URBACT

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Remote-*IT*

Remote and Hybrid work for Thriving Cities

City of Dubrovnik

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

Dubrovnik: A destination for digital nomads

August 2025

Remote-IT

Remote and Hybrid work for Thriving Cities

TARTU (EE)

BUCHAREST District 6 (RO)

DUBROVNIK (HR)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Integrated Action Plan (IAP) outlines the City of Dubrovnik's strategic approach to positioning itself as a leading year-round destination for digital nomads in Southern Europe. Developed as part of the URBACT IV "Remote-IT" network, the IAP responds to global shifts in work patterns, demographic trends, and tourism models, aiming to harness the potential of remote work for urban innovation, economic diversification, and improved quality of life.

Drawing on extensive stakeholder engagement through the URBACT Local Group (ULG), the plan identifies key strengths—such as Dubrovnik's cultural heritage, connectivity, and natural beauty—as well as challenges like seasonal tourism dependency, high cost of living, and limited community integration for nomads. These insights informed the IAP's integrated and cross-sectoral structure, combining marketing, infrastructure, policy, and community-building measures.

Pilot actions such as the Digital Nomad Marketing Campaign and the Offline Space at the TUP Factory have provided valuable early insights, validating key approaches and catalyzing broader community involvement.

Implementation will be led by the City of Dubrovnik in close collaboration with local, national, and international stakeholders.

Through this IAP, Dubrovnik sets a forward-looking agenda that embraces innovation, inclusion, and long-term resilience—reimagining the city as a vibrant home for both locals and global digital nomads

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The IAP defines three strategic objectives:

- **Increase support and services for digital nomads** (e.g., coworking hubs, improved connectivity, accessible infrastructure).

- **Foster local engagement and integration** (e.g., workshops, family-friendly content, university cooperation)

- **Improve awareness of Dubrovnik in global digital nomad communities** (e.g., targeted marketing campaigns, a dedicated app, partnerships).

GLOSSARY

Digital Nomad: A remote worker who uses technology to live and work in various locations, typically independent of a fixed office or employer in their country of residence.

URBACT: A European territorial cooperation programme that supports sustainable urban development through transnational exchange and learning among cities.

Remote-IT: An URBACT Action Planning Network focused on addressing challenges and opportunities related to remote and hybrid work in European cities.

IAP (Integrated Action Plan): A strategic planning document developed by cities in URBACT networks, combining research, stakeholder input, and actionable steps for sustainable urban transformation.

ULG (URBACT Local Group): A group of local stakeholders assembled to co-develop and support the IAP, including public officials, NGOs, businesses, and citizens.

Digital Nomad Visa: A residence permit allowing non-EU/EEA remote workers to live and work in Croatia without being employed by a Croatian entity.

Offline Space: A relaxed, non-commercial hub for digital nomads and locals in Dubrovnik, designed to foster informal interaction, creativity, and well-being.

TUP Factory: A repurposed industrial space in Dubrovnik being transformed into a cultural and social hub for remote workers, creative and cultural industries, and the local community.
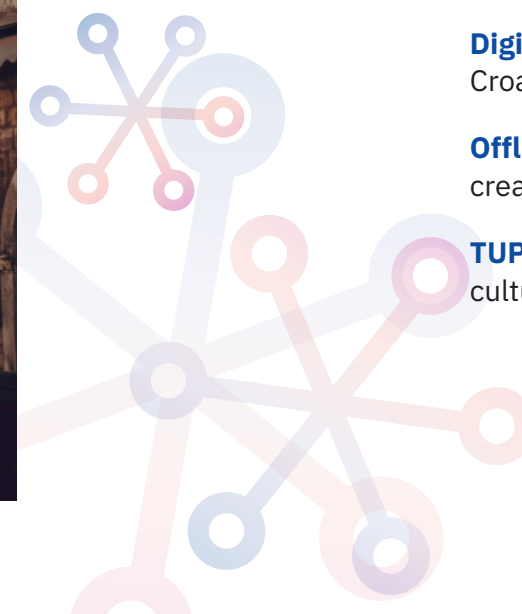
1. CONTEXT, NEEDS AND VISION

1.1. Remote and hybrid work

Remote-IT is an URBACT Action Planning Network, financed through the URBACT IV (2021-2027) program of the European Commission. The Remote-IT network tackles the new challenges cities are experiencing connected to the future of work. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the transformation around how work is organized, with hybrid and remote work models significantly impacting the lives of citizens, as well as the organizational culture of both public and private employers. The Remote-IT partnership of cities is collaboratively exploring this emerging topic in order to implement proactive policy making. For more information see the dedicated project website: https://urbact.eu/networks/remote-it

The Network is led by the Dubrovnik's Development Agency (DURA), Croatia. Partner cities include: Brindisi (Italy), Bucharest District 6 (Romania), Camara de Lobos (Portugal), Heraklion (Greece), Murcia (Spain), Tartu (Estonia), Tirana Albania). URBACT is the European Territorial Cooperation program aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. For more information see: https://urbact.eu/

As defined by the OECD[1] , a **digital nomad** is an individual who leads a technology-enabled, location-independent lifestyle. This lifestyle is made possible by the use of enabling technologies, such as high-speed internet, video conferencing tools, online collaboration platforms for teams, and cloud solutions, which allow for global connectivity. Remote work offers the potential to access a higher quality of life environment and the ability to choose a more favorable tax regime. A key distinction of digital nomads from other categories of working migrants, such as cross-border workers and intra-corporate transferees, is that their income is earned from foreign sources.

The EU currently lacks a standardized definition[2] , and in some cases, individuals who rely solely on semi-passive or passive income may also fall under the category of digital nomads based on certain new regulations. Some specific definitions can be identified in the national laws of countries that have introduced a digital nomad visa.

[1] Should OECD countries develop new Digital Nomad Visas?] (oecd.org)
[2] 202135_digital_nomad_visas.pdf (europa.eu)

In Croatia, a third-country national who is engaged in employment or work using communication technology for a company, whether their own or another, that is not registered in the Republic of Croatia and does not provide services to employers within the Republic of Croatia.

According to the Croatian Law on Foreigners, a "digital nomad is a third-country national who is employed or performs work through communication technology for a company or his own company that is not registered in the Republic of Croatia and does not perform work or provide services to employers in the Republic of Croatia"[3].

1.2. Current situation and relevant data

Dubrovnik is a city in the southernmost part of Croatia, on the Adriatic Sea coast, known for its historical and cultural heritage, especially for its old town center which is under UNESCO protection. Dubrovnik is one of the most visited tourist destinations in Europe, with numerous landmarks, beaches, festivals, and events. Dubrovnik is a small city. According to the 2021 National Census data, there are 41,562 residents in the City of Dubrovnik. The total area of the city's administrative area is 143.35 square kilometers, which is a total of 8.04% of the area of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County.

According to development index, which is valued at 117.633% of the Croatian national average, the city falls into the VIII group of development, which applies to local government units ranked above the national average based on the index value. Dubrovnik-Neretva County is in the IV group of development with a development index of 105.303, placing it fourth in development among all counties in Croatia.

The economic development of Dubrovnik is primarily focused on tourism and maritime activities, while industry and agriculture are less represented. The development of tourism infrastructure has been improved through the modernization of transport connections, including a highway connecting Zagreb and Ploče, with an extension planned to reach Dubrovnik. Meanwhile, Dubrovnik Airport, located in Čilipi, has shown continuous traffic growth following recovery from the Homeland War, which significantly contributes to the city's tourism economy.

[3] https://www.zakon.hr/z/142/Zakon-o-strancima

1.2.1. Digital Nomad Visa

Croatia introduced its digital nomad visa in 2021, aiming to attract remote workers from around the world. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to boost tourism and the local economy, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly impacted global travel and tourism industries.

The visa is available to non-EU/EEA nationals who are working remotely for a company or are self-employed. Applicants must not perform any work for Croatian employers. As of April 2025, the digital nomad visa is available for up to 3 years. Digital nomads can stay in Croatia for up to 18 months on a temporary residence visa—with the option for one extension, making it possible to live and work here for up to three years. This is a significant increase from the previous 12-month stay, which could only be extended by another six months. The change offers more flexibility and makes Croatia an even more attractive option for nomads looking for a longer-term base. Close family members of a digital nomad who has been granted temporary stay in the Republic of Croatia may join them in the Republic of Croatia. This includes "common law marriage" partners (non-married couples who have been together for longer than 3 years in a childless couple, and shorter if they have a child together or in case of conclusion of marriage. [4]

> In 2023, a total of 1,485 applications for digital nomad visas were submitted, while 532 digital nomad visas were finally approved. From January to the end of September 2024, a total of 842 applications for digital nomad visas were submitted, while 342 digital nomad visas were finally approved to persons from 42 different countries.[6]

Application Requirements: Proof of employment or self-employment outside of Croatia; A valid passport; Proof of sufficient funds to support themselves during their stay; Health insurance coverage for the duration of the stay in Croatia; A clean criminal record; Proof of accommodation in Croatia. Applicants must show that they have a stable income and sufficient financial means to cover their stay in Croatia. Third-country nationals who are regulating their temporary stay as digital nomads are required to have the amount corresponding to at least 2.5 average monthly net salaries paid for the previous year, in accordance with the official data published by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics. This amount is increased by 10% of the average monthly net salary for each additional family member or life partner or informal life partner.

Currently, the amount required on a monthly basis is a minimum of 3.295,00 EUR which can be shown through a bank statement showing proof of regular income or pay slips for the last six months. Alternatively, if you intend to stay in the Republic of Croatia for 12 months, you can provide proof that you have a minimum of 39.540,00 EUR already available in your bank account. If you intend to stay in the Republic of Croatia for 18 months, you need to provide proof that you have a minimum of 59.310,00 EUR available in your bank account. [5]

Furthermore, digital nomads must have valid health insurance that covers medical expenses in Croatia. Digital nomads are exempt from paying Croatian income tax, which is a significant advantage for remote workers looking to relocate. Interested individuals can apply online through the Croatian Ministry of the Interior's website. Once the application is reviewed and approved, applicants receive their digital nomad visa, allowing them to reside in Croatia for up to a year.

Dubrovnik launched the Digital Nomad Pass in 2023. The introduction of the Digital Nomad Pass is part of Dubrovnik's broader strategy to diversify its tourism sector, reduce seasonal tourism dependency, and promote sustainable, year-round economic growth. By attracting digital nomads, Dubrovnik aims to foster a dynamic and innovative community that contributes to the local economy and enriches the cultural landscape of the city. The pass is available to digital nomads who are legally residing in Croatia, including those on the Croatian digital nomad visa. It's intended for remote workers who want to base themselves specifically in Dubrovnik. Interested individuals can apply online through the official website or through local tourism offices in Dubrovnik. Applicants need to provide proof of their digital nomad status, such as evidence of remote employment or self-employment, and a valid Croatian digital nomad visa or other relevant residency permits.

In 2024, Dubrovnik had almost 1.4 million arrivals and more than 4.5 million overnight stays, mostly foreigners.[7] The tourism season in Dubrovnik-Neretva County operates successfully from April to September. Seasonality significantly impacts Dubrovnik's tourism economy, with 49.75% of all overnight stays and 49.11% of total arrivals for the year occurring during the summer months (July and August).[8]

The average age of residents in the Dubrovnik-Neretva Region is 41.5 years, in line with the national average for Croatia. The pronounced seasonality of tourism, the region's main economic sector, contributes to concerning demographic trends in Dubrovnik, including a population decline and the migration of young people in search of stable, year-round employment.

The implementation of the TFC project coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly impacting Dubrovnik's local economy which is heavily reliant on mass and short-term tourism. This period of disruption prompted the city to reevaluate and diversify its approach to tourism. The surge in remote work,

> The City of Dubrovnik stands out as a highly sought-after Mediterranean destination, experiencing a consistent rise in visitor numbers annually. However, like other leading tourist destinations in Europe, Dubrovnik faces the challenges associated with over-tourism due to the escalating influx of visitors. In response to the constraints posed by limited capacity and resources, the city initiated the **"Respect the City" project in 2017**, aiming to foster sustainability in tourism. Additionally, Dubrovnik joined the **URBACT Tourism-friendly cities network (TFC) during 2020-2022**.

[4] https://mup.gov.hr/aliens-281621/stay-and-work/temporary-stay-for-the-purpose-of-family-reunification/281662
[5] https://mup.gov.hr/aliens-281621/stay-and-work/temporary-stay-of-digital-nomads/286833
[6] Ministry of the Interior https://mup.gov.hr/otvoreni-podaci/287522
[7] City of Dubrovnik: https://www.dubrovnik.hr/vijesti/sampion-turizma-2024-18986
[8] GSTC Reassessment, https://www.gstcouncil.org/destination-re-assessment-dubrovnik-croatia/

coupled with the necessity to reorganize tourism activities, revealed the potential of digital nomads as an appealing market. Recognizing this opportunity, in 2021, Dubrovnik launched initiatives like the European conference **"Dubrovnik for Digital Nomads" and "The Dubrovnik Digital Nomad-in-Residence."** In 2022, the TFC ULG identified remote work preparedness as a strategic avenue to foster sustainable tourism practices, emphasizing prolonged stays.

The primary challenge lies in leveraging the remote work trend to attract digital nomads for extended periods, thereby fundamentally reshaping the city's tourism models. Simultaneously, there is a need to address the well-being of the city's residents, predominantly employed in the tourism sector, whose livelihoods rely heavily on face-to-face interactions. Additionally, the city must navigate its digital transformation to democratize sectors such as housing, short-term rentals, urban mobility, air quality, and sea biodiversity. This approach aims to identify collaborative solutions that align with the evolving landscape and cater to the diverse needs of residents and visitors alike.

1.2.2. Integrated Action Plan Focus

Dubrovnik's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) focuses on actions that can promote the city for digital nomads, especially during the low season, in order to contribute to the transition towards more sustainable models of tourism and an overall improvement in the quality of life for locals and digital nomads. The IAP will also target other implications for adopting hybrid work models, considering economic, ecological, and social implications.

1.2.3. Key Local Resources and Support

A key local resource is the strong support of the City of Dubrovnik. City officials were actively involved in the Dubrovnik city visit and the first transnational Remote-IT meeting which was held in Dubrovnik, showcasing how the administration has championed Dubrovnik's recent orientation towards attracting digital nomads through campaigns such as the Digital Nomad Residency Programme. Multiple City officials are active members of the ULG.

The Dubrovnik Development agency DURA has strong URBACT experience. DURA has been involved as partner in several URBACT III networks: TechTown, 2nd Chance, Active NGOs and Tourism-friendly Cities and has contributed regularly with speakers and showcasing good practices of IAP development in the URBACT capacity building events.

Added value can be found in possible Action Plan resourcing, through the New European Bauhaus (NEB) project. DURA helped to manage the revitalization project of the TUP Factory ("TUP" Carbon Graphite and Electrical Contact Products Factory), which was chosen with 20 other cities to receive the NEB technical support for transforming the old industrial venue in new urban cultural and social incubator and intersection between local community and tourists/remote workers.
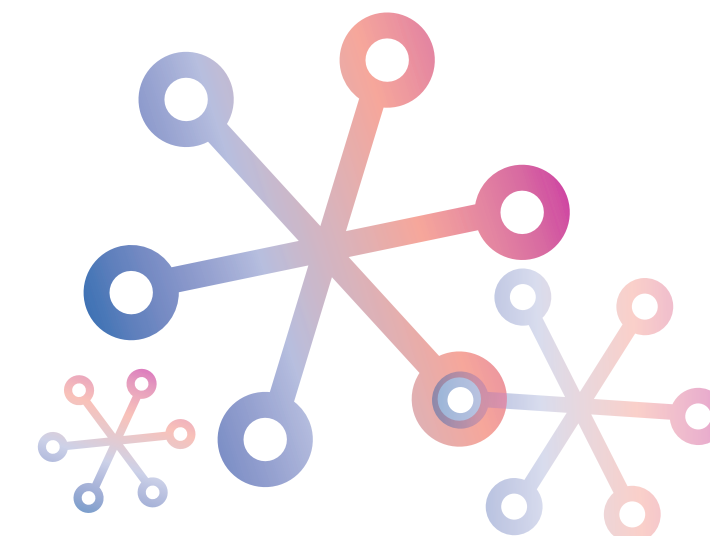
Additional added value is found in the synergy with Dubrovnik's other URBACT networks because DURA is also part of the EcoCore network, where the focus is on transforming the city's brownfields into thriving green corridors, encouraging green businesses to use the current underutilized areas. This opens potential synergies to the environmental dimension of remote work patterns and also may contribute to the cross-sectoral theme of green transition.

1.3. Relevant existing strategies and policies

There are a number of local strategies and plans that are relevant to the theme of digital nomads. Complementary with the current local and regional strategies, which identified remote work patterns as an opportunity, the City of Dubrovnik has the following relevant plans:

- Respect the City – Action Plan until 2025
- Integrated Action plan from URBACT Tourism Friendly Cities
- Smart City Strategy [9]
- Strategy for the Development of the Dubrovnik Urban Area
- Development Plan of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County to 2027
- Initiatives of the Croatian Ministry of Tourism and Sport

[9]   https://www.dubrovnik.hr/uploads/posts/18109/16.Prijedlog-zaklju%25C4%258Dka-o- usvajanju-Strategije-pametnog-grada-za-Grad-Dubrovnik.pdf

Strategy for the Development of the Dubrovnik Urban Area

Specific Objective 1.3.: Development and Promotion of Equitably Distributed and Responsible Tourism with a Low Negative Impact on the Social, Natural, and Cultural Environment [10]

To achieve Specific Objective 1.3., two measures have been established.

The first measure focuses on the restoration and sustainable valorization of the resource base of the historical urban landscape to achieve territorial sustainability. This will be implemented through activities such as investments in infrastructure, restoration of public spaces in historic urban areas, enhancement of conservation and restoration works on cultural heritage, revitalization and presentation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and more.

Additionally, these activities will contribute to the creation of tourism products in alignment with the necessary protection of these assets. The second measure aims to promote the development of sustainable year-round tourism and selective forms of tourism to achieve economic diversification, move away from mass tourism, and decentralize the role of tourism within the economic structure and its concentration in the City of Dubrovnik.

1.3.2. Promotion of Sustainable Year-Round Tourism and Selective Forms of Tourism for the Purpose of Diversification and Decentralization of Tourism Functions

1.3.2.11. Ensuring the necessary infrastructure and raising awareness of the potential for developing smart villages to enhance their recognition among digital nomads.

Development Plan of Dubrovnik-Neretva County until 2027

Specific Objective 1.2.: Encouraging Sustainability, Digitalization, and Innovation in the Economy [11]

Measure 1.2.3.: Development of Cultural and Creative Industries

This measure will support the preparation of infrastructure projects aimed at developing cultural and creative industries, as well as conducting training programs for entrepreneurs operating in these sectors.

Additionally, the measure includes plans to further develop the branding of the county as an attractive destination for digital nomads and to promote stronger involvement of digital nomads in the development of the ICT industry in the region.

List of Indicative Activities:

- **1.2.3.1.** Support for the preparation of infrastructure projects for the development of the cultural and creative industries.
- **1.2.3.2.** Development and implementation of training programs to strengthen entrepreneurial skills in the cultural and creative industries.
- **1.2.3.3.** Development of the concept of Dubrovnik - Neretva County as a desirable destination for digital nomads.

[10] https://www.dubrovnik.hr/uploads/pages/282/4.%20SRUP%20Dubrovnik.pdf

[11] https://www.dunea.hr/images/dokumenti/Plan_razvoja_DNZ_do_2027._FINAL.pdf

Implementation Stakeholders:

Dubrovnik-Neretva County (DNŽ), local self-government units, Regional Agency DUNEA, Croatian Chamber of Commerce (HGK), Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts (HOK), and other business associations.

The Croatian Ministry of Tourism and Sport has played an important role in promoting digital nomadism in Croatia. Recognizing the potential of digital nomads to contribute to year-round tourism, the Ministry has launched various initiatives and collaborations to attract remote workers. In collaboration with the Croatian National Tourist Board, a campaign titled "Croatia, your new office!" was initiated. This campaign aims to position Croatia as an attractive destination for digital nomads by highlighting its advantages such as good internet connectivity, a high standard of English proficiency among locals, a favorable climate, and a high quality of life. The campaign specifically targets markets in the USA, Canada, and the UK, using social media and other promotional activities to reach potential digital nomads.[12]

1.4. Problem identification by local stakeholders

The ULG composition is diverse and balanced. Many of the ULG members have also been members of previous ULGs for the URBACT projects already implemented in URBACT III. There are several ULG members that operate at regional and national levels, as the topic of remote work is highly independent from the administrative boundaries.

Standard methodological procedures of secondary and primary research were used in the development of the IAP. Data from existing documentation and public information sources were collected and analyzed, and 10 ULG workshops were held, as well as meetings with relevant stakeholders were held. The creation of the IAP followed these basic stages:

1. Analysis of the current situation and potential opportunities

- **Problem Tree**
- **Solution Tree**

2. Stakeholder Analysis
- **Mapping and analysis of stakeholders**
- **Influence – Interest Matrix**

3. Persona workshop
- **Three persona profiles identified**

4. Specific objective table
5. Action table
6. 12 Aspects of an Integrated Approach
7. Self-Assessment for Integrated Approach
8. Testing Action Ideation template
**9. Impact-Effort Matrix**
10. Testing Action Can
11. IAP Canvas

1.4.1. Local Strengths/Opportunities

Dubrovnik's appeal as a destination for digital nomads lies in its unique historical charm, stunning coastal scenery, and rich cultural heritage. These attributes can significantly enhance the living experience for digital nomads seeking both productivity and leisure. The city's well-preserved medieval architecture and vibrant cultural scene offer a distinctive backdrop that can attract a diverse and creative digital nomad community. Moreover, Dubrovnik's entry into the Schengen area simplifies travel logistics, making it easier for digital nomads to reside and work there without the complications of visas and border controls.

There are numerous opportunities to transform Dubrovnik into a premier digital nomad hub. One key opportunity is the development of year-round infrastructure and services to cater to digital nomads, such as improved transport connectivity, well-equipped co-working spaces, and affordable long-term accommodation options. By addressing the high cost of living and seasonal marketing strategies, Dubrovnik can position itself as an attractive, competitive destination.

[12] https://www.dunea.hr/images/dokumenti/Plan_razvoja_DNZ_do_2027._FINAL.pdf
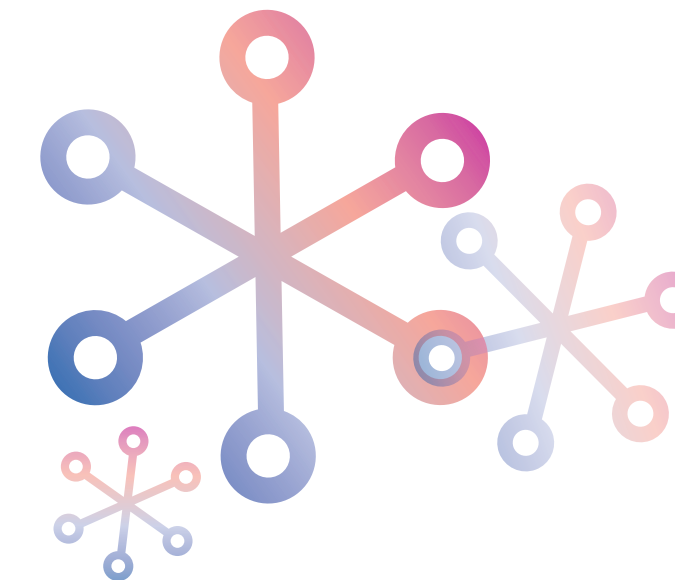
Additionally, fostering a sense of community through regular meet-ups, networking events, and the establishment of digital nomad coordinators can enhance the social and professional experience for digital nomads, encouraging longer stays and positive word-of-mouth promotion.

Furthermore, engaging local stakeholders and raising awareness about the benefits digital nomads bring to the local economy can stimulate support for necessary investments and initiatives. By leveraging its existing strengths and addressing the current gaps, Dubrovnik can unlock its untapped potential and become a vibrant, year-round destination for digital nomads. Emphasizing family-friendly amenities can also attract digital nomads with children, broadening the demographic appeal of the city.

1.4.2. Local Challenges/Weaknesses

Local challenges and weaknesses, as identified by the ULG through the Problem Tree analysis, are predominantly focused on the underutilization of Dubrovnik's potential as a destination for digital nomads.

Connectivity and Accessibility

One of the primary challenges is the insufficient connectivity and accessibility to the destination. Limited flight arrivals and inadequate year-round transport connectivity make it difficult for digital nomads to travel to and from the destination conveniently. These transportation challenges, compounded by the region's entry into the Schengen area, may also affect the movement of nomads and their ability to access the area easily.

Accommodation and Living Conditions

Accommodation poses a significant barrier, both in terms of quality and availability. There is a lack of sufficient, well-equipped accommodations tailored to the needs of digital nomads. Additionally, private renters are less inclined to lease their properties to digital nomads because they earn higher incomes from seasonal renting. Many private renters also prefer taking a break after the peak tourist season, which further reduces the options available to nomads.

Living costs are another deterrent. The destination is perceived as expensive, with high prices for food, drinks, and services, making it less appealing to nomads looking for affordability. For digital nomads with families, the lack of international schools and the inability for their children to enroll in local schools further diminishes the destination's attractiveness.

Community and Social Networking

A recurring theme is the lack of a strong digital nomad community and opportunities for social networking. The destination suffers from a lack of community connection, meet-ups, and coordinators dedicated to addressing digital nomad issues. The small existing community, coupled with insufficient social networking opportunities, hampers the ability to build a sense of belonging and collaboration among nomads.

Workspace Infrastructure

The lack of adequate co-working spaces is a significant drawback. Existing spaces often lack the necessary infrastructure, such as extended working hours, comfortable environments, and additional services. Moreover, there are concerns about the economic viability of maintaining co-working spaces, given the relatively small number of digital nomads currently utilizing them.

Marketing and Promotion

Insufficient and inconsistent marketing efforts exacerbate the problem. Marketing strategies remain overly focused on the seasonal tourist market, failing to target digital nomads effectively. Furthermore, there is a lack of proper identification and engagement of potential digital nomads. This disconnect is reflected in issues like the poor promotion and sales of the Digital Nomad Dubrovnik Pass and limited contact with digital nomads at the destination.

The destination also struggles to mobilize digital nomads themselves as promoters. Insufficient word-of-mouth promotion from current nomads reflects poorly on the destination's ability to leave a positive impression. Obstacles for the private sector to communicate effectively on digital nomad forums further hinder promotional efforts.

Resource and Stakeholder Challenges

The destination faces systemic challenges with resources and stakeholder engagement. Resources are overburdened, and there's a clear discrepancy between the destination's capacity and the number of digital nomads it attracts. Local stakeholders often lack awareness of the digital nomad community's needs, which hampers efforts to align offerings with expectations.
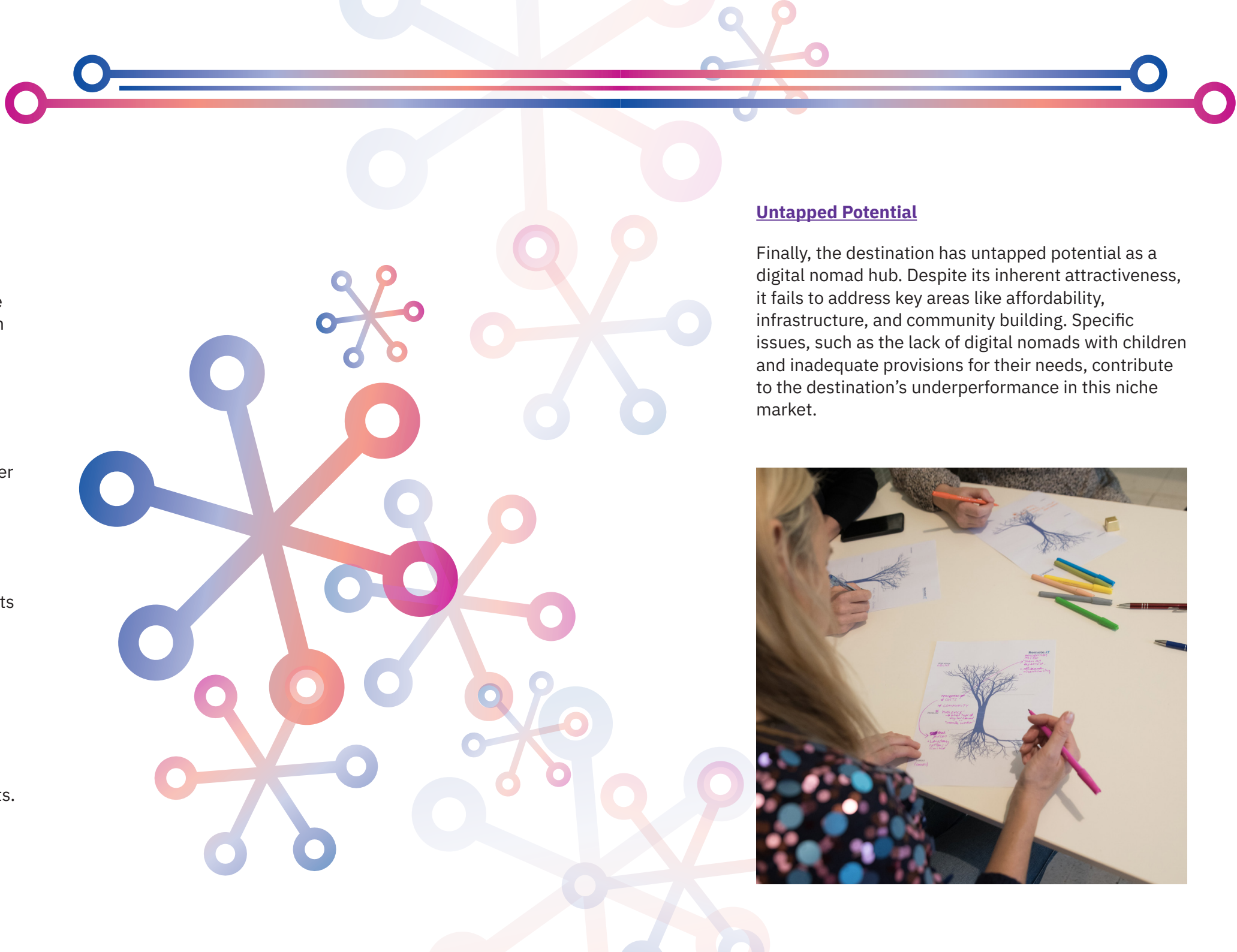
Untapped Potential

Finally, the destination has untapped potential as a digital nomad hub. Despite its inherent attractiveness, it fails to address key areas like affordability, infrastructure, and community building. Specific issues, such as the lack of digital nomads with children and inadequate provisions for their needs, contribute to the destination's underperformance in this niche market.
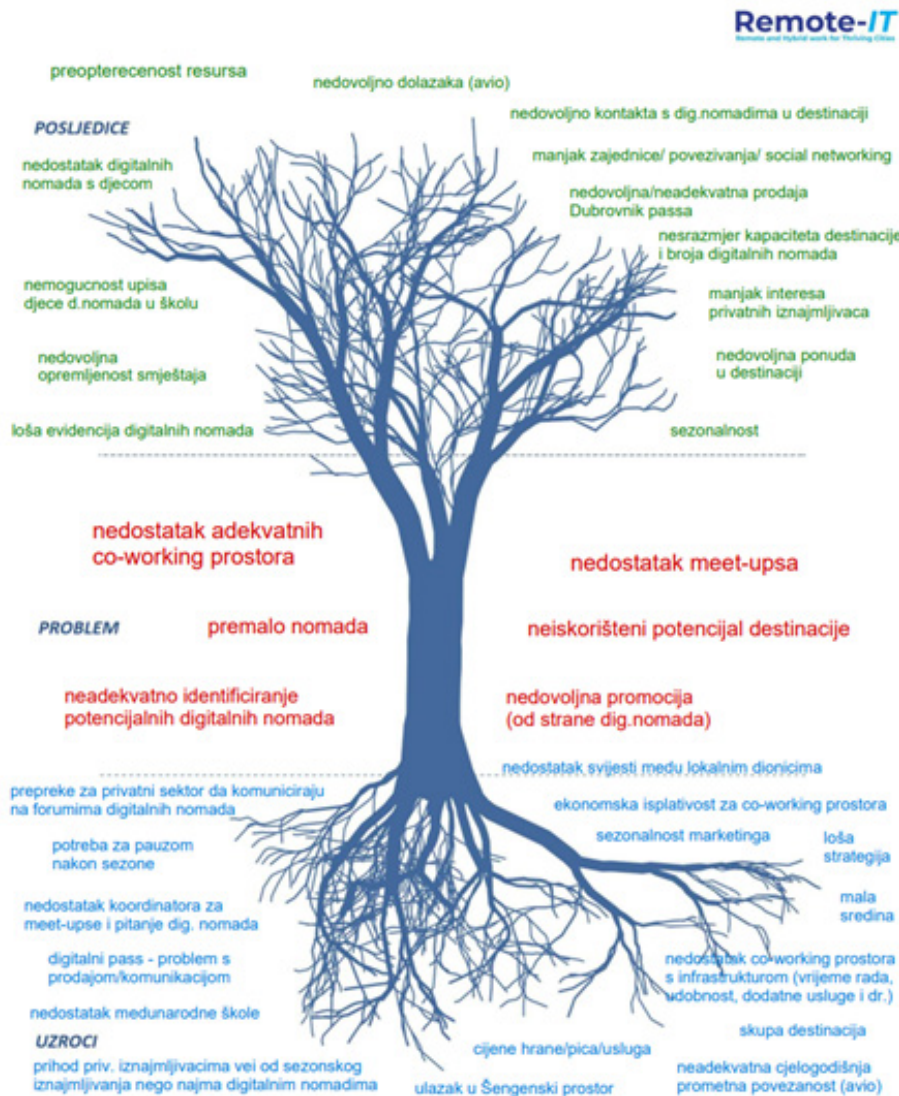
Local priorities

To position Dubrovnik as a top destination for digital nomads, several local priorities need to be addressed.

■ Firstly, enhancing year-round transport connectivity is crucial. This includes increasing the number of flights and improving transportation infrastructure to ensure easy access to the city throughout the year. By addressing the current inadequacies in transport, Dubrovnik can become more accessible and appealing to digital nomads who prioritize seamless travel options.

■ Secondly, improving the availability and quality of accommodation tailored to the needs of digital nomads should be a priority. Housing availability and affordability is one of the most significant challenges not only for attracting digital nomads but also for retaining the local workforce. While short-term measures could involve incentivizing private renters to offer long-term rentals at competitive rates and ensuring these are equipped with necessary amenities, the issue also requires structural, longer-term interventions. These could include reviewing and adapting local housing policies to balance short-term tourist rentals with long-term rental availability, exploring public-private partnerships to develop dedicated mid- to long-term rental housing, and making use of underutilized public or private buildings. Where relevant, these measures should align with and build upon existing municipal and national housing policies already in place.

■ Developing more co-working spaces with modern infrastructure, comfortable working conditions, and additional services is also essential. These spaces should be designed to include features such as extended working hours, ergonomic furniture, and reliable internet connectivity. To ensure their sustainability, public-private partnerships and financial incentives could be explored to address concerns about the economic viability of such spaces.

■ Another critical priority is fostering a vibrant digital nomad community through effective marketing and community-building initiatives. This includes organizing regular meet-ups, networking events, and having dedicated coordinators to address digital nomad issues. However, these activities should form part of a broader, more strategic approach to brand perception and brand management.

Despite various initiatives and achievements in prolonging the tourist season and moving towards attracting visitors 365 days a year, at present, Dubrovnik's international image is largely that of a seasonal tourist hotspot. While this reputation is valuable, it does not fully align with the city's aspirations to be seen as a year-round, work-friendly, and community-oriented destination. To address this,

the city could develop a coherent brand strategy that defines the core values and identity it wishes to project, backed by guidelines for communication, partnerships, and content creation. This brand framework should be established before major marketing campaigns are launched, ensuring that all promotional efforts reinforce the desired image.

Enhancing the promotion of Dubrovnik's unique attractions, leveraging positive testimonials from current digital nomads, and raising awareness among local stakeholders about the economic and cultural benefits of hosting digital nomads will further strengthen this positioning.

By focusing on these priorities — while taking concrete steps to address housing constraints and proactively shaping the city's brand identity — Dubrovnik can harness its strengths and overcome existing challenges to become a leading destination for digital nomads.

1.5. Local Stakeholders - ULG members:

City of Dubrovnik: Administrative Department for Mayor's Affairs, Administrative Department for Culture, Heritage, and Tourism

NGOs: Digital Nomad Association (DNA) Croatia

Public Cultural institutions: Dubrovnik Heritage

Higher education and research institutions: RIT Croatia

Tourism related stakeholders: Dubrovnik Tourist Board, Chamber of Crafts, County Chamber of Economy, Dubrovnik Long Stay (web page), Saltwater Nomads, Sun Gardens Residences

CCI stakeholders: TUP Factory

1.6. Vision/overarching objective

Vision:

Dubrovnik is a TOP destination for digital nomads in Southern Europe.

Overarching Objective:

Dubrovnik strives to redefine itself as a premier destination for digital nomads in Southern Europe by offering a seamless blend of accessibility, modern infrastructure, and a vibrant, supportive community. This vision is rooted in creating an environment where remote workers can thrive professionally and personally, fostering authentic and long-term connections to the city, while enhancing the city's global reputation as a hub for innovation, collaboration, and cultural richness.

1.7. Main integration challenges

o First analysis of current levels of integration

The ULG tackled the issue of different levels of integration through a dedicated workshop. Some of the results are found below.

o Current approach to key URBACT cross-cutting themes (gender, digital, green…)

Aspect	Is it Relevant? Why?	Current Situation	What Can Be Done to Improve This?
1. Stakeholder Involvement in Planning	Collaboration ensures solutions are aligned with stakeholder needs and challenges.	Limited engagement of landlords, co-working developers, and digital nomads in planning processes.	- Organize regular workshops for stakeholders. - Establish a "Digital Nomad Council." - Use surveys and focus groups to gather digital nomad feedback.
2. Coherence with Existing Strategies	Aligning digital nomad strategies with broader city goals avoids overlap and ensures long-term impact.	Isolated initiatives with minimal integration into urban planning, tourism, and economic frameworks.	- Review and align with Dubrovnik's urban/tourism plans. - Develop a unified strategy showing digital nomads' contributions. - Appoint liaison teams for cross-department coordination.
3. Sustainable Urban Development	Economic, social, and environmental sustainability ensures balanced growth and long-term viability.	Focus on seasonal tourism leads to resource overburden during peaks and inefficiency during off-seasons. Environmental concerns remain under addressed.	- Cap seasonal tourism numbers; redirect resources to year-round initiatives. - Incentivize eco-friendly infrastructure. - Foster community programs like language exchanges or cultural workshops to integrate digital nomads into local life.
4. Sectoral Integration	Cross-sector collaboration creates a comprehensive ecosystem for digital nomads.	Efforts remain siloed within specific sectors like tourism or real estate.	- Host cross-sector forums for collaboration. - Develop bundled offerings combining housing, workspaces, and leisure. - Engage tech companies to build apps for connecting nomads with services.
5. Integration of Cross-Cutting Themes	Focus on inclusivity, digital innovation, and sustainability makes Dubrovnik competitive and future-focused.	Limited emphasis on gender inclusivity, green policies, and technological solutions.	- Launch women-friendly programs (e.g., co-working spaces with childcare). - Promote green-certified accommodations/workspaces. - Use smart city technologies to improve connectivity and manage resources more effectively.
6. Integration Over Time	Ensures that initiatives remain relevant and adaptive to changing trends and technologies.	Reliance on short-term campaigns with no clear timeline for infrastructure upgrades, marketing, or evaluation.	- Create a phased, multi-year development plan with milestones. - Establish monitoring frameworks to track progress. - Partner with nomad organizations for long-term continuity.
7. Stakeholder Involvement in Implementation	Collaborative implementation improves accountability and problem-solving.	Limited involvement of private stakeholders such as landlords and local organizations.	- Create joint task forces for implementation. - Assign clear responsibilities to stakeholder groups. - Conduct regular review meetings for progress tracking.

1.8. Testing actions at local level

As part of the URBACT Remote-IT network, the City of Dubrovnik piloted two key testing actions in 2025 to better understand and address the needs of digital nomads:

1. **Marketing campaign aimed at digital nomads**
2. **Opening the "Offline Space" near the new coworking space in the TUP Factory**

1. Marketing Campaign Aimed at Digital Nomads (City of Dubrovnik Funds)

Local Experience:

This pilot marketing campaign positioned Dubrovnik as a digital nomad-friendly city by promoting its unique lifestyle offer during the off-season. The campaign leveraged digital channels, influencers, and targeted content, highlighting features like the new free coworking space.

Campaign Results:

- Total Reach: 237,656 unique users
- Impressions: Over 1.5 million
- Clicks to Website/Survey: 1,993
- Engagements: 3 comments, 266 reactions, 12 saves, 1 share

A traffic-focused ad also successfully directed targeted users to a digital nomad needs survey. The campaign effectively raised awareness and built visibility for both the co-working infrastructure and the broader concept of Dubrovnik as a nomad base.

Effectiveness Evaluation:

- Proof of Concept: The high reach validated targeted promotion as a viable tool for attracting remote workers.
- Activating the ULG: ULG members co-created content and messaging, contributing to more grounded and locally relevant communication.
- Building Political and Public Buy-in: Visibility generated through the campaign helped build momentum and legitimacy among both public stakeholders and residents.
- Quick Wins: Immediate visibility translated into real-world inquiries and boosted the perceived credibility of local efforts.

Lessons Learned:

- A reach-first strategy is effective, but future campaigns should aim for deeper engagement through community storytelling, user-generated content, and dynamic events.
- Human-focused visuals were in high demand; future content should center on people and shared experiences.
- Real-time campaign updates (e.g., "5 at 5" meetups) proved valuable in maintaining momentum and relevance.
- Survey campaign results indicated strong initial interest but showed that sustained outreach is needed to gather deeper insights.

2. Opening the "Offline Space" (URBACT Funds)

Local Experience:

Located in Room 123 of the historic TUP Factory, the Offline Space was designed as a welcoming, no-cost, informal coworking zone for digital nomads and locals alike. With natural light, Adriatic views, fast Wi-Fi, and refreshments—all free of charge—it aimed to complement the adjacent formal coworking space with a more relaxed and accessible setting.

Effectiveness Evaluation:

- Proof of Concept: Strong digital engagement and survey responses validated the space's appeal and ease of access.

- Building Political and Public Buy-in: Positive experiences shared by users built broader support for investing in such spaces.

- Activating the ULG: Stakeholders helped organize pilot events and workshops in the space, gaining direct insights into community-building dynamics.

- Innovation: A user-centered design process, including real-time feedback, led to adaptive improvements in layout and use.

- Quick Wins: Immediate uptake and positive reception reinforced the feasibility of replicating and scaling this model across other city venues.

Digital Nomad Feedback from Survey

A parallel survey of digital nomads in Dubrovnik revealed valuable insights:

- Respondents spanned diverse nationalities and were mostly aged 18–34. Most were self-employed or working remotely for foreign employers.

- Top reasons for choosing Dubrovnik were lifestyle, climate, and natural beauty.

- Pain points included expensive or unavailable long-term accommodation, unreliable internet, and lack of coworking infrastructure.

- Social integration received a mixed rating (average score 7/10), with nomads requesting more structured events and informal meetups.

- Coworking in cafés was seen as problematic due to tourist crowds, smoking, and limited laptop-friendliness.

- Events most in demand: cultural programs, language classes, and community-based activities—rather than nightlife.

- Despite challenges, most would recommend Dubrovnik to other nomads, especially for spring–autumn stays.

1.8.1. General IAP Alignment

The lessons from the testing phase directly informed strategic priorities in the IAP:

1. Informing Space & Infrastructure Development:

Feedback confirmed high demand for accessible, low-barrier spaces like Room 123. The IAP now includes measures to expand similar informal and formal coworking facilities with quality infrastructure and minimal entry requirements.

2. Strengthening Community & Social Integration:

Survey results underscored a strong desire for more social and cultural connection. The IAP includes structured engagement activities, regular local-nomad events, and integration programs such as language exchange and community meetups.

3. Enhancing Communication & Visibility:

While the marketing campaign reached a wide audience, modest interaction rates showed the need for more emotionally resonant content. The IAP prioritizes refreshed strategies featuring testimonials, local ambassadors, and user-driven content.

4. Addressing Seasonality & Affordability:

Recurring concerns about affordability and seasonal disconnect informed the IAP's housing component, which now calls for partnerships with landlords and platforms to provide long-term rentals and remote worker-friendly accommodation standards.

5. Sustaining Engagement & Feedback Loops:

To keep improving based on evolving needs, the IAP embeds continuous feedback mechanisms such as quarterly surveys, open community meetings, and online suggestion platforms.

By piloting these actions and listening directly to digital nomads, Dubrovnik has laid the groundwork for a data-driven, inclusive, and future-ready strategy—one that moves beyond promotion to deliver meaningful, lasting value for both remote workers and the local community.

1.9. Peer Learning: Insights from the URBACT Remote-IT Network

The Dubrovnik team engaged in a series of transnational meetings and site visits across partner cities. These exchanges provided valuable insights into diverse strategies for fostering remote work and attracting digital nomads. The lessons learned have significantly influenced the development of Dubrovnik's Integrated Action Plan.

Murcia, Spain (March 2024)

Murcia's approach focused on revitalizing urban spaces to support remote work. The city demonstrated how repurposing underutilized brownfield areas into vibrant co-working spaces for creative and cultural industries can foster community engagement and economic development. This strategy emphasized the importance of integrating remote work infrastructure into the urban fabric. In particular, the Dubrovnik team was impressed by the Murcia Spanish Audio-visual HUB which received financing through EU Next Generation Funds.

Tartu, Estonia (June 2024)

Tartu's emphasis on digital infrastructure and cybersecurity provided insights into creating a secure and efficient environment for remote workers. The city's advanced digital services and commitment to cybersecurity underscored the necessity of robust digital frameworks to support remote work initiatives. The site visit to the coworking space next to the local university was particularly useful because it gave insight into a practical model for managing a coworking space (hot desks, monthly plans).

Camara de Lobos, Portugal (September 2024)

Camara de Lobos highlighted the value of regional collaboration in attracting remote workers. By engaging local and regional stakeholders, the city developed cohesive strategies that leveraged shared resources and strengths, demonstrating the effectiveness of collaborative approaches in policy development. It was particularly interesting to not the dynamic between digital nomads, residents, and related housing issues. These lessons influenced the actions developed in this IAP.

Brindisi, Italy (January 2025)

Brindisi showcased the importance of stakeholder engagement in planning for remote work. Through extensive workshops and local involvement, the city developed a comprehensive understanding of the needs and opportunities associated with attracting digital nomads, emphasizing the role of community participation in policy formulation. In Brindisi the Dubrovnik team had another opportunity to visit a coworking space in a restored building and to have more insight into a commercially viable business model.

Tirana, Albania (March 2025)

Tirana's efforts centered on developing policies to attract remote workers. The city focused on creating legal frameworks and incentives to position itself as a competitive destination for digital nomads, illustrating the impact of supportive policies in fostering remote work environments. The site visit to the Tirana Pyramid complex provided inspiration how old spaces can be given new life and how investments can be drawn from a mix of public and private funding.

Heraklion, Greece (May 2025)

Heraklion integrated sustainable tourism with remote work initiatives. The city's focus on community integration, proximity tourism, and inclusive infrastructure highlighted the potential of combining tourism and remote work strategies to create balanced and sustainable urban ecosystems.

### Bucharest District 6, Romania (June 2025)

Bucharest District 6 emphasized enhancing the quality of life to attract and retain remote workers. Initiatives included improving public spaces, offering cultural activities, and ensuring access to essential services, showcasing the importance of livability in remote work planning. Insight into the Impact Hub gave valuable insight into a coworking model.

Applying Lessons Learned

Drawing inspiration from these partner cities, Dubrovnik has identified key areas for development:

- **Digital Infrastructure:** Investing in secure and reliable digital services to support remote work (Tartu).

- **Urban Revitalization:** Repurposing existing spaces to create coworking hubs and community centers (Murcia, Brindisi).

- **Policy Development:** Crafting policies that attract and retain digital nomads, including visa facilitation and incentives.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involving more local businesses and digital nomads in planning and implementation (Bucharest).

By integrating these insights, Dubrovnik aims to establish itself as a dynamic and welcoming destination for digital nomads and remote workers—enhancing both economic resilience and community well-being.
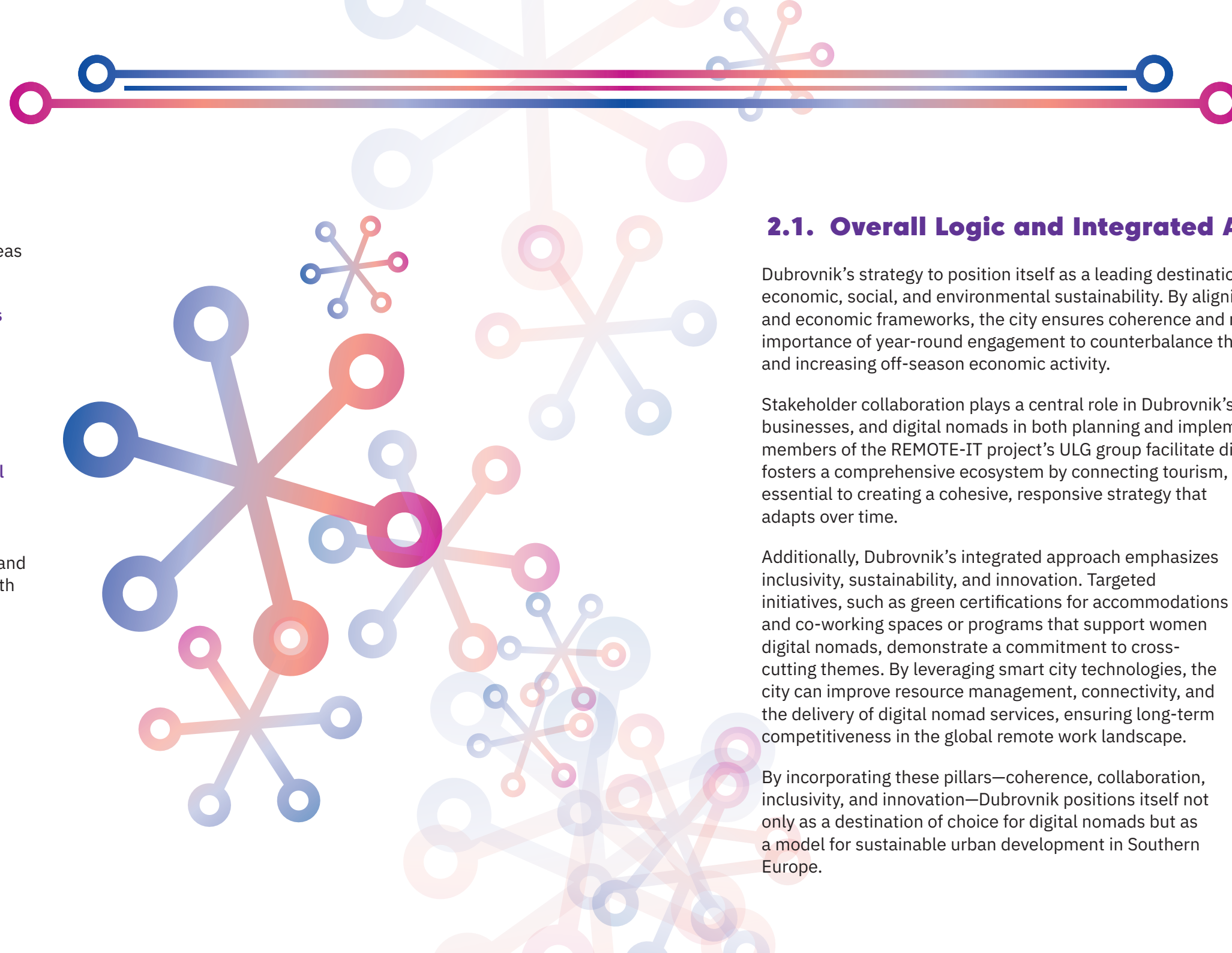
2.1. Overall Logic and Integrated Approach

Dubrovnik's strategy to position itself as a leading destination for digital nomads is rooted in an integrated approach that balances economic, social, and environmental sustainability. By aligning digital nomad initiatives with broader urban planning, tourism strategies, and economic frameworks, the city ensures coherence and maximizes the long-term impact of its efforts. This approach acknowledges the importance of year-round engagement to counterbalance the current seasonal tourism model, reducing resource strain during peak periods and increasing off-season economic activity.

Stakeholder collaboration plays a central role in Dubrovnik's logic. The inclusion of landlords, co-working space developers, local businesses, and digital nomads in both planning and implementation ensures that initiatives address real needs and challenges. The core members of the REMOTE-IT project's ULG group facilitate dialogue and encourage co-creation of solutions, while cross-sectoral integration fosters a comprehensive ecosystem by connecting tourism, housing, and technological innovation. This multi-level governance structure is essential to creating a cohesive, responsive strategy that adapts over time.

Additionally, Dubrovnik's integrated approach emphasizes inclusivity, sustainability, and innovation. Targeted initiatives, such as green certifications for accommodations and co-working spaces or programs that support women digital nomads, demonstrate a commitment to cross-cutting themes. By leveraging smart city technologies, the city can improve resource management, connectivity, and the delivery of digital nomad services, ensuring long-term competitiveness in the global remote work landscape.

By incorporating these pillars—coherence, collaboration, inclusivity, and innovation—Dubrovnik positions itself not only as a destination of choice for digital nomads but as a model for sustainable urban development in Southern Europe.

2.2. Strategic Objectives

I. Increase Support and Services for Digital Nomads

II. Improve Awareness About Dubrovnik in Digital Nomad Communities

III. Foster Local Engagement and Integration

2.3. Intervention Areas

I. Increase Support and Services for Digital Nomads

SO1: Develop a robust ecosystem of services, infrastructure, and community support tailored to the needs of digital nomads to enhance their professional and personal experiences in Dubrovnik.

II. Improve Awareness About Dubrovnik in Digital Nomad Communities

SO2: Strengthen Dubrovnik's visibility and reputation in global digital nomad communities through targeted marketing, partnerships, and ambassador programs.

III. Foster Local Engagement and Integration

SO3: Build strong partnerships with local stakeholders and create a supportive environment that integrates digital nomads into Dubrovnik's community while aligning with local needs.

2.4. Specific and operational objectives

I. Increase Support and Services for Digital Nomads (SO1)

1. Arranging TUP space
  • Expected Result: Improved conditions and content for digital nomads.

2. Establishing institutions, centers, and spaces operating 24/7/365
  • Expected Result: Job openings, socialization opportunities, revitalized city life.

3. Improving winter traffic/air connectivity
  • Expected Result: Easier year-round access.

4. Establishing a digital nomad hub and office
  • Expected Result: Employment generation and strategic coordination.

II. Improve Awareness About Dubrovnik in Digital Nomad Communities (SO2)

1. Organizing events for nomads
  • Expected Result: Promotion and synergy between locals and nomads.

2.Engaging local residents as project ambassadors
  • Expected Result: Enhanced project visibility and success.

3. Developing a Digital Nomad App
  • Expected Result: Centralized access to resources and services.

4. Launching a targeted marketing campaign
  • Expected Result: Digital nomads are better informed about Dubrovnik as a destination.

5. Cooperating with digital nomad associations
  • Expected Result: Improved services for digital nomads and digital nomads are better informed about Dubrovnik as a destination.
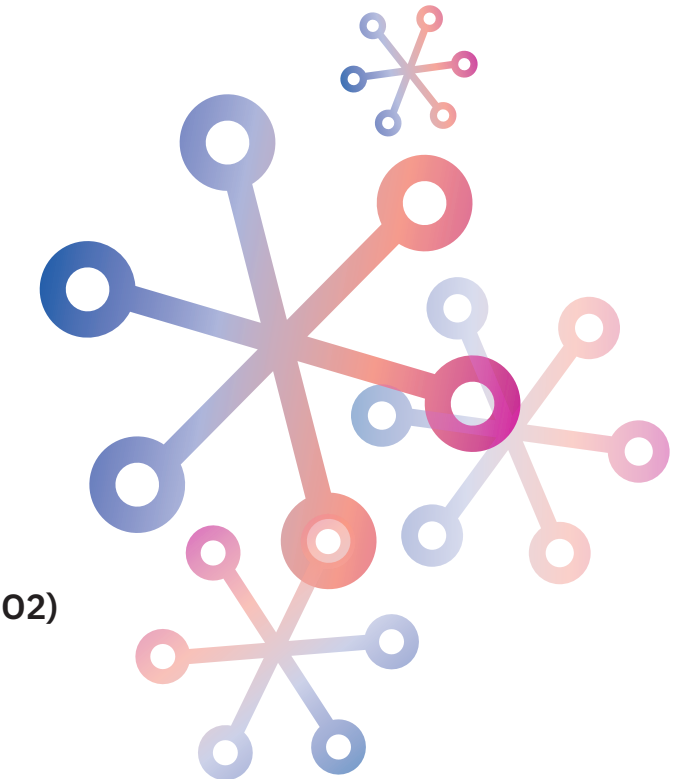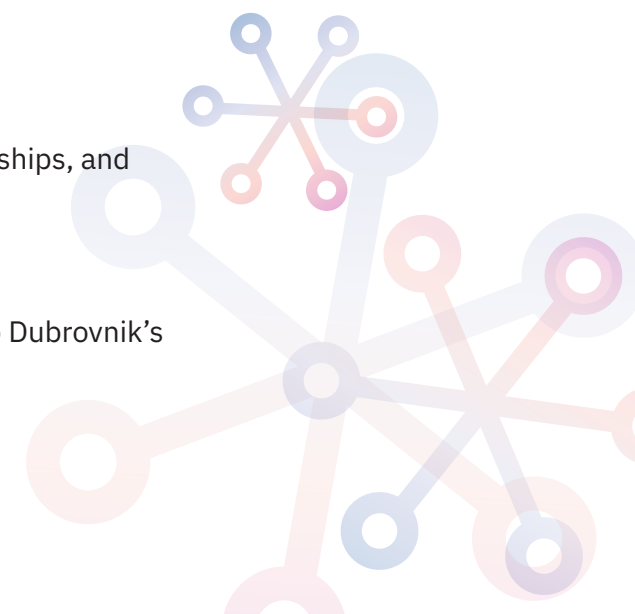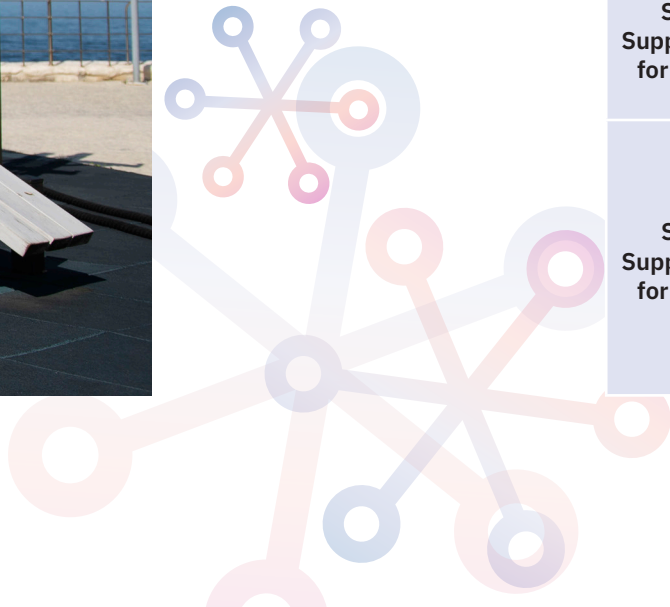
III. Foster Local Engagement and Integration (SO3)

1. **Creating an encouraging atmosphere for entrepreneurs in the nomadic sector**
   • Expected Result: Improved services for digital nomads and partnerships with local businesses.

2. **Educating local service providers and population**
   • Expected Result: Better integration and engagement.

3. **Establishing contacts through chambers to expand service offerings**
   • Expected Result: Increased utilization of local services.

4. **Developing child-friendly content like park mapping and playrooms**
   • Expected Result: Improved family-oriented facilities.

5. **Mapping outdoor exercise areas and fitness facilities**
   • Expected Result: Published maps for easy accessibility.

6. **Engaging students through university partnerships and activities**
   • Expected Result: New learning opportunities and job creation.

2.5. Actions

Strategic Objective	Activity	Expected result	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
SO1: Increase Support and Services for Digital Nomads	1.1 TUP space management	- Better content and conditions for digital nomads	- Donors - TUP - City of Dubrovnik - Dubrovnik Tourist Board Sponsors	- TUP - TUP Coworking space manager	- Dubrovnik Tourist Board - City of Dubrovnik - DURA - Private sector	Continuous
SO1: Increase Support and Services for Digital Nomads	1.2 Institutions, centers, private spaces that work 24 hours, 365 days	- Job openings - More socializing - Revitalizing life for the city's population	- Private companies	- Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts	- Owners of premises (perhaps neglected premises)	10 years
SO1: Increase Support and Services for Digital Nomads	1.3 Greater traffic/air connectivity in winter	- Easier arrival all year round	- Dubrovnik Airport - City of Dubrovnik - Dubrovnik Tourist Board	- Dubrovnik Airport	- Dubrovnik Tourist Board - City of Dubrovnik	Continuous
SO1: Increase Support and Services for Digital Nomads	1.4 Establish a HUB and a welcome center for digital nomads at the Tourist Information Center (TIC)	- Guidance on services and local amenities for digital nomads - Welcome kit	- City of Dubrovnik - Dubrovnik Tourist Board	- City of Dubrovnik	- City of Dubrovnik - Dubrovnik Tourist Board	Continuous

Strategic Objective	Activity	Expected result	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
SO2: Improve Awareness about Dubrovnik in Digital Nomad Communities	**2.1 Organization of events for nomads**	- Promotion - Synergy between local population and nomads - Digital Nomad Week - Empower nomads to organize events, workshops, mentorships	- Revelin (and other clubs) - Bistro 49 - Lazareti - Love bar - DBC	- Digital Nomad Consul - Dubrovnik Tourist Board	- Hospitality industry	Continuous
SO2: Improve Awareness about Dubrovnik in Digital Nomad Communities	**2.2 Local residents as ambassadors of the digital nomad project**	- Better visibility and project success	- Local population	- DURA through the project - ULG Group members	- DURA - Dubrovnik Tourist Board - Associations - City of Dubrovnik	Continuous
SO2: Improve Awareness about Dubrovnik in Digital Nomad Communities	**2.3 Digital Nomad App**	- Everything in one place - Digital and accessible (DUPass), digital purchase) co-working space	- Dubrovnik Tourist Board - TUP - DU Pass	- Dubrovnik Tourist Board	- City of Dubrovnik	2028
SO2: Improve Awareness about Dubrovnik in Digital Nomad Communities	**2.4 Targeted marketing campaign**	- Digital nomads are better informed about Dubrovnik as a destination - Online community of followers	- Dubrovnik Tourist Board - Target digital nomad events (DN days at different destinations)	- Dubrovnik Tourist Board	- City of Dubrovnik	Continuous
SO2: Improve Awareness about Dubrovnik in Digital Nomad Communities	**2.5 Cooperation with digital nomad associations**	- Digital nomads are better informed about Dubrovnik as a destination - Improved services for digital nomads	- Dubr. Tourist Board - Target digital nomad events (DN days at different destinations)	- Dubrovnik Tourist Board	- City of Dubrovnik - TUP	Continuous

Strategic Objective	Activity	Expected result	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
SO3: Foster Local Engagement and Integration	**3.1 Creating an encouraging atmosphere for entrepreneurs in the nomadic sector through education and information**	- Workshops and trainings for local businesses, property owners, and service providers about needs of digital nomads - Encourage partnerships between local businesses and DNs (products and services) - Adapting services to nomads	- City of Dubrovnik - Dubrovnik Tourist Board - Association of Hospitality and Tourism Workers of the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts - Other professional associations - Clusters	- Association of Hospitality and Tourism Workers of the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts	- City of Dubrovnik Tourist Board - Chamber of Commerce - Associations - Clusters - Digital Nomad Consul - Caterers - Landlords - Healthcare providers, beauty services, etc. - Akademis "Academia"	Until spring 2026
SO3: Foster Local Engagement and Integration	**3.2 Workshops for local population**	- Greater engagement of local residents - Cultural exchange programs - Language workshops	- Educators - Workshop cycles	- Dubrovnik Tourist Board	- City of Dubrovnik - TUP - DURA	Continuous
SO3: Foster Local Engagement and Integration	**3.3 Contact through chambers expands the activities that provide their services**	- 30 consumed services (hairdressers, beauticians, dentists, hikers...)	- Engagement of local office of Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts	- Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts	Business community	From now on

Strategic Objective	Activity	Expected result	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
SO3: Foster Local Engagement and Integration	3.4 Content for children: map/mapping (TZ) of parks for children, playgrounds, playrooms, meetups for children	- Content availability - Maps published on the website - Walking routes	- Engagement of public bodies (city administrative departments and city companies)	- Admin. Dept. for Education, Sports, Social Welfare and Civil Society	- City of Dubrovnik - Admin. Dept. for Municipal Services manages the playgrounds.	3 months
SO3: Foster Local Engagement and Integration	3.5 Mapping outdoor exercise areas and fitness facilities, swimming pools	- Map published on the website	- Engagement of public bodies (city administrative departments and city companies)	- Dubrovnik Sports Federation	- Local organizations - Business community	3 months
SO3: Foster Local Engagement and Integration	3.6 Cooperation with the university and use of their facilities	- Student engagement - Cooperation with foreign persons and institutions - Job openings for domestic students - The university can earn from rent	- University with subsidies - Seminar papers and similar - Promotion - Meetups	- Universities	- Universities - Dubrovnik Tourist Board - TUP	5 years

3. ACTION PLANNING DETAILS

This section outlines the implementation framework for a series of targeted actions aimed at enhancing Dubrovnik's appeal as a destination for digital nomads and fostering stronger integration with the local community. By applying the URBACT planning methodology, each action has been carefully structured to ensure feasibility—from promoting Dubrovnik through events and digital tools to fostering local engagement through education and inclusive public space mapping. Responsibilities are clearly assigned across city departments, public institutions, and community stakeholders, with defined timelines, estimated budgets, and diverse funding sources. Monitoring indicators and risk mitigation strategies further ensure that these initiatives are not only realistic but also adaptable, providing a solid foundation for future urban innovation in Dubrovnik.

3.1. Strategic and Overarching Objective Indicators

Overarching Objective:

Dubrovnik strives to redefine itself as a premier destination for digital nomads in Southern Europe by offering a seamless blend of accessibility, modern infrastructure, and a vibrant, supportive community. This vision is rooted in creating an environment where remote workers can thrive professionally and personally, fostering authentic and long-term connections to the city, while enhancing the city's global reputation as a hub for innovation, collaboration, and cultural richness.

Strategic Objectives:

I. Increase Support and Services for Digital Nomads

II. Improve Awareness About Dubrovnik in Digital Nomad Communities

III. Foster Local Engagement and Integration

Level	Indicator	Definition	Baseline (2025)	Target & Source
Overarching Objective	Share of long-stay visitors identifying as digital nomads	% of all international visitors who stay ≥28 days and self-identify as digital nomads	<1%	Target: ≥5% (by 2030) Source: Dubrovnik Tourist Board visitor survey; accommodation provider data
SO1: Develop a robust ecosystem of services, infrastructure, and community support tailored to the needs of digital nomads to enhance their professional and personal experiences in Dubrovnik.	Availability of dedicated DN facilities and services	Number of functioning co-working spaces, community hubs, and DN-targeted municipal services	3	Target: ≥8 (by 2028) Source: City registry; DN App listings
SO2: Strengthen Dubrovnik's visibility and reputation in global digital nomad communities through targeted marketing, partnerships, and ambassador programs.	Positive brand mentions in top DN platforms	Number of positive posts/articles/reviews on top 10 DN forums, blogs, and social groups per year	~20	Target: ≥100 (by 2028) Source: Manual/AI-assisted media monitoring
SO3: Build strong partnerships with local stakeholders and create a supportive environment that integrates digital nomads into Dubrovnik's community while aligning with local needs.	% of DN events/workshops involving both locals and nomads	Share of events where ≥30% of participants are from both groups	10%	Target: ≥50% (by 2028) Source: Event registration data; post-event surveys

Action 2.1 – Organization of Events for Nomads

Aspect	Details	
1. Implementation Steps	1.1 Conduct needs assessment via surveys and consultations with nomads and local stakeholders (Jan–Feb 2026) 1.2 Design an annual calendar of events (March 2026) 1.3 Secure venues (Revelin, Lazareti, Love Bar, Bistro 49, etc.) and logistics partners (March–April 2026) 1.4 Launch call for nomad-led workshops/mentorships (April–May 2026)	1.5 Develop branding and promotional material for "Digital Nomad Week" and other events (May–June 2026) 1.6 Run pilot events and Digital Nomad Week (June–September 2026) 1.7 Gather feedback and adjust format for continuous rollout (October–December 2026) 1.8 Continue quarterly events and networking meetups from 2027 onwards
2. Timings	Initial Phase: January–December 2026 Ongoing: Quarterly from 2027 onward	Key milestones: - Needs assessment: Jan–Feb 2026 - Event calendar + partner agreements: March–April 2026 - Digital Nomad Week: August 2026 - Evaluation & planning for Year 2: November 2026
3. Responsibilities	Lead: Digital Nomad Consul Key Partners: Dubrovnik Tourist Board, local coworking spaces, local hospitality venues (Revelin, Lazareti, Love Bar, Bistro 49, Dubrovnik Beer Factory)	Supporting Stakeholders: City of Dubrovnik (logistics, permits), local businesses, expat and nomad communities (event co-hosting)
4. Costs	Total First-Year Estimate: €52,000 - Needs Assessment & Research: €3,000 - Venue rental & logistics: €20,000	- Promotion & Branding: €7,000 - Honoraria for speakers/workshops: €10,000 - Staffing & coordination: €12,000
5. Funding	- Dubrovnik City Budget (Department for Culture & Tourism) - Dubrovnik Tourist Board (event support fund) - EU funding (Creative Europe, ERDF – Urban Innovative Actions)	- Private Sponsorships (local businesses, coworking spaces, tech companies) - In-kind contributions (venues offering space at discounted rates)
6. Monitoring Indicators	KPI: Annual DN event participation Definition: Number of unique digital nomads attending at least one organized event per year	Baseline: 0 (2025) Target: ≥300 (by 2027) Source: Event sign-in records
7. Risk Mitigation	- Low participation or visibility - Budget shortfalls - Logistical/venue availability issues - Limited engagement from locals	Mitigation Measures: - Start with smaller pilot events to refine approach - Secure venue partnerships early in planning - Cross-promotion with nomad platforms & influencers - Encourage co-creation with local NGOs and cultural institutions - Set aside contingency budget (~10%)

Action 2.3 – Digital Nomad App

Aspect	Details	
1. Implementation Steps	1.1 Form steering group with city, DU Pass, and IT specialists (Jan 2026) 1.2 Define MVP feature list: events calendar, coworking map, DU Pass integration (Feb 2026) 1.3 Hire app developer/agency (Mar 2026) 1.4 Develop and test beta version (Apr–Jul 2026) 1.5 Launch public version with promotional push (Sep 2026) 1.6 Plan for advanced features: booking, permits, community chat (from 2027)	
2. Timings	Initial phase: Jan–Sep 2026 Further development: Ongoing annually from 2027	
3. Responsibilities	Lead: Dubrovnik Tourist Board Partners: TUP, DU Pass team, City of Dubrovnik, technical and promotional support	
4. Costs	Initial development: €45,000 - Technical scoping & consulting: €5,000 - Design and development: €30,000	- Testing and user feedback: €5,000 - Launch & promotion: €5,000
5. Funding	- EU Digital Europe Programme - Interreg funds - City of Dubrovnik Smart City Fund - Potential co-financing from IT partners or sponsors	
6. Monitoring Indicators	KPI: Active DN App users Definition: Number of unique monthly active users of the DN App	Baseline: 0 (2025) Target: ≥1,000 (by 2027) Source: App analytics dashboard
7. Risk Mitigation	- Delays in development - Low adoption - Tech issues	Mitigation Measures: - Clear milestones & supervision - Engage DN community early in design - Long-term maintenance contract

Action 2.4 – Targeted Marketing Campaign

| Aspect	Details	
1. Implementation Steps	1.1 Identify key channels and target markets (Jan 2026) 1.2 Develop content (videos, blog posts, influencer collaborations) (Feb–Apr 2026) 1.3 Launch digital and physical campaign (May 2026) 1.4 Attend nomad-focused international events (ongoing) 1.5 Regular performance evaluation and retargeting	
2. Timings	Start: Jan 2026 Ongoing: Campaign runs continuously with biannual refresh	
3. Responsibilities	Lead: Dubrovnik Tourist Board Partners: City of Dubrovnik, influencers, marketing agencies	
4. Costs	Annual budget: €35,000 - Content creation: €10,000 - Ads and promotion: €15,000	- Event presence: €5,000 - Monitoring & analytics: €5,000
5. Funding	- Dubrovnik Tourist Board budget - EU Regional Promotion Grants - Local business sponsorship (co-branding opportunities)	
6. Monitoring Indicators	KPI: Conversions from DN campaign Definition: Number of inquiries/bookings traceable to DN marketing campaign Baseline: 0 (2025) Target: ≥200/year (by 2027) Source: Campaign tracking codes; partner reports	
7. Risk Mitigation	- Low engagement - Budget constraints - Content fatigue	Mitigation Measures: - Adapt channels, test messaging - Phased rollout - Diverse formats and voices

Action 3.2 – Workshops for Local Population

Aspect	Details	
1. Implementation Steps	1.1 Identify low-season months and venue partners (Sep 2025) 1.2 Develop curriculum: language exchange, cultural awareness (Oct 2025) 1.3 Hire or assign educators (Nov 2025) 1.4 Launch seasonal workshops (Jan–Feb annually) 1.5 Collect feedback and adapt program	
2. Timings	Seasonal, annually from January 2026	
3. Responsibilities	Lead: Dubrovnik Tourist Board Partners: City of Dubrovnik, DURA, TUP	
4. Costs	Annual budget: €18,000 - Educators and materials: €12,000 - Promotion: €3,000 - Coordination: €3,000	
5. Funding	- City Education & Integration Funds - Erasmus+ (adult education strand) - Local and EU cultural grants	
6. Monitoring Indicators	KPI: Workshop attendance Definition: Total number of local residents attending DN integration workshops annually Baseline: 0 (2025) Target: ≥150/year (by 2027) Source: Workshop registration lists	
7. Risk Mitigation	- Low turnout - Short educator pool	Mitigation Measures: - Better timing, outreach via local schools/NGOs - Create early interest and training

Action 3.4 – Content for Children: Map of Play Spaces

Aspect	Details	
1. Implementation Steps	1.1 Inventory and geo-tag parks, playrooms, meetups (Jan–Feb 2026) 1.2 Create digital map layer for website (Mar 2026) 1.3 Produce eco-printed map versions (Apr 2026) 1.4 Launch awareness campaign via schools and tourist board	
2. Timings	Initial implementation: Jan–Apr 2026 Updates: Biannually	
3. Responsibilities	Lead: Admin Dept. for Education, Sports, Social Welfare and Civil Society Partners: City of Dubrovnik, Admin. Dept. for Municipal Services, Dubrovnik Tourist Board	
4. Costs	Initial phase: €9,000 - Mapping and data collection: €3,000 - Digital platform integration: €3,000 - Printing and eco-materials: €3,000	
5. Funding	- City budget (education and family inclusion line) - Child-focused EU or NGO grants	
6. Monitoring Indicators	KPI: Online map usage Definition: Number of unique visitors to the children's play space map per year Baseline: 0 (2025) Target: ≥2,000/year (by 2027) Source: Website analytics	
7. Risk Mitigation	- Inaccurate info - Low use	Mitigation Measures: - Cross-check with public departments - Boost via QR codes, integration in DU Pass

Action 3.5 – Mapping Outdoor Fitness Facilities

Aspect	Details
1. Implementation Steps	1.1 Survey all outdoor fitness and swimming sites (Jan–Feb 2026) 1.2 Document each with photos, accessibility, equipment details (Feb–Mar 2026) 1.3 Develop interactive online map with filters (Apr–May 2026) 1.4 Integrate with city/tourist board sites and DU Pass
2. Timings	Jan–May 2026, then updated annually
3. Responsibilities	Lead: Dubrovnik Sports Federation Partners: City of Dubrovnik, local organizations, and businesses
4. Costs	First year: €12,000 - Survey and content: €5,000 - Web integration: €4,000 - Promotion and updates: €3,000
5. Funding	- City health & sport budget - Public health or EU active living programs
6. Monitoring Indicators	KPI: Fitness map usage Definition: Number of unique visitors to the outdoor fitness map per year Baseline: 0 (2025) Target: ≥2,000/year (by 2027) Source: Website analytics
7. Risk Mitigation	- Poor data quality - Underuse Mitigation Measures: - Involve sports community - Integrate into DN App and guides
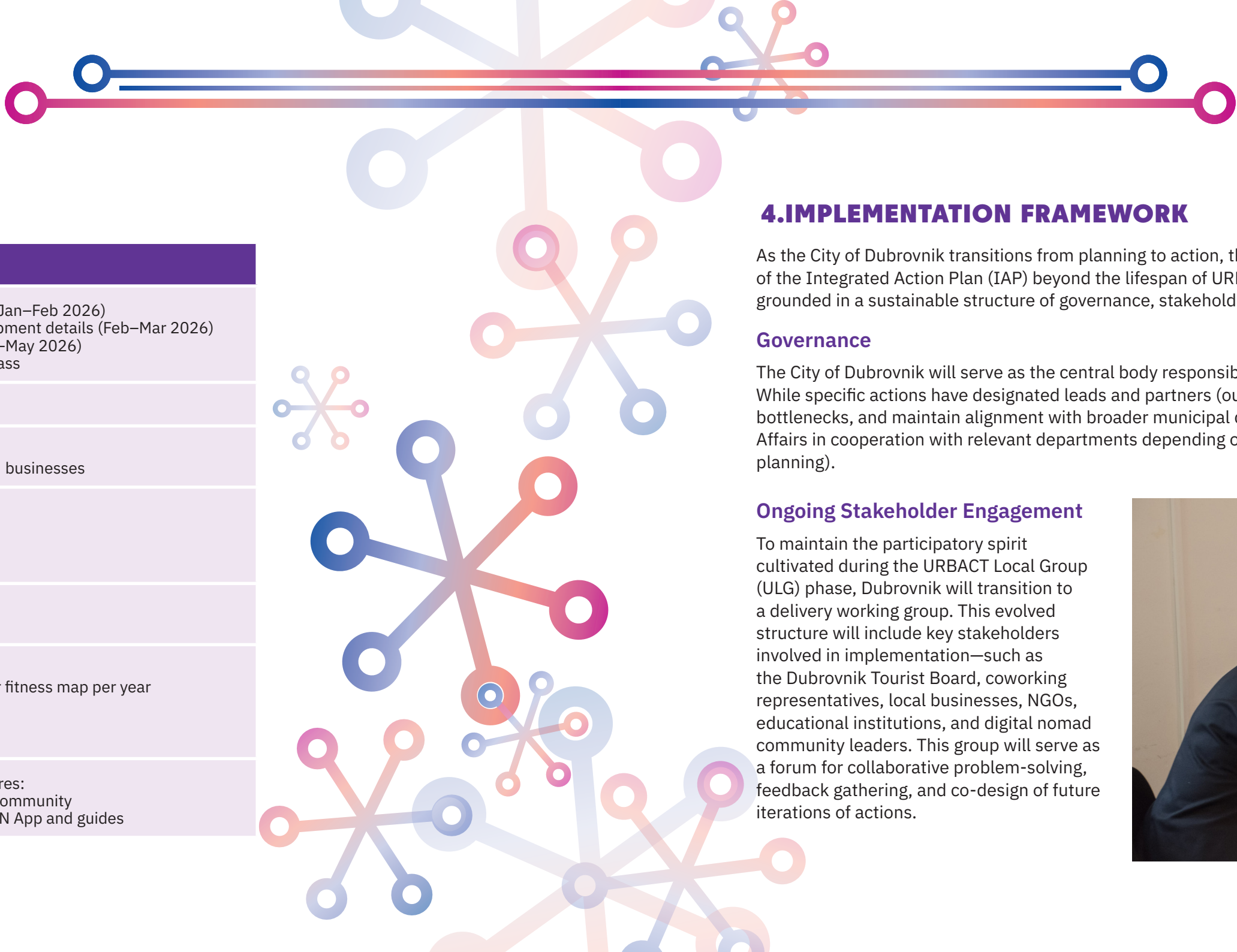
4.IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

As the City of Dubrovnik transitions from planning to action, this section provides a comprehensive framework to guide the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) beyond the lifespan of URBACT support. It ensures that the strategies outlined in Section 3 are grounded in a sustainable structure of governance, stakeholder collaboration, financing, and performance monitoring.

Governance

The City of Dubrovnik will serve as the central body responsible for the overall coordination, oversight, and strategic alignment of the IAP. While specific actions have designated leads and partners (outlined in Section 3), the City will monitor cross-cutting progress, resolve bottlenecks, and maintain alignment with broader municipal development goals. Oversight will be led by the Department of Mayor's Affairs in cooperation with relevant departments depending on the thematic area (e.g., education, sports, municipal services, IT, and urban planning).

Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

To maintain the participatory spirit cultivated during the URBACT Local Group (ULG) phase, Dubrovnik will transition to a delivery working group. This evolved structure will include key stakeholders involved in implementation—such as the Dubrovnik Tourist Board, coworking representatives, local businesses, NGOs, educational institutions, and digital nomad community leaders. This group will serve as a forum for collaborative problem-solving, feedback gathering, and co-design of future iterations of actions.

Overall Costings and Funding Strategy

A consolidated funding strategy has been developed, combining local, national, EU, and private sources. Key components include:

- **Municipal Budget Allocations** (especially under tourism, culture, education, and smart city lines)
- **Dubrovnik Tourist Board Support**
- **European Union Funds**, such as Interreg, ERDF (Urban Innovative Actions), ESF+
- **Private Sponsorships** from local companies, tech firms, and hospitality stakeholders
- **In-Kind Contributions**, including venue support and volunteer-led initiatives

The City of Dubrovnik will also continue to explore multi-annual EU funding calls to ensure continuity and scalability.

Overall Timeline

Implementation will begin in earnest in early 2026 following the finalization of planning. A high-level timeline includes:

2025: Completion of planning, budgeting, and stakeholder commitments

2026: Launch of initial actions (e.g., event programming, app development, mapping exercises)

2027 and beyond: Expansion and iteration of actions based on monitoring feedback

Risk Assessment

Key risks to successful implementation include:

- **Resource Shortfalls** (budgetary or human): Mitigated by early multi-source funding commitments and a lean implementation structure
- **Stakeholder Fatigue or Turnover:** Addressed by formalizing roles within the delivery working group and maintaining active communication
- **Low Engagement (from nomads or residents):** Offset by phased rollouts, pilot testing, and consistent community feedback mechanisms
- **Technological Delays (in app or digital tools):** Minimized through clear procurement processes and performance-based contracts

Each risk is accompanied by estimated likelihood and impact metrics, with mitigation plans developed and regularly reviewed.

Monitoring and Reporting

The City of Dubrovnik will establish a structured monitoring system to ensure that implementation remains on track, aligned with strategic objectives, and responsive to emerging needs.

Overall coordination will rest with the Department of Mayor's Affairs, working in close collaboration with the Dubrovnik Tourist Board. Each thematic lead (as identified in Section 3) will be responsible for collecting relevant data for their action area. A designated Monitoring Coordinator within the City administration will compile inputs, oversee quality assurance, and prepare consolidated reports.

Data will be gathered through a combination of:

- **Surveys, focus groups, and community consultations** (digital nomads and residents)
- **Digital analytics** from online platforms and tools
- **Participation and attendance records** for events and activities
- **Economic and tourism impact indicators**

Formal progress reports will be produced twice per year (mid-year and end-of-year). Reports will include:

- **Progress against planned actions and milestones**
- **Key performance indicators (output and impact)**
- **Comparative analysis with previous reporting periods**
- **Identified risks, issues, and mitigation actions**

Reports will be submitted to the Mayor and City Council, shared with the Delivery Working Group, and summarized for public communication to maintain transparency.

If significant deviations from the plan are identified—whether in timelines, resources, or performance indicators—the Delivery Working Group will convene to recommend corrective measures. These may include reallocating resources, adjusting timelines, piloting alternative approaches, or engaging additional partners. Urgent issues will be escalated directly to the Department of Mayor's Affairs for decision-making.

Under the ongoing goal of monitoring and adapting over time, Dubrovnik will focus on two key areas:

1. **Evaluating the success of existing initiatives – The city will regularly assess the performance of initiatives, making improvements based on feedback gathered through surveys, focus groups, digital engagement analytics, and economic impact studies. This process will be supported by performance and impact measurement tools, ensuring adjustments are evidence-based.**

2. **Tracking global trends and adapting policies accordingly – Dubrovnik will maintain awareness of international developments, particularly those affecting the expectations of digital nomads. By collaborating with experts and monitoring global trends, the city will be able to proactively adapt its policies and remain competitive as a destination.**

Activities under both focus areas will be implemented jointly by the Dubrovnik Tourist Board, the City of Dubrovnik, continuing through 2026, 2027, and 2028.

5.CONCLUSION

With this Integrated Action Plan, Dubrovnik sets a clear course toward becoming a more welcoming, connected, and sustainable city for digital nomads and its local community alike. The process has not only yielded a set of concrete, actionable initiatives but also strengthened local collaboration and strategic planning capacity.

Key lessons include the importance of early stakeholder involvement, piloting actions before full rollout, and integrating digital solutions to enhance engagement. These insights will inform future city initiatives well beyond the URBACT network's timeline.

Moving forward, the City of Dubrovnik will prioritize clear communication and visibility of the IAP, including regular public updates, community engagement events, and international dissemination through digital nomad platforms and municipal channels. The work done here has already begun to shape internal policies—particularly in tourism, innovation, and inclusion—which will continue evolving as the IAP is implemented and refined.

This plan is not the end, but a launchpad—positioning Dubrovnik as a forward-looking city ready to innovate, adapt, and lead by example.
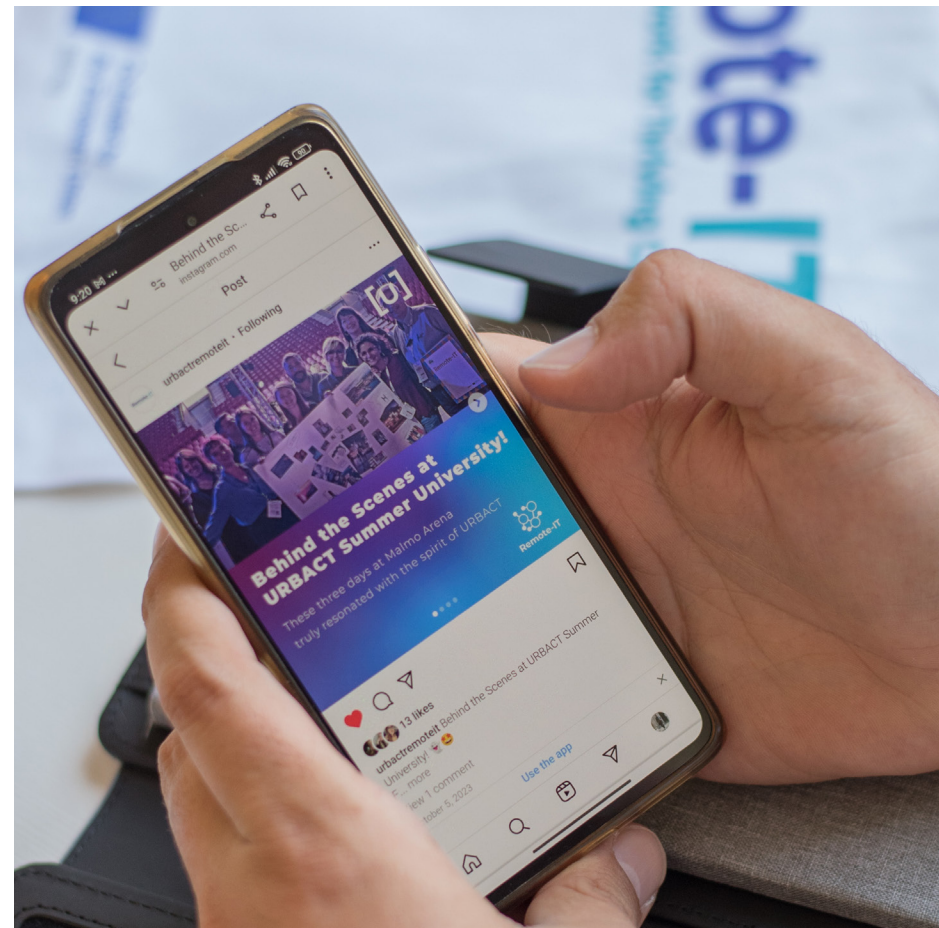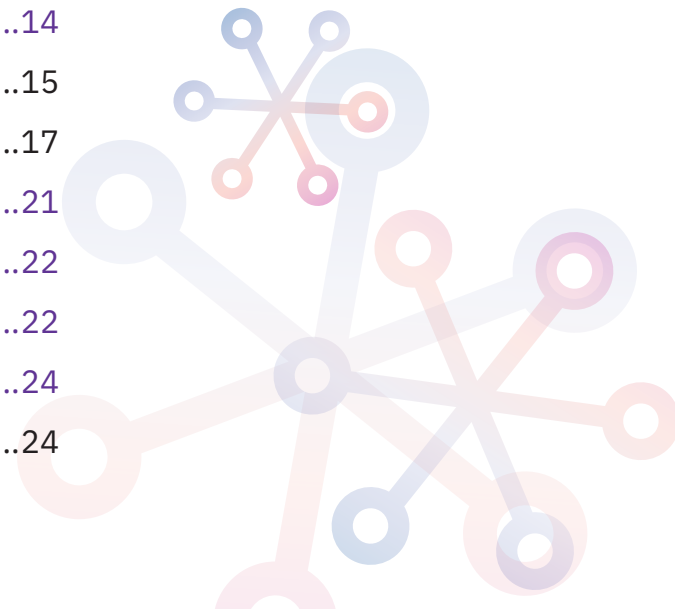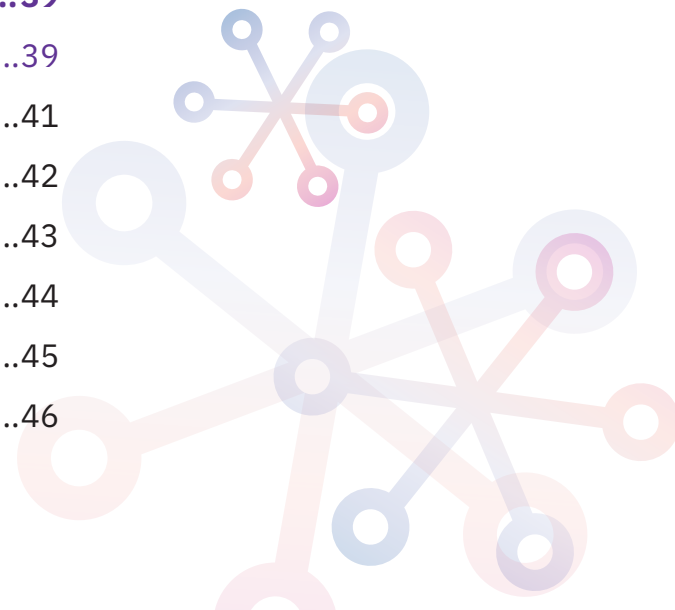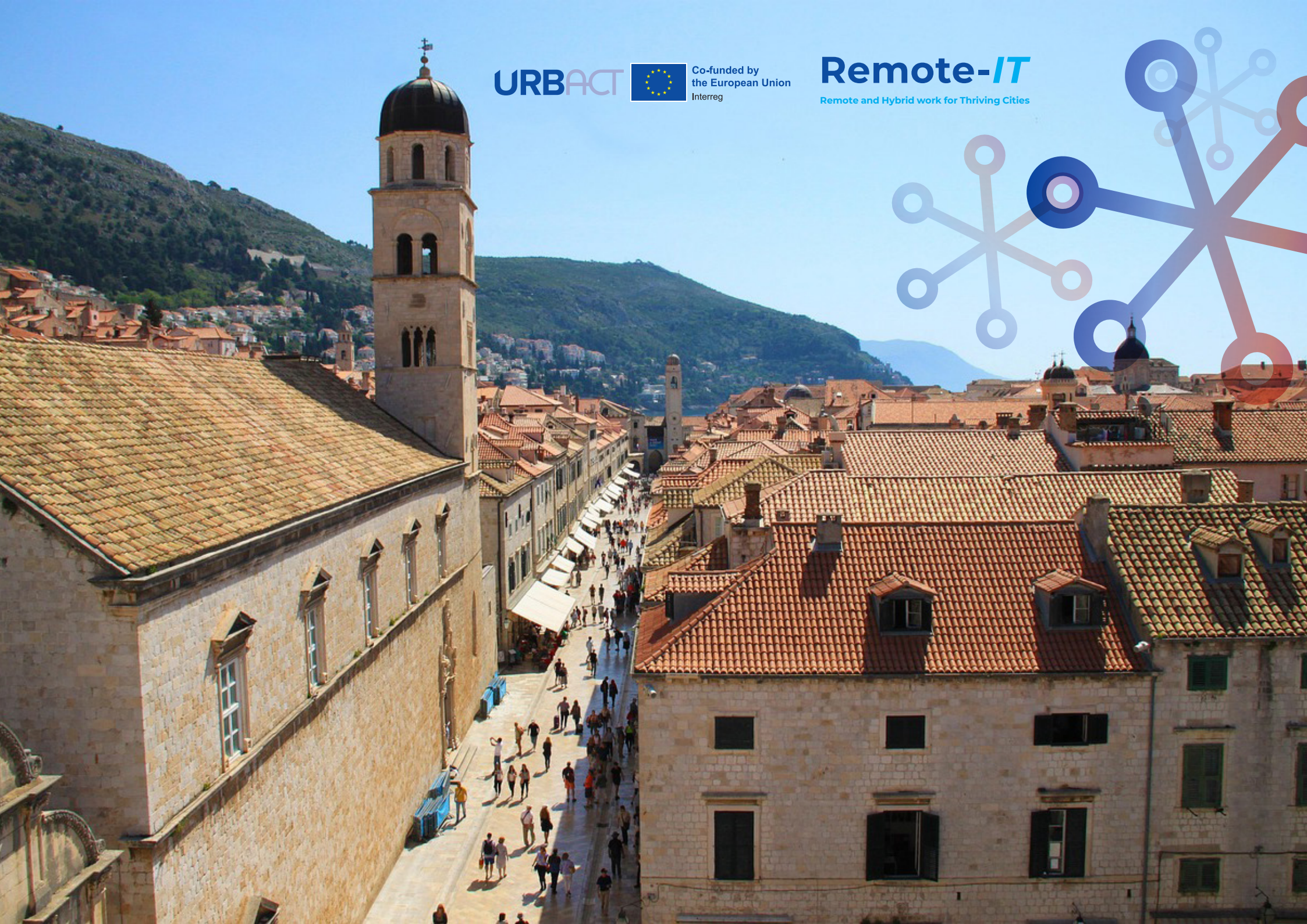
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