect and adjust approaches

This framework mirrors the successful approach used where participant feedback and measuring attendance helped validate actions and inform future decisions.

Overall progress will be monitored and evaluated with annual implementation reports compiled by RRC Ormož, summarizing activity delivery, partner engagement, budget use, and key results.

Pre- and post-event surveys for workshops and events will serve to assess awareness, satisfaction, and short-term learning impacts. And a final evaluation report in Q4 2027 will be integrating both quantitative data and qualitative inputs, including good practices from various projects and specially from EcoCore network..

Tracking will be coordinated by RRC Ormož, supported by lead partners for each action. Frequency of monitoring is defined by each action, preferably quarterly with reviews of ULG. Post-event evaluations after every major workshop, Green Living Day, or business accelerator activity are planned based on survey to get data.

These methods ensure that the IAP remains adaptive, community-informed, and aligned with strategic sustainability goals.

Table 3: Timetable

Activity	Implementation period	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
30% Reduction in Car Dependency						
New cycling paths	2026-2030		PM	IE + PM	FE + follow up actions	
Implementing a comprehensive sustainable mobility strategy	2026-2030		PM	IE	PM	FE + follow up actions
"Mobility-as-a-Service" (MaaS) platform.	2028-2030			IE + PM	IE + PM	FE + follow up actions
35% Community Engagement in Green Initiatives						
Organizing 3 annual sustainability workshops	2026 - 2029	PM	IE + PM	FE + follow up actions		
Launching a digital platform for sustainable living	2026 - 2029	PM	IE + PM	FE + follow up actions		
Green initiatives organizing quarterly "Green Living Days"	2026 - 2029	PM	IE + PM	FE + follow up actions		
30 % of Businesses Engaged in Circular Economy Practices						
B2B material exchange platform to recycle and reuse materials	2028-2030			PM	IE + PM	FE + follow up actions
"Zero Waste Business Certification" program	2027-2030		PM	IE	PM	FE + follow up actions
25% Increase in Green Business Creation						
"Green Business Accelerator"	2026-2030	PM	IE	PM	FE + follow up actions	
"Green Innovation Hub"	2026-2030	PM	IE	FE + follow up actions		
"Green Business Accelerator Network,"	2026-2030	PM	IE	PM + IE	FE + follow up actions	

PM – performance monitoring

IE – interim evaluation

FE – final evaluation

4.4 Funding strategy

The implementation of the EcoCore IAP in Ormož will rely on a well-balanced funding strategy that combines local, national, and European financial resources, as well as private sector involvement where applicable and possible. Each action is designed with an individual cost structure, but the collective goal is to secure sustainable and diversified financing to support the delivery of planned actions.

4.4.1 Estimated costs

Estimated cost for 4 core actions:

The total estimated cost for the implementation of the main 4 actions of this IAP is approximately 185.000 EUR, distributed across four core actions.

AXES	ACTION STEP	Amount per action	Amount per EAP (€)
"Green Innovation Hub"	Equipment	20.000 EUR	75.000 EUR
	Training & Mentoring	20.000 EUR	
	Staff & Operations	30.000 EUR	
	Communication /Promotion	5.000 EUR	

Green Business Accelerator Network	Events and networking	10.000 EUR	50.000 EUR
	Staff and coordination	20.000 EUR	
	Training and expert support	15.000 EUR	
	Communication and promotion	5.000 EUR	
Organizing 3 annual sustainability workshops	Speakers and content development	10.000 EUR	29.000 EUR
	Venue and logistics	3.000 EUR	
	Promotion and materials	8.000 EUR	
	Coordination and organization	6.000 EUR	
	Catering (optional)	2.000 EUR	
Green Living Days	Event materials and equipment	15.000 EUR	31.000 EUR
	Coordination and staff	4.000 EUR	
	Promotion and visibility	4.000 EUR	
	Workshop leaders and facilitators	8.000 EUR	

4.4.2 Funding sources

To secure the necessary resources, a combination of the following funding sources will be used:

Funding source		Estimated contribution	Purpose
Municipality of Ormož		N/a	Co-financing and operational support
ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), Horizon, Interreg & other EU funds		N/a	Infrastructure, innovation and entrepreneurship support, circular economy
National Environmental Funds		N/a	Regional cooperation and green public events
National Entrepreneurship Funds		N/a	SME development and mentoring schemes
Private sponsors and investors		N/a	Events, promotion, and small co-investments

Each activity has a dedicated lead (e.g., RRC Ormož or the Municipality of Ormož) responsible for tracking commitments, ensuring alignment with grant requirements, and reporting on use of funds. RRC Ormož plays a crucial role as a development and research centre working also for Municipality so it will play a crucial role in finding and securing funding, specially from various EU funds through connected projects. Matching funds and in-kind contributions (venue use, staff time, local promotion) are expected from local institutions.

4.4.3 Coordination and funding management

As mentioned, funding coordination will be overseen by RRC Ormož, in collaboration with the Municipality of Ormož, and supported by the ULG. A central budget sheet will be updated yearly or more often if necessary, enabling transparent financial oversight.

RRC Ormož will ensure early mapping of open calls at EU and national level and assist with developing application templates and prepare documentation well in advance with support of Municipality.

This proactive and layered funding strategy is essential to ensure the long-term implementation and sustainability of Ormož's EcoCore IAP goals.

4.5 Risk assessment

A risk assessment has been developed to support the successful implementation of the EcoCore IAP and prepare mitigation strategies to avoid delays as much as possible. Drawing from the URBACT methodology and experiences from the project, the following table outlines the main risks identified, along with their likelihood, potential impact, and mitigation strategies.

RISK	TYPE OF RISK	PROBABILITY	MITIGATION
Low community engagement	BEHAVIORAL	Low	Early promotional campaigns, attractive mentorship program, early marketing, use schools, contests, and incentives
Lack of funding	FINANCIAL	Medium/High	Securing funding in advance, in constant search for fundings, diversified funding plan;
Low investor interest	OPERATIONAL	Medium	Engage international investor networks early; define co-financing incentives
Limited participation of startups	OPERATIONAL	Low	Provide startup visibility, targeted promotion, clear value proposition
Low attendance	BEHAVIORAL	Medium	Strong promotion via schools, local media, and incentives

Lack of relevant speakers	OPERATIONAL	Low	Partner with national NGOs and universities early
Insufficient feedback collection from participants	OPERATIONAL	Medium	Use digital forms, QR codes, small rewards
Loss of institutional or political support	POLITICAL	Low	Formal agreements with municipality and local stakeholders; ensure cross-party alignment on sustainability goals
Stakeholder fatigue or drop-out	OPERATIONAL	Medium	Role rotation, light workload distribution, recognition mechanisms, youth inclusion in ULG
Cultural resistance to behaviour change	BEHAVIORAL	Medium	Communication campaigns tailored to local mindset; include local stakeholders
Business disinterest in circular economy engagement	OPERATIONAL BEHAVIORAL	Medium	Offer clear incentives, promotional support, recognition mechanisms

4.6 Timeline / Gantt chart

Activity	Implementation period	2026				2027				2028				2029				2030			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Action 1: Green Innovation Hub																					
Planning and partner engagement	2026-2030																				
Space preparation and program design																					
Equipment installation and call for entrepreneurs																					
Program launch and mentoring starts																					
Full operation, workshops, monitoring, adjustments if																					
Promotion																					
Action 2:Green Business Accelerator Network																					
Stakeholder mapping and concept design	2026-2030																				
Platform development and testing																					
Network launch and local onboarding																					
First matchmaking event; feedback collection																					
Regional outreach and international promotion																					
Training for investment readiness																					
Network expansion; partnership development																					
Final evaluation and sustainability planning																					
Action 3: Organizing 3 annual sustainability workshops																					
Workshop planning	2026-2029																				
Partner with local institutions and experts for content																					
Develop communication and promotion strategy																					
Organize and deliver 3 workshops annually (2026–2029)																					
Collect feedback and evaluate impact																					
Promotion																					
Action 4Green initiatives organizing quarterly "Green Living Days"																					
Plan and organize 4 themed sustainability events per year	2026-2029																				
Stakeholder engagement																					
Green Living Days																					
Promote events in the community																					
Evaluate participation and satisfaction after each event																					