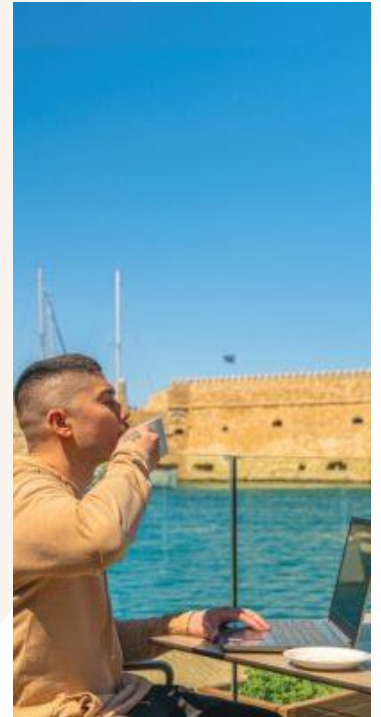# Remote-IT

Integrated Action Plan
of Heraklion City

Remote-IT
Remote and Hybrid work for Thriving Cities

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Remote-IT
Integrated Action Plan of Heraklion City

Responsible for this publication:
Directorate of Planning, Programming and ICT, Municipality of Heraklion

Contents

Message from our Political Leadership

Alexis Kalokerinos
Mayor of Heraklion

"Heraklion is at the crossroads of history and innovation.

As a municipal authority, we recognize the potential of the global phenomenon of digital nomads. That is why we are laying the foundations to make our city a modern, open, and attractive destination for those who choose to work remotely, combining quality of life with professional creativity.

Through the Integrated Action Plan of the Municipality of Heraklion that we have developed, we are strategically investing in digital infrastructure, services, and actions that facilitate the integration of Digital Nomads into the local community.

Our goal is for Heraklion to become a vibrant hub of innovation and coexistence, while strengthening the local economy and enhancing the city's international presence. Enhancing inspiration in an environment with open horizons."

Anastasios Tsatsakis
Deputy Mayor for Development Planning and Digital Transformation

"In political terms, work is a fundamental right for every citizen. In social and human terms, work involves creation, production, forming relationships and participating in the material and immaterial aspects of the world.

Technological tools have changed the traditional perception of work in modern times, enabling employees to work from anywhere in the world.

However, this new reality must not lead to a restriction of labour rights, including the right to a quality working environment.

Recognising these new needs, the Municipality of Heraklion is leveraging its unique geographical location, modern infrastructure and rich cultural heritage to provide digital nomads with an inspiring and welcoming work environment. The aim is to combine professional creativity with a high quality of life — elements that are integral to success and personal well-being.

The Municipality of Heraklion is designing municipal and private spaces to enhance the remote working experience, establishing Heraklion as an ideal destination for individuals seeking to combine work with a unique lifestyle and welcoming digital nomads to a place where work and life take on a new dimension."

Executive Summary of the IAP

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Heraklion, developed within the URBACT IV "Remote-IT" network, outlines the city's strategic response to the evolving landscape of remote work and its ambition to become a preferred destination for digital nomads. Building on extensive stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and small-scale pilot actions, the IAP sets out a clear vision for Heraklion by 2035: to be a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive city that attracts and supports digital nomads through enhanced infrastructure, services, and community integration.

The IAP has been **co-designed with local stakeholders** and reflects both Heraklion's emerging potential and its existing urban, economic, and social challenges. Key challenges identified include limited high-speed internet coverage, insufficient co-working spaces, housing shortages due to tourism pressure, and a lack of targeted marketing. At the same time, Heraklion's climate, cultural heritage, safety, and growing innovation ecosystem position it as a highly attractive location for remote professionals.

The IAP is structured around **four strategic objectives**:
- Enhancing internet infrastructure to ensure citywide access to high-speed connectivity.
- Expanding work and accommodation facilities tailored for digital nomads.
- Improving sustainable mobility and local transport networks.
- Strengthening the attraction of digital nomads and improving the readiness of the local community through marketing, education and cooperation with stakeholders.

Twenty-six (26) specific actions are proposed, ranging from Wi-Fi network expansion and mobile app development to the accreditation of digital-nomad-friendly businesses, co-creation spaces, and green mobility initiatives. Two testing actions—a digital nomad microsite and a soundproof working booth—were implemented during the project, offering valuable lessons for full-scale implementation.

The IAP employs a **holistic and integrated methodology**, emphasizing multilevel governance, sectoral coherence, spatial planning, and sustainability. It is designed as a practical roadmap that balances infrastructure investment with community engagement and long-term monitoring mechanisms. Through this approach, Heraklion aims not only to attract digital nomads but also to leverage their presence as a catalyst for urban innovation, economic diversification, and improved quality of life for all residents.

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IAP Section 1:
Context, needs and vision

1.1 Introduction and project presentation

Local
Context

↓

Needs
Identification

↓

Overall
Vision
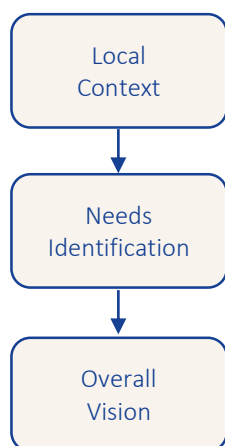
Remote-IT is an URBACT Action Planning Network, financed through the URBACT IV (2021-2027) programme of the European Commission. Remote-IT network tackles the new challenges cities are experiencing connected to the future of work. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the transformation around how work is organised, with hybrid and remote work models significantly impacting the lives of citizens, as well as the organisational culture of major employers (public/private). Remote-IT partnerships of cities is collaboratively exploring this emerging topic in order to implement proactive policy making. Website https://urbact.eu/networks/remote-it;

Remote-IT directly tackles the European Commission's 2030 priority for a Europe fit for the digital age, which aims to empower people with a new generation of technologies. More specifically, the European Commission's "Digital Europe" policy framework, which encompasses policies such as the Digital Services Act, the European Data Strategy and the Digital Markets act, provide the legislative guidelines for many of the topics related to remote work preparedness. Remote-It makes also a substantial contribution to Policy Objective 5 of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027, which aims to bring Europe closer to its citizens.

The Remote-It 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).

1.2 Current situation/ data relevant to the themes addressed

Heraklion City

4th largest city
in Greece

177,000
citizens

Sectors: Trade,
tourism, agriculture

Heraklion is the capital of Crete and one of the Mediterranean region's most fascinating and vibrant cities. It is the fourth largest city in Greece with a municipal population of 177,064 (2021) and more than 211,000 in its wider metropolitan area. The city's main economic sectors are trade, tourism, agriculture, livestock, and industry. The unemployment rate in Heraklion is almost 12%. Heraklion has a moderately educated workforce, with 21.3% of the active population holding university or equivalent degrees, and 3.8% of which have also completed post-graduate studies (including PhD level). Heraklion has an industrial area and one of the busiest airports in Greece today (second only to Athens and first in charter flights). It also has a port with a busy ferry service, mainly to Piraeus, Santorini, and other Greek islands. Heraklion hosts two universities and the largest research center/ institute in Greece. Thus, Heraklion shows remarkable potential in research and innovation, and its increasing business and economic support infrastructure leading to successful research commercialization, particularly in the fields of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) and biotechnology.

The city of Heraklion grapples with multi-level governance challenges related to tourism. Despite national and regional promotion of Crete as a tourism destination due to the island's economic dependence on this sector, the reality in Heraklion is that the city serves as the main

entry point with the local airport and port experiencing significant traffic. However, the influx of tourists disrupts residents' quality of life and contributes minimally to the city's economy. Housing affordability concerns have risen, exacerbated by a considerable number of units dedicated to short-term rentals. Tourists tend to spend limited time in Heraklion, favouring other parts of the island, perpetuating an unsustainable tourism model with a substantial environmental footprint.

Recognizing the need for change, digital nomad visas were identified as an opportunity to shift Heraklion's tourism model. However, regional authorities initiated a marketing campaign in 2020 promoting Crete as a destination for digital nomads, leading to an unexpectedly busy 2022 season. Despite this success, Heraklion remains committed to environmental goals, signing the Covenant of Mayors Planning for Energy and Planning to reduce CO2 emissions by 40% by 2030. Consequently, strategic actions are now crucial to support Heraklion in becoming a digital nomad destination while addressing challenges in the housing market.

The Herakllion IAP will focus on actions that can promote the city for remote workers especially during low season in order to contribute to the transition towards more sustainable models of tourism. Their work will also target other implications for adopting hybrid work models, considering economic, ecological, and social implications.

1.3 Relevant existing strategies and policies

Remote working is not widespread in Greece. It was mainly developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and nowadays in Greece it seems not to be much preferred by traditional employers. The Greek legal framework allows remote working for employees in the private sector, but not in the wider public sector except in times of crisis such as that of COVID-19. For this reason, and in parallel with the tourist nature of the country, the term "remote worker" in Greece is almost intertwined with the term "digital nomad".

At the national level, the Greek state has undertaken the Digital Nomad Visa initiative (Laws 4825/2021 and 5038/2023) to attract remote professionals to live and work in one of the world's most spectacular destinations. The Digital Nomad Visa is available to non-EU nationals who a) are dependent employees or self-employed individuals working remotely for companies or clients located outside of Greece, and b) can prove a stable income of at least 3,500€ per month, which increases by 20% for a spouse and 15% per dependent child. The Greek Digital Nomad Visa is valid for a period of up to 12 months, but before its expiration, a digital nomad can apply for a Digital Nomad residence permit, with 2 years of validity (with an option of renewal). According to updated data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023 saw a record 1,200 applications for digital nomad visas and residence permits. Since the introduction of the Digital Nomad Visa, 1,340 permits have been issued, with significant representation from countries such as the USA, Canada, China, and Israel.

In the regional and local context, Greek local authorities have not yet developed full and comprehensive policies exclusively for digital nomads/remote workers. Any initiatives on digital nomads/ remote-workers are part of broader policies and strategies for tourism and the sustainability of the quality of life in the regions.

In its updated Tourism Strategy (2023), the Municipality of Heraklion has been increasingly focused on strengthening its sustainable tourism profile. Strategic efforts in this regard in-

clude connecting the city to the Archaeological site of Knossos, development of the new airport which will significantly expand passenger capacity, port development, and the potential future development of the marina near Pankritio Stadium, among others. To further improve its touristic offering, the city has restored and developed various segments of its Venetian walls as a tourist attraction. By improving the touristic offerings of the city, the Municipality aims to route tourism to the island, and particularly overnight tourism, towards the city of Heraklion. The region also aims to increase the value-added of tourism to the area and attract higher spending per tourist by developing infrastructures to accommodate luxury travel. In coming years, the city is also prioritizing smart tourism solutions to enhance visitor experience, promote the city's tourist identity, and transform the city from a "place to transfer" to "a place to stay." In this regard, the city aims to develop new services, processes, and business approaches for SMEs in the tourism sector, enhance the touristic experience through digital services and applications, and support the tourist sector through Open Data & smart apps.

In the context of Heraklion's Tourism Strategy, digital nomads are identified as a targeted demographic within the "Business Tourism or Business Travel" strategic axis. The strategic document highlights the absence of exclusive and valuable information, in addition to inadequate connection services with digital nomad communities, as the predominant impediments to attracting digital nomads.

The Municipality of Heraklion has developed a series of strategies with the aim of effecting sustainable improvements to urban life, a goal which also includes digital nomads. To this end, the Municipality's strategic plans for sustainable urban development, sustainable energy, waste management and digital transformation (smart city) have been drawn up.

Over the 2014-2020 programming period, EU co-funded projects within the Municipality of Heraklion were primarily dedicated to strengthening its competitiveness and research and innovation and addressing environmental infrastructure. Significant projects include the rehabilitation of its water supply, restoration of various segments of its Venetian walls, energy efficiency projects and upgrading to renewable energy sources. Heraklion's Smart City Strategy helped the city land significant investments in digital infrastructures and circular waste projects. For the 2021-2027 programming period, the city is aiming to strengthen its position as a sustainable, cultural, tourism destination. The city is actively participating in the Global Sustainable Tourism Council project which identifies key risks to the municipality and sets the foundation for a road map for sustainable tourism development.

Indicative EU co-funded projects within the Municipality of Heraklion, that are related with the city life and digital nomads, are:
- Cultural heritage as a tool of economic development and social inclusion – KAIRÓS (URBACT III – Action Planning Networks 2014-2020)
- LIFE GrIn: Promoting urban integration of GReen INfrastructure to improve climate governance in cities (LIFE Programme)
- Waste Management Intelligent Systems and Policies - WIN-POL (Interreg Europe 2014-2020)
- Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan - SUMP (ERDF 2014-2020, 2021-2027)

1.4 Local stakeholders involved in the project

The main goal of the URBACT Local Groups (ULG) is to use the URBACT framework and methods to design an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) on local level for sustainable urban development and to strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders to develop efficient policies. ULGs establish a durable cooperation of the stakeholders, using the URBACT method which is based on

a holistic approach, that takes into consideration the physical, economic and social dimensions of urban development, form a sustainable perspective.

The Heraklion ULG in Remote-IT project is pursuing three primary objectives:

a) to gather all relevant stakeholders who can actively contribute to the elaboration of the local IAP and involve them in the activities of the Remote-IT network.

b) to ensure the viability and feasibility of the IAP at local level.

c) to ensure the sustainability of results in the long term, after the end of the Remote-IT project.

The ULG activities include:

- Analysing local challenges, seeking solutions and ultimately developing an IAP making Heraklion more attractive and friendly for digital nomads
- Embedding the learning from transnational exchange (practical knowledge, good practices, peer review, etc. form other cities in the Remote-IT network and beyond) in to the local policy-making process
- Contributing to the transnational exchange and learning process taking place at transnational level
- Communicating results at local level, and disseminating lessons learnt to the wider community
- Taking part in the Remote-IT training schemes organised at national and European levels, thereby developing the capacities of local stakeholders.

The practices that will serve to emphasize Heraklion as a prime location for digital nomads encompass a wide range of multidisciplinary approaches, encompassing numerous individual aspects of both tourism development and sustainable urban development. The approach towards this direction must be completely horizontal and integrated and therefore the ULG brings together expertise with representatives from all the sectors involved, both public and private, as well as social actors, the local administration, the business community, the academic community, etc.

According to the above, the selection of the ULG in Heraklion was challenging. From the public sector, the Municipality of Heraklion, which is also the partner in the Remote-IT project, is represented in the ULG both at strategic level (e.g. Planning Directorate) and at the level of relevant services (e.g. IT Directorate) or spatial representatives (e.g. representatives of municipal areas). Additional partners with a public character are the Region of Crete, local universities, public organisations related to transport in the city, etc. From the private sector, the Heraklion ULG has invited and involved the business community such as chambers of commerce, innovation promotion companies, non-governmental organisations promoting entrepreneurship, tourism operators, etc. Involving communication experts is essential for promoting Heraklion through digital channels, helping it become a popular choice among digital nomads.

Finally, the ULG of Heraklion consists of about 30 members divided in standing and guest members, plus the representatives of the municipal districts (table 1 / figure 2, Appendix I). The Directorate of Planning, Organisation and Information Technology of the Municipality of Heraklion has entrusted the coordination of the ULG to a team from the Department of Business Administration Tourism of the Hellenic Mediterranean University.

Seven (7) ULG meetings were conducted meetings during the lifetime of the project. ULG

meetings were usually organized before and after the transnational meetings (TM). Before the TM, the ULG has discussed the agenda of the meeting, identify any questions that the ULG expects to be answered and identify any thematic input that the ULG could channel to the meeting. After the TM, the delegated participants should transfer the answers to the questions of the ULG and the lessons learned from the meeting.

The initial four ULG meetings were dedicated to establishing the challenges and formulating the objectives and strategy for the IAP. The subsequent three meetings (5 to 7) were devoted to delineating the specifics of the proposed actions and addressing the present requirements of the project from the TMs. A range of methodologies from the URBACT Toolbox, including the problem tree and the "newspaper of tomorrow", have been employed in the majority of Heraklion's ULG meetings.

Figure 1: Heraklion ULG Meetings Timeline
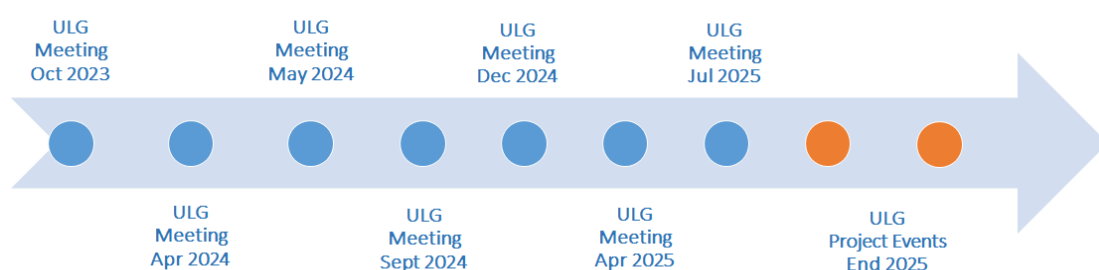
Table 1: Entities in Remote-IT ULG of Heraklion

Sector/ Type	Entity
Municipality of Heraklion	• Directorate of Programming, Planning and ICT • European Programs Department • ICT Department & Network Security Section • Department of Culture • Municipal Communities Presidents
Region of Crete	• Directorate of Tourism Region of Crete • Directorate of Electronic Government of the Region of Crete • Young Generation and Youth Entrepreneurship Section of Region of Crete. • ICT Department, Region of Crete • Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete
Municipal & Public Development Companies	• Heraklion Development Agency S.A. • DEPANAL S.A.
Tourism Related Entities	• Tourism and Hospitality & Chief Auditor, TUV HELLAS (TUV NORD) S.A • Association of Business entrepreneurs of apartments – Rooms for Rental "Filoxenia" • Association of Hotels Heraklion
Entrepreneurship	• Heraklion Chamber of Commerce • BIZRUPT NGO, Business incubator & accelerator • Women Do Business NGO • Co-Working Spaces companies
Universities / Research Centers	• Hellenic Mediterranean University • Technological Park of Crete, FORTH
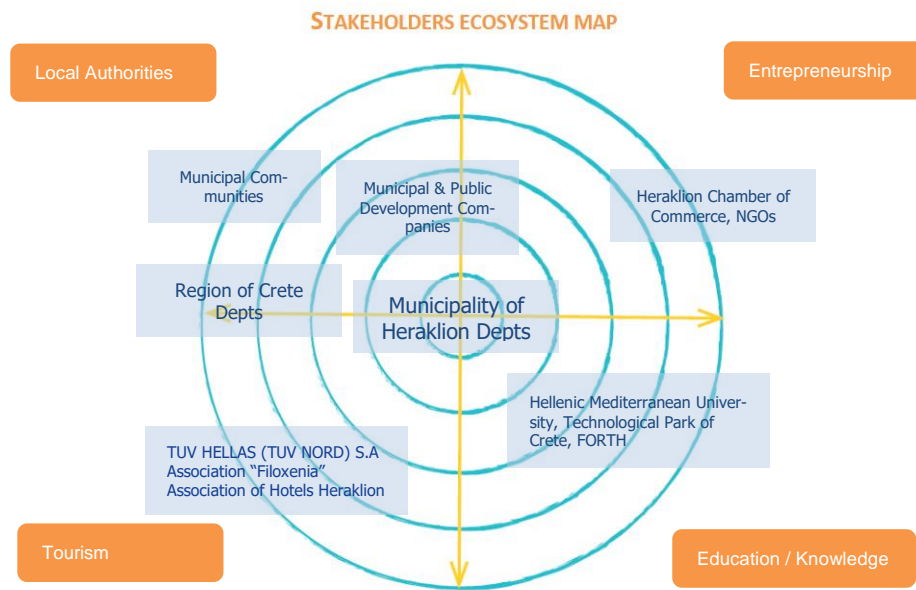
Figure 2: Entities in Remote-IT ULG of Heraklion

1.5 Peer learning contribution to the ULG and the IAP development

As mentioned before, the work of Heraklion's ULG was significantly supported by continuous feedback from the transnational meetings (TMs) of the Remote-IT project. The Municipality of Heraklion actively participated as a partner in most of the TMs, and members of the local ULG engaged in online forums by meeting and listening to experts. Additionally, the ULG co-ordination team played a key role in both the design and implementation of various Remote-IT project activities, including the creation of podcasts for those involved in projects related to remote work and digital nomadism.

Here are some clear examples of how know-how was transferred from project partners and international practices, benefiting both the ULG and the IAP of Heraklion:

- The URBACT tools, which focus on preparing integrated action plans, were explained during TMs.
- Ideas for actions were generated from field visits to relevant sites during these transnational meetings, such as the newcomer welcome center in Tartu, Estonia.
- A peer review process was conducted during TMs, in which project partners and experts evaluated the Heraklion IAP.

In general, the continuous peer learning from partners and experts in the Remote-IT project greatly benefited the Heraklion's ULG and significantly contributed to the development of this action plan.

1.6 Problem identification

The ULG examined the characteristics of the city of Heraklion through constructive dialogue among its members, who actively contributed suggestions and provided well-reasoned arguments about why Heraklion is not currently an attractive destination for digital nomads. They also proposed actions to enhance infrastructure and develop services that would improve the quality of life for both the local community and the employees who choose Heraklion as a destination for their digital work.

According to ULG, Heraklion has several strengths that make it appealing for digital nomads, including its pleasant climate, stunning natural landscapes, rich multicultural history, vibrant nightlife, varied entertainment options, and diverse culinary traditions. Furthermore, the city provides a strong sense of safety and security, complemented by the warmth and friendliness of its residents. In other words, Heraklion scores highly in three key categories that attract digital nomads, as indicated by empirical and academic studies: culture and history, nature and climate, and social/political aspects.

On the other hand, ULG acknowledged that enhancing communication networks, upgrading transport infrastructure, finding available housing, and creating dedicated workspaces will significantly improve the city's image and its ability to attract digital nomads. Achieving these improvements requires active collaboration among public sector actors, local authorities, social organizations, transport operators, and the business community.

In addition to assessing Heraklion's strengths and weaknesses, ULG identified current opportunities and threats related to the city's appeal to digital nomads. Opportunities include the development of new tourism support infrastructure and recent acknowledgments of Heraklion as a unique destination. However, there are challenges and threats as well, such as the high level of competition from other destinations and the increasing preference for face-to-face work. These factors are summarized in the following SWOT analysis.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis of Heraklion as a Digital Nomads Destination

Strengths	Weaknesses
• **Nature and climate** (Mediterranean climate, mild weather / high temperature, unique landscape and numerous natural attractions) • **Rich history** (Minoan civilization - Knossos, Venetian civilization – Heraklion Walls, etc.) • **Vibrant (Cretan) culture** (a very special and internationally recognized culture, numerous customs and cultural events) • **Recreational service amenities** (restaurants and pubs, leisure and recreational facilities, and nightlife) • **Social security & Inclusiveness** (safety and security, friendliness of local people) • **Cretan Cuisine / Gastronomy** (excellent food quality, local agro-food products, world famous cuisine combined with Mediterranean diet)	• **IT Infrastructure** (relatively low internet coverage in parts of the metropolitan area, lack of very high and stable internet speeds in parts of the metropolitan area) • **Transportation infrastructure and routes** (relative lack of green and modern means of transport, low density of services in the semi-urban/remote areas of the municipality) • **Accommodation / Available housing** (lack of available housing on the urban side of the city due to the tourist and metropolitan character of the municipality) • **Working facilities** (a few co-working/ co-creation spaces) • **Information and marketing** (absence of centralised and accurate information on digital nomads, lack of digital/ physical welcome points/ services, lack of marketing initiatives designed to attract digital nomads/ remote workers) • **Health and education system** (little to non-existent school infrastructure for foreigners, heavy bureaucracy in the provision of health services to foreigners)

Opportunities	Threats
• The **large number of visitors** to Heraklion enables the city to promote itself as a digital nomad destination. • The **new Heraklion airport**, set to open in 2027, will improve access to the city by offering more capabilities, increased routes, and lower costs. • There are opportunities for **marketing synergies** between general tourism campaigns and targeted campaigns aimed at digital nomads. • Additionally, the EU/ National Strategic Reference Framework (ESPA) programmatic period 2021-2027 will provide **funding for initiatives** aimed at enhancing the quality of life in Heraklion. • **Growing communities of digital nomads** are starting to establish themselves in Crete	• The **cost of living** in Heraklion has been increasing in recent years. • International destinations like Lisbon and national locations such as Thessaloniki have established a **strong competitive advantage**. • There is an **escalating staff shortage** in the Municipality and in public organizations that manage programs and projects related to improving the quality of life in Heraklion. • **Climate change** may negatively impact tourism and the region's appeal as a destination. • **Global uncertainties** in the political and economic landscape could discourage digital nomads from coming to the area. • **Failure to update national legislation** on digital nomads to meet current needs, such as visa requirements and bureaucratic processes, presents a challenge. • A **possible growing negative perception** among locals towards digital nomads, fueled by the issues of over-tourism, which adversely affect residents.

Based on the analysis above, ULG created two primary personas of digital nomads. Considering Heraklion's strengths and weaknesses, both groups share a common foundation, as briefly illustrated in the following figure.

	Persona A	Persona B
Demographics	Male or Female, 30-40 years old, Single, Higher education, American/ European, Freelancer or junior manager, Min income 3.500€	Male or Female, 40-50 years old, Engaged/ married (with α child), Higher education, American/ European, Freelancer or senior manager, Min. income 5.000€
Goals and motivations	Travelling, seeing the world, many and "intensive" experiences in the destination	Travelling, understanding deeply new cultures, more work-life balance, reaching and experiencing qualitative characteristics of a destination (climate, gastronomy, etc.).
Challenges	Wifi-digital infrastructures, the lack of / the expensive accommodation, poor transport connectivity	Wifi-digital infrastructures, lack of accommodation, lack of dedicated working spaces, poor transport connectivity, lack of international schools (for children)
Important to them	Beauty of the destination, cost of destination, friendly citizens, Heraklion's opportunities for entertainment	Safety, climate, natural beauty, gastronomy, absence of bureaucracy, opportunities to travel / experience nearby destinations (in Crete / Greece), infrastructures for family (schools, kids' activities)

Figure 3: Digital Nomad Personas for Heraklion

1.7 Vision/overarching objective

By having a detailed inventory of needs and problems, substantial solutions can be provided by Heraklion's ULG in line with sustainable development strategy of the city, in order to make Heraklion more friendly for both the resident and the digital nomads.

Stakeholders believe that in the coming years, Heraklion can attract and welcome digital no-mads and remote workers. What it needs to do is reflected in the following shared vision.

Vision
Mission

In 2035, Heraklion to be a popular destination for digital nomads, with modern telecom-munication networks, adequate living and working spaces, sustainable mobility prac-tices, exploitation of the countryside, as well as actions to connect digital nomads with the local culture and the authentic lifestyle of the broader region.

1.8 Main integration challenges

Heraklion aims to become a popular destination for digital nomads and remote workers, a goal that hinges on successful integration, in line with the philosophy of the URBACT initiative. The active involvement of stakeholders in the ULG meetings and their feedback on various aspects of this vision highlight the challenges of achieving integration. The table below sum-marizes the challenges and perspectives related to this integration.

Table 3: Self Assessment for integrated approach in Heraklion's IAP

Suggested obligatory aspects of integrated approaches		Relevant to the Heraklion case	Current situation	Improvement
i.	Stakeholder involvement in planning	Absolutely relevant. Action plans for digital nomads relate to various aspects of quality of life in Heraklion.	Representatives of the most relevant stakeholders participated in the ULG consultations.	Share the current Implementation Action Plan (IAP) with more stakeholders before entering the implementation phase
ii.	Coherence with existing strategies	Absolutely relevant. The IAP is closely aligned with Heraklion's strategies for tourism and sustainability.	The city's strategies partially include dedicated tactics for digital nomads/remote workers	Incorporate proposals that meet the needs of digital nomads in the next review of the city's strategies
iii.	Sustainable urban development (economic, social, environmental)	Absolutely relevant. The effective hosting of digital nomads contributes to the economic (e.g. improvement of the local economy), social (e.g. enhancement of multicultural behaviour/culture) and environmental (e.g. new green infrastructures) development of Heraklion.	The Municipality of Heraklion and most of the relevant stakeholders understand the need for sustainable urban development.	The actions of this IAP should be integrated with other programs or initiatives to maximize the sustainable benefits for the city.

ix.	Integration over time.	Absolutely relevant. The IAP includes actions in the short, medium and longer-terms and consideration of any necessary order in the implementation of actions	The IAP is considered complete on the basis of current conditions.	The IAP should be revised, if necessary, in line with changes in the medium-term conditions.
xii.	Stakeholder involvement in implementation	Absolutely relevant. The success of most IAP actions depends on stakeholder contributions.	The stakeholders involved in ULG have committed to future contributions for this action plan.	The Municipality of Heraklion can sustain the ULG after the Remote-IT project concludes, reminding stakeholders of their crucial role.
Suggested optional aspects of more integrated approaches		**Relevant to the Heraklion case**	**Current situation**	**Improvement**
iv.	Sectoral integration	Absolutely relevant. Heraklion's vision as a digital nomad destination addresses various policies and sectors, including infrastructure, public services, transport, education, housing, etc.	Sectoral integration has been considered in forming the ULG and planning actions.	-
v.	Spatial integration	Absolutely relevant. Heraklion is a metropolitan area, necessitating coherent actions at various spatial levels.	The spatial integration was considered in forming the ULG by inviting all local community presidents.	Ongoing communication and engagement with communities for project implementation and knowledge transfer.
vi.	Territorial integration	Relevant. Crete is the main destination for digital nomads, regardless of their preferred municipality on the island.	Neighboring municipalities know about the Remote-IT project.	Neighboring municipalities should be thoroughly informed about this IAP and encouraged to develop similar planning initiatives / actions.
vii.	Multi-level governance	Relevant. Actions are planned coherently at local, regional, and national level.	Actions are systematically planned at the city level with support from the regional government, which collaborates with various departments in the ULG.	Distribution of the current IAP to additional public directorates at the national level.
viii.	Integration of cross-cutting thematic aspects	Relevant. The cross-cutting thematic aspects are additional issues or areas that intersect the main IAP.	This IAP includes gender-neutral actions that foster digital transformation, support climate change adoption, and enhance procurement	-

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			clarity.	
x.	Complementary types of investment	Relevant. Actions include both 'hard' (physical/infrastructure) and 'soft' (human capital) investments.	The plan balances the need for both physical and human investments.	The "hard" investments should not be given lower priority in implementation because they are the most difficult actions to take.
xi	Mobilizing all available funding	Absolutely Relevant. The leverage of all type of funding is need for this IAP.	This IAP considers all available funding sources from the EU and the National Strategic Reference Framework (ESPA).	Investigate the possibility of funding certain actions through the municipality's own finances, as well as private sources, such as local businesses.

1.9 Testing activities

During the 4th meeting of Heraklion's Urbact Local Group, all relevant stakeholders participated in a brainstorming session to propose ideas for short and long-term actions. In order to be prioritized, all the proposed ideas were mapped on an effort-impact grid. In the next phase, the participating institutions, taking into account the limited budget and the tight schedule of the Remote-IT project, discussed which of the above could be implemented as testing actions. Through a voting process, the small-scale actions with the best effort-to-cost ratio were chosen: the first version of a dedicated website for digital nomads and a small working station (working space).

<u>Testing Action 1: Dedicate Microsite for Digital Nomads</u>

Proof of concept: The purpose of this website is firstly to provide interested digital nomads with the necessary and reliable information about the Heraklion area and secondly to present the advantages of the city, making it attractive for digital nomads.

Activating the ULG: During discussions for the design of an ideal digital nomads' website, several proposals were made by the local ULG regarding both the visual aspect (user-friendly) and the type of information it should include. The goal is for visitors to easily access information on accommodation, working spaces, healthcare, and transportation. Additionally, there will certainly be information about events organized by the Municipality of Heraklion in the social, athletic, and cultural sectors to meet the nomads' need for social interaction. Additionally, through the website, digital nomads can quickly and easily register, allowing Heraklion to have a more official and reliable source of information for those coming to work and staying for a while. This registration will help identify additional needs and improve the services provided. Technically, the website will be hosted under the domain of the Municipality of Heraklion, and it will be created according to modern web design.

Building Political and Public Buy-in: The microsite's usage dynamics by digital nomads and the challenges encountered since its initial development have fostered political and community support.

Innovation: Until today, there has been no dedicated municipal website for digital nomads.

Implementation of Testing Action: The first version of the website was developed between
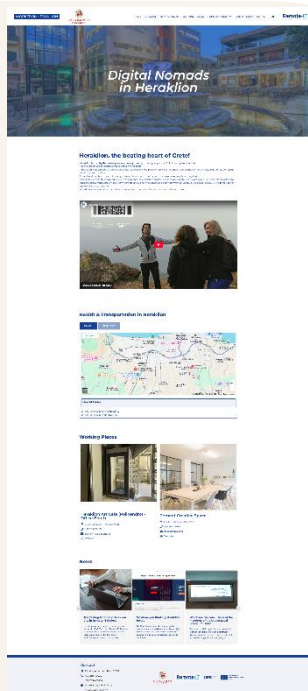
March and April 2025 under the domain name digitalnomads.heraklion.gr. Due to time constraints, the microsite utilized pre-existing content from municipal services and tourism promotion campaigns of the Municipality of Heraklion. For this IAP, the microsite's evaluation was conducted using usage statistics from May to June 2025.

Quick wins – Lessons Learned: Through this small-scale initiative, the Municipality of Heraklion has launched a dedicated website aimed at digital nomads. However, current statistics indicate limited traffic to the site, highlighting the need for future promotional online campaigns to increase visibility. Additionally, the development process revealed the necessity for specialized content and improved communication mechanisms tailored to engage with digital nomads. These insights will be valuable for the future comprehensive development of the full website (refer to action 4.1, section 2.5).

Testing Action 2: A digital nomad's friendly working space in Heraklion's municipality infrastructure

Proof of concept: This testing action aims to transform existing municipal infrastructure into a more remote-friendly workplace for digital nomads. The municipal infrastructure will be enhanced with a modern soundproofed workstation allowing visitors to make distraction-free calls and conference calls with their remote partners.

Activating the ULG: Members of the ULG recognized the importance of ensuring that municipal infrastructure is well-equipped to accommodate remote workers and visitors to the city. They expressed their commitment to promoting facilities that are welcoming to digital nomads within the broader community. ULG suggested that the remote working-friendly infrastructure should be located in the center of Heraklion city, in order to be accessible to many remote workers and digital nomads.

Building Political and Public Buy-in: The presence of a soundproof booth in a municipal building can inspire more similar initiatives from both the public and private sectors.

Innovation: Heraklion lacks large co-working spaces, and the availability of infrastructure for teleworking in public areas, such as soundproof booths, is not common. This will be the first time such equipment is installed in a public space. The concept for this pilot project emerged from visits by the project partners to places of interest, particularly during the transnational meeting in Tartu, Estonia.

Implementation of Testing Action: After the examination of a couple of alternatives, the municipality of Heraklion chose Heraklion's Youth Center (a municipal cultural hub and art café owned by the Municipal Corporation DEPANAL, a member of ULG), which is near the Town Hall. The soundproof booth was handmade, and created by a local company. The installation of the soundproof booth took place in April 2025 in Heraklion's Youth Center. The impact of this testing action was measured by recording the use of the soundproof booth with questionnaires distributed to the users, with the main indicator being the number of people (citizens, digital nomads /remote workers, city visitors) using this booth.

Quick wins – Lessons Learned: This small-scale action, makes a beautiful municipal café a more suitable place for digital nomads who want to spend some time in the city center but also have the opportunity to work remotely. After a month of operation, the primary users of the booth were visitors to Heraklion and students, with only a few identifying as digital nomads. However, all users shared excellent impressions of the initiative and expressed the opinion

that Heraklion needs more spaces equipped with similar infrastructure. In addition, the Heraklion Youth Centre as a space friendly to remote workers became a showcase for café and restaurant entrepreneurs in Heraklion. Thus this small-scale action allows the Municipality of Heraklion to support another one future action: the initial tracking of café and entertainment venues by providing a sticker indicating the remote-workers-friendly cafes in the city (refer to action 2.6, section 2.5).

IAP Section 2:
Overall logic and integrated approach

Overall
Vision

↓

Strategic
Objectives

↓

Intervention
Areas

↓

Actions

2.1 Overall Logic and Integrated Approach
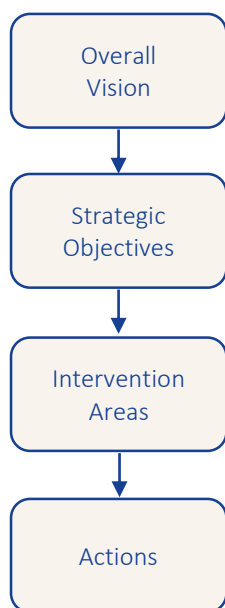
As noted in Section 1, the central issue is that Heraklion currently lacks appeal for digital nomads. The city's vision is to become a popular destination for digital nomads by 2035. This includes developing modern telecommunication networks, providing adequate living and working spaces, implementing sustainable mobility practices, utilizing the surrounding countryside, and taking steps to connect digital nomads with the local culture and the authentic lifestyle of the broader region.

The overall logic and integrated approach of an URBACT's IAP centers on a collaborative, participatory process aimed at achieving sustainable urban development. It's not simply a collection of individual projects, but a cohesive strategy built upon a shared vision and addressing interconnected challenges within a city or urban area.

The logic flows from a thorough diagnosis of the city's situation. This involves identifying key challenges and opportunities, analyzing existing policies and initiatives, and importantly, engaging with diverse stakeholders to understand their perspectives and needs (see Section 1). This participatory process is crucial, ensuring the plan is owned and driven by local actors and reflects the city's unique context.

From this diagnosis, a strategic framework emerges, defining clear, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART type) objectives. These objectives are interconnected and address the identified challenges holistically, recognizing that urban issues are rarely isolated.

The integrated approach should be further demonstrated through the selection and implementation of actions. These actions should not be implemented in isolation; instead, they should be designed to work synergistically, leveraging the strengths of various partners and resources. This Integrated Action Plan (IAP) principle requires careful coordination and monitoring, often involving specific roles and responsibilities defined for different actors.

MONITORING AND ASSESSING THE PROGRESS MADE

ANALYSING A PROBLEM TO REACH A SHARED UNDERSTANDING

PLANNING AND IDENTIFYING A COHERENT SET OF ACTIONS

DELIVERING ACTIONS AND FORESEEN CHALLENGES

ENSURING ADEQUATE MEANS TO DELIVER A CONCRETE PLAN

Additionally, the IAP must incorporate a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track progress, identify challenges, and adapt strategies as needed. This iterative process ensures that the plan remains relevant and effective throughout its implementation period and fosters continuous learning and improvement. The ultimate goal is to achieve lasting positive change in the city, improving the quality of life for its residents and contributing to sustainable development. The "integrated" nature of the approach ensures that solutions are not just implemented but are genuinely connected and work collectively to achieve the overall vision.

2.2 Strategic Objectives

Based on the analysis presented in Section 1, Heraklion has the potential to become a popular destination for digital nomads by focusing on four (4) strategic objectives (SO). Two out of four strategic objectives can be subdivided into Operational Objectives (OOs). All the strategic objectives have been defined to encompass both 'hard' and 'soft' investments in varying pro-portions, while also adhering to all necessary aspects of the URBACT integrated approach.
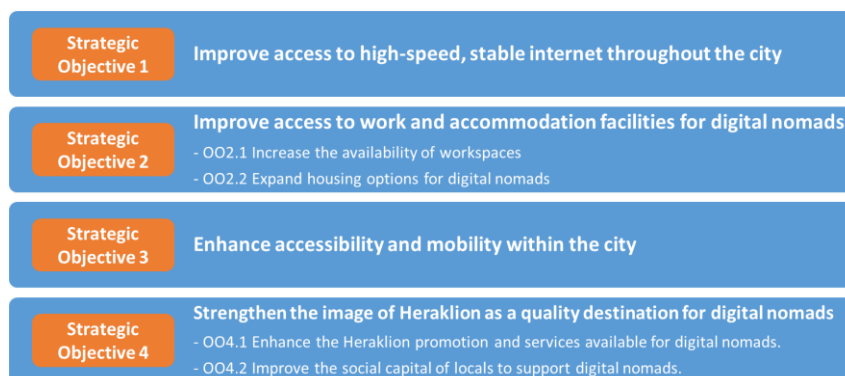

Strategic Objective 1	Improve access to high-speed, stable internet throughout the city
Strategic Objective 2	Improve access to work and accommodation facilities for digital nomads - OO2.1 Increase the availability of workspaces - OO2.2 Expand housing options for digital nomads
Strategic Objective 3	Enhance accessibility and mobility within the city
Strategic Objective 4	Strengthen the image of Heraklion as a quality destination for digital nomads - OO4.1 Enhance the Heraklion promotion and services available for digital nomads. - OO4.2 Improve the social capital of locals to support digital nomads.

Figure 4: Strategic Objectives of Heraklion's IAP

SO1. Improve access to high-speed, stable internet throughout the city.

SO1 is linked to a weakness identified by the ULG in Heraklion: the relatively low level of internet coverage and the lack of very high, stable speeds in parts of the metropoli-tan area. A stable, fast, and secure internet is essential for attracting digital nomads to any destination.

SO2. Improve access to work and accommodation facilities for digital nomads.

SO2 addresses the challenges of a lack of available housing and working facilities, such as co-working and co-creation spaces, in urban areas of the city. The ULG has identified this as one of the most important challenges for Heraklion if it is to fulfil its vision for digital nomads. This strategic objective can be subdivided into the following opera-tional objectives:

OO2.1 Increase the availability of workspaces.

OO2.2 Expand housing options for digital nomads.

SO3. Enhance accessibility and mobility within the city.

SO3 targets shortcomings in Heraklion's transport and mobility infrastructure identi-fied in the SWOT analysis. These include a lack of environmentally friendly and modern transportation options, limited services in semi-urban and remote areas, and issues with walkability. This objective directly impacts the quality of life for digital nomads and the city's sustainability. Better transport links can encourage digital nomads to stay in remote, semi-urban parts of Heraklion.

SO4. Strengthen the image of Heraklion as a quality destination for digital nomads.

SO4 is considered important, as ULG meetings have repeatedly noted the absence of centralized and accurate information on digital nomads. There is also a lack of digital or physical welcome points and services, and a lack of marketing initiatives designed to attract digital nomads and remote workers. Within this objective, there will also be a

focus on locals to maintain a positive social capital towards digital nomads. This strategic objective can be subdivided into two operational objectives:

OO4.1 Enhance the Heraklion promotion and services available for digital nomads.

OO4.2 Improve the social capital of locals to support digital nomads.

2.3 Intervention areas

The areas of intervention in Heraklion's Integrated Action Plan can be categorized into four: internet and technology infrastructure, digital nomads' facilities, transportation/ mobility system and horizontal services. All intervention actions align with the analysis of the current situation in Heraklion and the vision and strategic objectives of this IAP. In summary, three of these actions focus on infrastructure that the city needs to develop to enhance the quality of life for digital nomads. These include improvements in IT infrastructure, working and accommodation facilities, and the transportation and mobility system. The fourth action aims to attract and integrate digital communities in Heraklion through marketing and awareness initiatives.

With these intervention areas, the overall concept of the Heraklion IAP is formulated as shown in the next figure. The 26 actions in the intervention areas / strategic objectives are presented in sections 2.5 and 3.

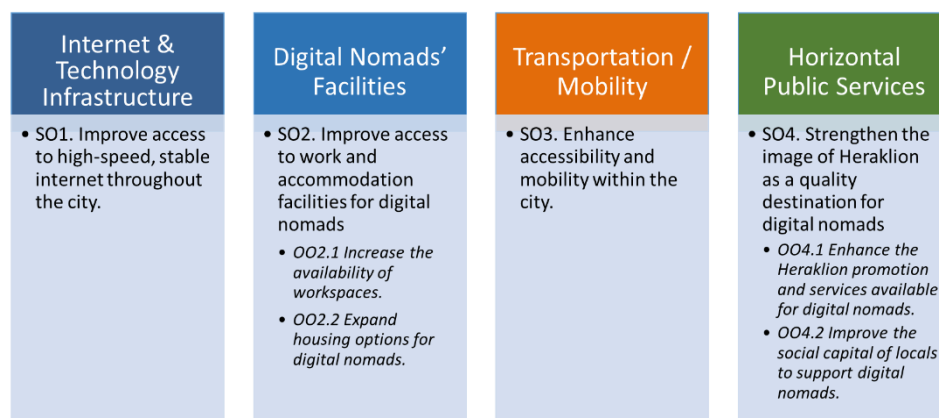| Internet & Technology Infrastructure	Digital Nomads' Facilities	Transportation / Mobility	Horizontal Public Services

• SO1. Improve access to high-speed, stable internet throughout the city.	• SO2. Improve access to work and accommodation facilities for digital nomads
	
	  • *OO2.1 Increase the availability of workspaces.*
	  • *OO2.2 Expand housing options for digital nomads.*
		• SO3. Enhance accessibility and mobility within the city.	• SO4. Strengthen the image of Heraklion as a quality destination for digital nomads
			
			  • *OO4.1 Enhance the Heraklion promotion and services available for digital nomads.*
			  • *OO4.2 Improve the social capital of locals to support digital nomads.*

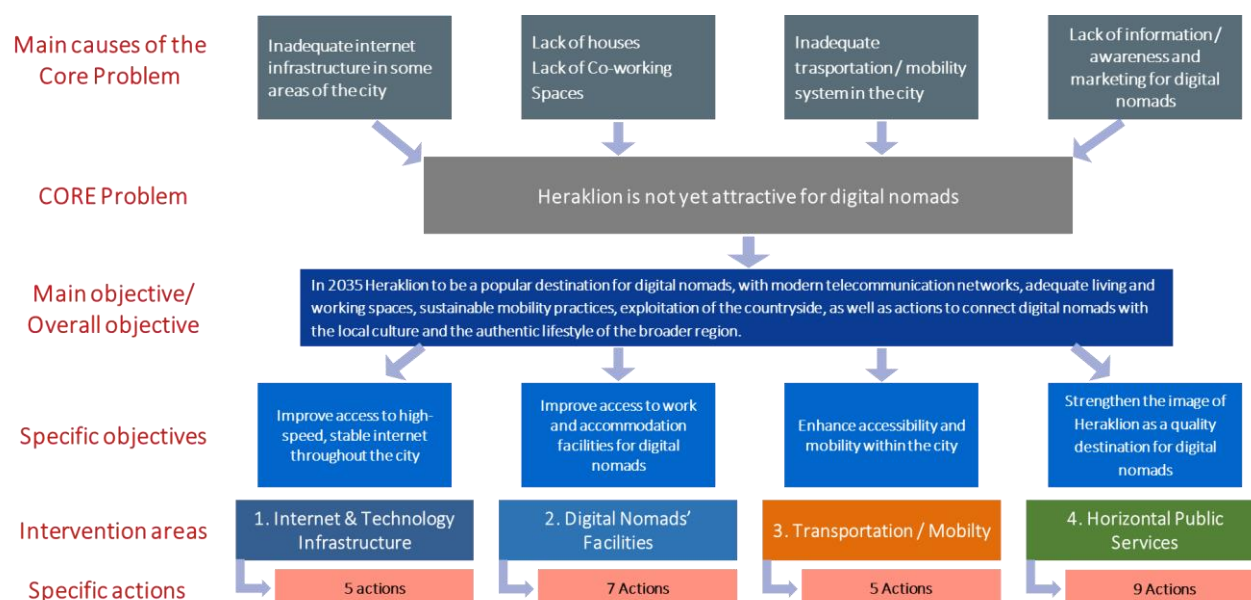**Figure 5**: Intervention areas of Heraklion's IAP

Figure 6: The overall map of Heraklion's IAP

2.4 Specific/ operational objectives

The strategic and operational (specific) objectives can be transformed into SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) goals to capture the change in the situation they address. In addition, each objective can have a small number of result indicators. In this way, the objectives of this IAP can be transformed into SMART objectives/indicators as indicatively shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Indicative SMART objectives

Specific / Operational Objective	Goal / Result	Result Indicator	Baseline Value	Target Value	Source of Information
SO1. Improve access to high-speed, stable internet throughout the city.	Increase the number of internet hotspots in Heraklion by at least 80% by 2028	Number of Internet Hotspots in the city	17 (2025)	32 (2028)	Annual Reports from ICT department of Heraklion's municipality
SO2. - OO2.1 Increase the availability of workspaces.	Creation of at least 5 digital nomad-friendly municipal facilities by 2028	Number of municipal spaces (e.g. municipal cafes, libraries, etc.) with digital nomad-friendly facilities	1 (2025)	6 (2028)	Annual Reports from ICT department of Heraklion's municipality
SO2. - OO2.2 Expand housing options for digital nomads	Creation of a database with 100 registered available houses for digital nomads by 2027	Number of residences (housing) for digital nomads registered in the database	0 (2025)	100 (2027)	Database performance report from ICT department of Heraklion's municipality
SO3. Enhance accessibility and mobility within the	Increase the number of pedestrian areas in	Number of pedestrian areas in Heraklion city	12 (2025)	16 (2029)	Annual Reports from technical de-

city	Heraklion at 25% by 2028				partment of Heraklion's municipality for the implementation of L.U.P
SO4. - OO4.1 Enhance the Heraklion promotion and services available for digital nomads.	To record at least 2500 digital nomads expressing interest in Heraklion by 2027.	Number of unique foreign visitors to the dedicated digital nomads' municipal website	0 (2025)	3000 (2027)	Website performance reports form ICT department of Heraklion's municipality
SO4.- OO4.2 Improve the social capital of locals to support digital nomads.	Education of 100 locals by 2027 for creating an encouraging atmosphere for digital nomads	Number of Heraklion citizens participated in training programme for digital nomads	0 (2025)	100 (2027)	Training registration records

2.5 Actions

Following the strategic analysis, the ULG proposed a total of twenty-six (26) specific actions, ranging from Wi-Fi network expansion and mobile app development to the accreditation of digital-nomad-friendly businesses, co-creation spaces, and green mobility initiatives. All the actions aligned with the strategic objectives, as shown in the table below.

Table 5: Action Table

SO1. Improve access to high-speed, stable internet throughout the city					
Activity	Expected results	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
1.1. Expansion of the Public Open WiFi Network in areas of Heraklion (new hot-spots)	More Free, Public WiFi areas for digital nomads	Human resources, time, technology choice, procedures for the supply of equipment	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Region of Crete (Electronic Government Directorate, ICT department) - Technical Chamber of Greece – Eastern Crete department - Heraklion Communities Representatives/ Counsellors	1,5 years
1.2. Upgrade of the Existing Public Open WiFi Network in Heraklion's areas	Technical upgrade, synchronisation and better speeds of the Public WiFi areas for digital nomads	Human resources, time, technology choice, procedures for the supply of equipment	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Region of Crete (E-Government Directorate, ICT department) - Technical Chamber of Greece – Eastern Crete department - Heraklion Communities Representatives/ Counsellors	1,5 years
1.3. Upgrade the Security of City's WiFi Networks	Modern cybersecurity upgrade and accreditation of the public WiFi networks	Human resources, time, procedures for the supply of equipment, cooperation with third party cybersecurity service provider	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Region of Crete (E-Government Directorate, ICT department)	2,5 years

SO1. Improve access to high-speed, stable internet throughout the city					
Activity	Expected results	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
1.4. Consultation with Integrated Communications Providers (e.g. Cosmote) for the expansion of 5G / 6G networks in Heraklion	Expansion of 5G / adoption of 6G mobile networks in Heraklion city	Human resources, time, cooperation with consultants	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Region of Crete (E-Government Directorate, ICT department) - Local Universities - Greek ICPs	Continuous
1.5. Preparation of an Implementation Plan for the Scalability of Internet Network to Support Smart Cities Applications and IoT Devices	A study for the interconnection of all municipal infrastructure in order to support interconnected digital services to digital nomads and citizens	Human resources, time, cooperation with technical third parties	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Municipality of Heraklion (strategic units) - Region of Crete (E-Government Directorate, ICT department, Tourism Directorate) - Local Universities - Heraklion Chamber of Commerce - Tourism unions - Technical / Consultant Companies	1 year

SO2. Improve access to work and accommodation facilities for digital nomads					
Activity	Expected results	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
2.1. Creation of remote workers - friendly municipal facilities	More remote workers / digital nomads friendly municipal facilities	Human resources, time, procedures for the supply of equipment, spaces' reconstruction works, procedures for the promotion and use of the appropriate equipment	Municipality of Heraklion	- Multi-shareholding Municipal Corporation of the Municipality of Heraklion – DEPANAL S.A - Municipal Communities Presidents - Heraklion Development Agency S.A.	3 years
2.2. Development of a database of suitable houses for digital nomads	- A database with suitable accommodation for digital nomads, that can be integrated in sites/ mobile apps - A mechanism/ procedure for the database's update	Human resources, time, supply of equipment/ software, procedures for the promotion / use / update of the database	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Directorate of Tourism Region of Crete - Association of Business entrepreneurs of apartments – Rooms for Rental - Association of Hotels Heraklion - Owners of premises - Co-Working Spaces companies	1,2 years
2.3. Development of a database of suitable working spaces for digital nomads	- A database with suitable accommodation for digital nomads, that can be integrated in sites/ mobile apps - A mechanism/ procedure for the database's update	Human resources, time, supply of equipment/ software, procedures for the promotion / use / update of the database	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Co-Working Spaces companies - Heraklion Chamber of Commerce - BIZRUPT NGO, Business incubator & accelerator - Women Do Business NGO - Local association of restaurants/ cafes	1,2 years
2.4. Education program for local businesses and hosts (e.g. Airbnb hosts) to adopt digital nomad-friendly practices	Better prepare local business infrastructure and services to support digital nomads	Human resources, time	Municipality of Heraklion	- Heraklion Chamber of Commerce - Association of Business entrepreneurs	1 year

SO2. Improve access to work and accommodation facilities for digital nomads					
Activity	Expected results	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
				- of apartments – Rooms for Rental - Association of Hotels Heraklion - Co-Working Spaces companies - Local Universities	
2.5. Consultation with stakeholders (e.g. local universities) on the use of available /unused accommodation for digital nomads	Provision of dozens of rooms for digital nomads at certain times of the year	Human resources, time	Municipality of Heraklion	- Association of Business entrepreneurs of apartments – Rooms for Rental - Association of Hotels Heraklion - Local Universities	0,5 year
2.6. Accreditation programme for digital nomad-friendly local businesses	Encourage and support local businesses to provide appropriate services to digital nomads	Human resources, time, accreditation procedures	Municipality of Heraklion	- Heraklion Chamber of Commerce - Association of Hotels / Apartments Heraklion - Co-Working Spaces companies	Continuous
2.7. Preparation of an Implementation Plan for the Exploitation of Old / Unexpoited Houses in Sub-Urban Areas of Heraklion	A study that will identify possible abandoned / unused housing in semi-urban areas of Heraklion and the plan for their use as housing for digital nomads	Human resources, time, cooperation with third parties (consultants)	Municipality of Heraklion	- Owners of premises - Municipality of Heraklion (strategic units) - Municipal Communities Presidents - Technical / Consultant Companies	2 years

SO3. Enhance accessibility and mobility within the city					
Activity	Expected results	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
3.1. Consultation with local transportation authorities for the expansion of bus routes in suburban areas of Heraklion	More bus routes connecting city center with suburban areas of Heraklion	Human resources, time,	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Municipality of Heraklion (strategic units) - KTEL Heraklio - Lasithi S.A. (transportation company) - Municipal Communities Presidents - Technical / Consultant Companies	0,5 year
3.2. Mobile App for the transportation system of Heraklion	An updated and modern mobile application for all transportations in Heraklion Municipality	Human resources, time, supply of equipment/ software, procedures for the promotion / use / update of the app	Municipality of Heraklion	- KTEL Heraklio - Lasithi S.A. (transportation company) - Heraklion Urban Bus - Heraklion's Airport / Port authorities - Municipal Communities Presidents - Technical / Consultant Companies	1,5 year
3.3. Expansion and Modernization of the Public Electric Bicycles of Heraklion	More and modern electric bicycles for the short-distance transportation of digital nomads in Heraklion's urban area	Human resources, time, supply of equipment/ software, procedures for the promotion / use (rent)/ maintenance	Municipality of Heraklion	- Multi-shareholding Municipal Corporation of the Municipality of Heraklion – DEPANAL S.A	2 years

				- Municipal Communities Presidents - Local association of restaurants/ cafes - Local Universities - Association of Hotels / Apartments Heraklion - Co-Working Spaces companies - Digital Nomads Associations	
3.4. Supply and installation of a network with smart benches	Existence of smart benches to facilitate the transportation/mobility of digital nomads	Human resources, time, supply of equipment, procedures for the promotion / use / maintenance of smart benches	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Municipality of Heraklion (technical department) - Digital Nomads Associations - Citizens	2 years
3.5. Enhancement of Walkability: Programme with the creation of new pedestrian streets and the upgrade of the existing pedestrian areas	More and modern pedestrian areas for digital nomads and locals	Human resources, time, spaces' reconstruction works, third party technical consultants / constructors	Municipality of Heraklion	- Municipality of Heraklion (technical department) - Digital Nomads Associations - Citizens	3 years

| SO4. Strengthen the image of Heraklion as a quality destination for digital nomads					
Activity	**Expected results**	**Resources**	**Leader**	**Key partners**	**Time frame**
4.1. Dedicated Municipal Website for Digital Nomads	A website for the promotion of Heraklion as digital nomads destination	Human resources, time, supply of equipment/ software, procedures for the promotion / update / maintenance of the website	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Municipality of Heraklion (other units) - Municipal Communities Presidents - Local associations of restaurants/ cafes / businesses - Local Universities - Co-Working Spaces companies - Technical / Consultant Companies	1 year
4.2. Digital Nomads App	An updated and modern mobile application for digital nomads that select Heraklion as their destination	Human resources, time, supply of equipment/ software, procedures for the promotion / use / update of the app	Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)	- Municipality of Heraklion (other units) - Municipal Communities Presidents - Local associations of restaurants/ cafes / businesses - Local Universities - Co-Working Spaces companies - Technical / Consultant Companies	1,5 year
4.3. Digital Nomads Events (e.g. yearly festival)	Creation of dedicated events such as a yearly digital nomads festival.	Human resources, time, procedures for the organization / promotion of the event	Municipality of Heraklion	- Multi-shareholding Municipal Corporation of the Municipality of Heraklion – DEPANAL S.A - Municipal Communities Presidents - Local association of restaurants/ cafes	2 years

SO4. Strengthen the image of Heraklion as a quality destination for digital nomads					
Activity	Expected results	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
				- Local Universities - Association of Hotels / Apartments Heraklion - Co-Working Spaces companies - Digital Nomads Associations	
4.4. Targeted Online Marketing Campaigns	- Search Engine Marketing for digital nomads - Social Media Marketing for digital nomads - Advertising and promotion material in digital nomads platforms	Human resources, time, supply of third-party marketing services	Municipality of Heraklion (tourism department)	- Municipality of Heraklion (strategic units) - Local associations of restaurants/ cafes / businesses - Multi-shareholding Municipal Corporation of the Municipality of Heraklion – DEPANAL S.A	Continuous
4.5. Cooperation with Digital Nomad Associations	Communication and promotion activities with international digital nomads' organisations	Human resources, time	Municipality of Heraklion (tourism department)	- Local associations of restaurants/ cafes / businesses - Entrepreneurship & Innovation NGOs	Continuous
4.6. Establish a (physical) Welcome Center for Digital Nomads	- A physical info point for digital nomads - Services like language training, guidance for cultural / activities proposal, housing list, local amenities, etc.	Human resources, time, space reconstruction works, supply of equipment, procedures for the maintenance of the welcome center	Municipality of Heraklion (tourism department)	- Municipality of Heraklion (technical department) - Municipal Communities Presidents - Local association of restaurants/ cafes - Local Universities - Association of Hotels / Apartments Heraklion - Co-Working Spaces companies - Digital Nomads Associations - Entrepreneurship & Innovation NGOs	2 years
4.7. Establish an Observatory / Monitoring Mechanism for Digital Nomads	A mechanism that can store and update useful data and indicators for digital nomads in Heraklion	Human resources, time, space, supply of equipment, procedures, and cooperation for data collection and analysis	Municipality of Heraklion (tourism department)	- Municipality of Heraklion (technical department) - Co-Working Spaces companies - Digital Nomads Associations - Entrepreneurship & Innovation NGOs	Continuous
4.8. Consultation with stakeholders (e.g. local hotels) for the exploitation of mass tourism with the digital nomad marketing efforts	Knowledge transformation and finding ways to promote Heraklion as a digital nomad destination to mass tourism	Human resources, time	Municipality of Heraklion (tourism department)	- Local association of restaurants/ cafes - Local Universities - Association of Hotels / Apartments Heraklion - Heraklion Chamber of Commerce - Airport / Port authorities	0,5 years

SO4. Strengthen the image of Heraklion as a quality destination for digital nomads					
Activity	Expected results	Resources	Leader	Key partners	Time frame
4.9. Education of Local Population for Creating an Encouraging Atmosphere for Digital Nomads	A more receptive local society to understand and properly host digital nomads.	Human resources, time, third party training services	Municipality of Heraklion	- Region of Crete (tourism directorate) - Local Universities - Digital Nomads Associations - Entrepreneurship & Innovation NGOs	1 year

IAP Section 3:
Action planning details

Actions

Action Plan-
ning Details
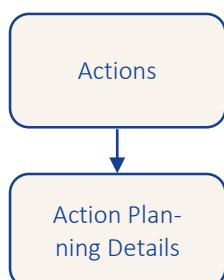
3.1 Prioritization of Actions

At the sixth meeting of the ULG, local stakeholder representatives were asked to select which of the actions presented in section 2 should be the priorities of the Action Plan. The prioritization criteria and their weights, as indicated by the ULG, are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Prioritization criteria

Evaluation Criterion	Description	Weight
Urgency	the need to take immediate action because of its importance in the current situation, as opposed to other actions	25%
Efficiency / Added Value	the extent to which the specific action can contribute to the strategic purpose and vision of the action plan	25%
Required Investment (cost)	the amount of budget/funding they believe is needed to carry out the action	15%
Post-Implementation Support	how the action can be supported by the Municipality of Heraklion and other stakeholders after its implementation, so that it can continue or be repeated if necessary	20%
Sustainability	The extent to which the action is compatible with the natural, social and economic environment of the city and in line with current sustainability policies	15%

The ULG members were divided into four groups and each group, after discussion, scored all the actions in each criterion on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest score. The weighted results of this procedure by all groups are presented in Table 7. The actions are indicated with the number given in Table 6.

Table 7: Actions' prioritization

Strategic Objective	Actions in descending order
SO1. Improve access to high-speed, stable internet throughout the city	1.4 | 1.5 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3
SO2. Improve access to work and accommodation facilities for digital nomads	2.2 | 2.3 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.7 | 2.1 | 2.5
SO3. Enhance accessibility and mobility within the city	3.2 | 3.1 | 3.5 | 3.3 | 3.4
SO4. Strengthen the image of Heraklion as a quality destination for digital nomads	4.2 | 4.1 | 4.5 | 4.8 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.9 | 4.7 | 4.6

3.2 Action planning details

Based on the results of the prioritization process, and excluding actions that do not require funding or which were launched as test actions, eight actions (two per intervention area) are presented in detail below.

|| ACTION 1.1. title: Expansion of the Public Open WiFi Network in areas of Heraklion

Area: High-Speed Internet Infrastructure

|| Short Description

The action concerns purchasing and installing equipment to extend the hotspot network in Heraklion to areas not yet covered by the existing network.

|| What Success Looks Like

15 new hotspots for public open WiFi access to the internet

|| Finance & Resources

Total Estimated Budget: 300.000€
Funding Structure:
External Funding 90% | Own Funding (Municipality of Heraklion) 10%
Funding Sources:
National Operation Program (WiFi4GR)
Recovery Fund (Smart Cities)

|| Duration

1,2 – 1,5 years
Estimated Start Date: Nov 2025
Estimated End Date: June 2027

| Owner of the action

Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)

| Stakeholders

Region of Crete (Electronic Government Directorate, ICT department) | Technical Chamber of Greece – Eastern Crete department | Heraklion Communities Representatives/ Counsellors

| Links to Strategy

Smart-City (Digital) Strategy of Heraklion Municipality

| Risks

Such a project may face several delays due to bureaucracy and price increases in equipment.

| Action Readiness

Mature phase: The proposal has been submitted for evaluation by the National Operation Program and Recovery Fund

|| ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	OUTPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES
Administrative procedures for obtaining funding & procurement tenders/ contracts	6 months (during all action period)	Municipality personnel			Delays due to bureaucratic procedures (e.g., procurement legislation changes)
Technical study for equipment specifications and installation	6 months	Subcontractor (technical company)	Technical specifications	Examination of compatibility with the existing Wifi network technology	
Equipment procurement procedures	3 months	Subcontractor (technical and ICT company)	Equipment		Possible price increases or technology changes
Installation and Testing of hotspots in public areas	3 months	Subcontractor (technical and ICT company)	15 new internet access hotspots in Heraklion	Acceptance and payment of the project by the Municipality of Heraklion	Delays due to the size of the intervention area (15 areas in Heraklion). Parts of the intervention areas won't be accessible to the public during installation.

|| ACTION 1.5. title: Scalability of Internet Network to Support Smart City's Applications and IoT Devices

Area: High-Speed Internet Infrastructure

|| Short Description
The action includes the preparation of a study to be used for the scalability of the Internet network and the integration of Heraklion's smart city services into all available devices and Internet of Things applications.

|| What Success Looks Like
1 action plan for the interconnection and integration of Heraklion's smart city services to citizens and digital nomads.

|| Finance & Resources
Total Estimated Budget: 65.000€
Funding Structure:
External Funding 95% | Own Funding (Municipality of Heraklion) 5%
Funding Sources:
National Operation Program | Recovery Fund (Smart Cities) | EU Funds

|| Duration
1 year
Estimated Start Date: Nov 2025
Estimated End Date: Nov 2026

| Owner of the action
Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)

| Stakeholders
Municipality of Heraklion (strategic units) | Region of Crete (E-Government Directorate, ICT department, Tourism Directorate) | Local Universities | Heraklion Chamber of Commerce | Tourism unions | Technical / Consultant Companies

| Links to Strategy
Smart-City (Digital) Strategy of Heraklion Municipality

| Risks
Such a project may face several delays due to bureaucracy. It must anticipate needs and technologies for the next 20 years.

| Action Readiness
Initial phase: Search for funding and preparation of study specifications by the ICT department of the Municipality of Heraklion

|| ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	OUTPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES
Administrative procedures for obtaining funding & procurement tenders/ contracts	6 months (during all action period)	Municipality personnel			Not funding opportunities during this period. Delays due to bureaucratic procedures (e.g., procurement legislation changes)
Conducting and delivering study / action plan	6 months	Subcontractor (technical/ IT company)	1 study/ action plan for the interconnection and integration of Heraklion's smart city services to citizens and digital nomads	Mapping of all existing smart city applications/services Consultation with stakeholders Suggestions for integration and pathways for integrated delivery of digital services	Some existing digital services were built in the distant past and are not compatible with modern technology.

ACTION 2.2. title: Development of a database of suitable houses for digital nomads

Area: Work and Accommodation Facilities for Digital Nomads

|| Short Description

The action concerns the creation of a digital mechanism for the registration and management of properties that can be offered for the accommodation of digital nomads, so that they can easily start their search for a place to live in Heraklion.

|| What Success Looks Like

1 easy-to-use system for the registration and editing of suitable properties for the accommodation of digital nomads.

1 new internal procedure for the Municipality of Heraklion for the management of the system and the help-desk of involved stakeholders.

100 Residences (housing) for digital nomads registered in the database.

|| Finance & Resources

Total Estimated Budget: 50.000€
Funding Structure:
External Funding 50% | Own Funding (Municipality of Heraklion) 50%
Funding Sources: Regional Operational Program Kriti (Crete) | EU Funds

|| Duration

1,2 years
Estimated Start Date: Oct 2025
Estimated End Date: Dec 2026

| Owner of the action

Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)

| Stakeholders

Directorate of Tourism Region of Crete | Association of Business entrepreneurs of apartments – Rooms for Rental | Association of Hotels Heraklion | Owners of premises | Co-Working Spaces companies

| Links to Strategy

Tourism Strategy of Heraklion Municipality

| Risks

Delays in funding or due to bureaucratic procedures. Lack of interest from property owners.

| Action Readiness

Initial phase: Search for funding and preparation of specifications by the ICT and tourism department of the Municipality of Heraklion.

|| ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	OUTPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES
Administrative procedures for obtaining funding & procurement of equipment/ services	3- 6 months (during all action period)	Municipality personnel			Delays in funding or due to bureaucratic procedures (e.g., procurement legislation changes)
Study for system design and usage procedure / service	3 months	Municipality personnel Maybe subcontractor (consultant company)	Technical specifications of the system 1 new service for the Heraklion's city.	Collaboration of ICT and tourism departments to set up the new service	
Equipment procurement	3 months	Subcontractor (supplier)	Equipment		
Database / system development & testing	3 months	Municipality personnel Subcontractor (ICT company)	1 system for finding suitable accommodation for digital nomads.	Testing interoperability / integration with websites/ mobile apps	
Promotion and operation of the system / database	3 months		100 residences registered in the database	Promotion of the system from stakeholders to premises owners	Lack of availability / interest from property owners

|| ACTION 2.6. title: Accreditation programme for digital nomad-friendly local businesses

Area: Work and Accommodation Facilities for Digital Nomads

|| Short Description

This action aims to motivate and reward local hospitality/entertainment businesses to adopt digital nomad-friendly practices through a certification process by the Municipality of Heraklion. The certification will cover internet infrastructure, available space for remote working, and business policies.

|| What Success Looks Like

1 accreditation procedure for local cafes/ entertainment businesses.

1 list/ database for suitable cafes/ entertainment businesses for digital nomads.

60 accredited businesses

|| Finance & Resources

Total Estimated Budget: 60.000€

Funding Structure:

External Funding 90% | Own Funding (Municipality of Heraklion) 10%

Funding Sources: Regional Operational Program Kriti (Crete) | EU Funds

|| Duration

1,5 years for the establishment of the service, then continuous

Estimated Start Date: Dec 2025

Estimated End Date: Oct 2027

| Owner of the action

Municipality of Heraklion (planning department)

| Stakeholders

Municipality of Heraklion (tourism department)| Heraklion Chamber of Commerce | Association of Hotels / Apartments in Heraklion | Co-Working Spaces companies

| Links to Strategy

Tourism Strategy of Heraklion Municipality

| Risks

Delays in funding or due to bureaucratic procedures. Lack of interest from local businesses.

| Action Readiness

Initial phase: Search for funding and prepare specifications by the Municipality of Heraklion.

|| ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	OUTPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES
Administrative procedures for obtaining funding & procurement of equipment/ services	3- 6 months (during all action period)	Municipality personnel			Delays in funding or due to bureaucratic procedures (e.g., procurement legislation changes)
Study for the accreditation system design and the provision of service	3 months	Municipality personnel Maybe a subcontractor (a consulting company)	1 new accreditation procedure for local cafes/ entertainment businesses	Collaboration with relevant local stakeholders (e.g. chamber of commerce)	
Promotion and operation of the accreditation procedure	6 months	Municipality personnel Employees with a project contract	1 list/ database for suitable cafes/ entertainment businesses for digital nomads. 60 accredited businesses	Promotion of the accreditation from stakeholders to business owners. Accreditation of businesses.	Lack of interest from local businesses.

‖ ACTION 3.2. title: Mobile App for the transportation / mobility system of Heraklion

Area: Local transportation and mobility system

‖ Short Description

This action will develop a mobile application that will allow digital nomads and visitors to Heraklion in general to find and use all means of transport and accessibility in the city.

The app is designed from Municipality of Heraklion and will include features for digital nomads.

‖ What Success Looks Like

1 mobile application with all available green and traditional means of transport to/from and within Heraklion.

120 digital nomads who registered in the mobile app

‖ Finance & Resources

Total Estimated Budget: 100.000€

Funding Structure:

External Funding 90% | Own Funding (Municipality of Heraklion) 10%

Funding Sources: Horizon Europe research and innovation programme | EU Funds

‖ Duration

1,5 years for the first launch of app, then continuous

Estimated Start Date: Sept 2025

Estimated End Date: Jan 2027

⏐ Owner of the action

Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)

⏐ Stakeholders

KTEL Heraklio - Lasithi S.A. (transportation company) | Heraklion Urban Bus | Heraklion's Airport / Port authorities | Municipal Communities Presidents | Private transportation companies| Technical / Consultant Companies

⏐ Links to Strategy

Smart-City (Digital) Strategy of Heraklion Municipality

Tourism Strategy of Heraklion Municipality

⏐ Risks

Delays in funding for app maintenance or delays due to bureaucratic procedures.

⏐ Action Readiness

Mature phase: The first funding has been obtained and the specifications/ design are in process.

‖ ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	OUTPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES
Administrative procedures for obtaining funding & procurement of equipment/ services	3- 6 months (during all action period)	Municipality personnel			Delays in funding for maintenance/ update or bureaucratic procedures
System analysis, system design and specifications of the mobile app	1 month to complete	Subcontractor (a consulting / ICT company)		Collaboration with relevant local stakeholders (e.g. transportation companies)	Low risk because this activity is ongoing
Mobile App development & testing	6 months	Municipality personnel Subcontractor (ICT company)	1 mobile app for transportation / accessibility in Heraklion	Testing interoperability / integration with websites/ mobile apps	
Promotion and operation of the mobile app	6 months	Municipality personnel Subcontractor	1 promotional campaign 120 digital nomads registered in the app	Promotion of the mobile app from stakeholders to possible users	
Update and maintenance of the mobile app	continues	Municipality personnel Subcontractor			Lack of funding, Lack of interest from users.

|| ACTION 3.5. title: Enhancement of Walkability in Heraklion

Area: Local transportation and mobility system

|| Short Description

The action aims to improve the mobility of residents and visitors in the center of Heraklion. It includes the creation of new pedestrian streets and the upgrading of existing pedestrian streets. This action is expected to greatly help digital nomads to enjoy the city with the best walking standards.

In each pedestrian street (where feasible) a distinct traffic zone is created of the bicycle, a bicycle parking zone, urban equipment placement zone, urban equipment placement zone, urban green space, etc.

|| What Success Looks Like

6 pedestrian streets/ area in Heraklion's city center will be upgraded

4 new pedestrian streets/ areas will be created in Heraklion center or Nea Alikarnassos community (e.g. Irodotou street).

|| Finance & Resources

Total Estimated Budget: 1.200.000€

Funding Structure:

External Funding 90% | Own Funding (Municipality of Heraklion) 10%

Funding Sources: National Operation Program (SUMP) | EU Funds | European Investment Bank (EIB)

|| Duration

3 years

Estimated Start Date: Sept 2025

Estimated End Date: Sept 2028

I Owner of the action

Municipality of Heraklion (strategic units)

I Stakeholders

Municipality of Heraklion (technical department) | Technical Chamber of Greece – Eastern Crete department | Digital Nomads Associations | Citizens | Municipal Communities Presidents

I Links to Strategy

Local and Special Urban Plan (L.U.P.) of Municipality of Heraklion

I Risks

As a construction action, it may face several delays due to bureaucracy and price increases in construction services.

I Action Readiness

Initial phase: A funding proposal should be prepared.

|| ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	OUTPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES
Administrative procedures for obtaining funding & procurement of equipment/ services	6-12 months (during all action period)	Municipality personnel			Delays in funding for maintenance/ update or bureaucratic procedures
Technical Studies for existing and new pedestrian streets	12 months	Subcontractor (a construction company)			
Construction	18 months	Municipality personnel Subcontractor (a construction company)	6 upgraded pedestrian streets 4 new pedestrian streets / areas	Acceptance, quality control and payment of the project by the Municipality of Heraklion	Possible price increases in construction services. Parts of the intervention areas won't be accessible to the public during construction.

‖ ACTION 4.2. title: Digital Nomads App

Area: Marketing and Awareness

‖ Short Description

This action will develop an updated and modern mobile application for digital nomads who choose Heraklion as their destination. The application will include features and content for digital nomads related to the cultural, sporting, entertainment and gastronomic life of Heraklion, as well as useful information for necessary civic procedures related to health, education, etc.

‖ What Success Looks Like

1 mobile application with all the useful information for digital nomads choosing Heraklion.

‖ Finance & Resources

Total Estimated Budget: 80.000€ (including 1-year support)
Funding Structure:
External Funding 80% | Own Funding (Municipality of Heraklion) 20%
Funding Sources: Regional Operational Program Kriti (Crete) | National Operation Program | EU Funds

‖ Duration

1,5 years for the first launch of the app, then continuous
Estimated Start Date: Dec 2025
Estimated End Date: April 2027

| Owner of the action

Municipality of Heraklion (ICT department)

| Stakeholders

Municipality of Heraklion (other units) | Municipal companies | Municipal Communities Presidents | Local associations of restaurants/ cafes / businesses | Local Universities | Co-Working Spaces companies | Technical / Consultant Companies.

| Links to Strategy

Smart-City (Digital) Strategy of Heraklion Municipality
Tourism Strategy of Heraklion Municipality

| Risks

Lack of or delays in funding, delays due to bureaucratic procedures, poor content in app, maintenance of the app

| Action Readiness

Initial phase: A funding proposal should be prepared.

‖ ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	OUTPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES
Administrative procedures for obtaining funding & procurement of equipment/ services	3- 6 months (during all action period)	Municipality personnel			Delays in funding or bureaucratic procedures
System analysis, system design and specifications of the app	3 months	Subcontractor (a consulting / ICT company)		Collaboration with relevant local stakeholders	
Mobile App development & testing	6 months	Municipality personnel Subcontractor (ICT company)		Testing interoperability / integration with websites/ mobile apps	Poor content in app
Promotion and operation of the mobile app	6 months	Municipality personnel Subcontractor	1 mobile app for digital nomads 1 promotional campaign	Promotion of the mobile app from stakeholders to possible users	Lack of interest from users.
Update and maintenance of the mobile app	continues	Municipality personnel Subcontractor			Lack of funding, inability to renew content

|| ACTION 4.4. title: Online Marketing Campaigns Promoting Heraklion to Digital Nomads

Area: Marketing and Awareness

|| Short Description

This action concerns the creation of digital marketing campaigns to promote Heraklion as a destination for digital nomads in Europe and America.

|| What Success Looks Like

3 discrete digital marketing campaigns in search engines, social media and digital nomads' platforms.

3000 unique foreign visitors to the dedicated digital nomads' municipal website

|| Finance & Resources

Total Estimated Budget: 45.000€

Funding Structure:

External Funding 80% | Own Funding (Municipality of Heraklion) 20%

Funding Sources: Regional Operational Program Kriti (Crete) | National Operation Program | EU Funds

|| Duration

1,2 year

Estimated Start Date: Dec 2025

Estimated End Date: March 2027

| Owner of the action

Municipality of Heraklion (tourism department)

| Stakeholders

Municipality of Heraklion (other units) | Municipal companies | Local restaurants/ cafes / businesses associations | Digital nomads' associations.

| Links to Strategy

Tourism Strategy of Heraklion Municipality

| Risks

Lack of or delays in funding, delays due to bureaucratic procedures, inconsistency with the central branding campaign of Heraklion

| Action Readiness

Initial phase: A funding proposal should be prepared.

|| ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	OUTPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES
Administrative procedures for obtaining funding & procurement of equipment/ services	3- 6 months (during all action period)	Municipality personnel			Delays in funding or bureaucratic procedures
Creation of Marketing Content (videos, banners, text ads)	4 months	Subcontractor (a promotion company)		Collaboration with relevant local stakeholders for content creation	Lack of connection with the central branding campaign of Heraklion
Search Engine Marketing Campaign	8 months (in parallel with other activities)	Municipality personnel Subcontractor	1 campaign in search engines	Landing page in Heraklion's digital nomad website	
Social Media Marketing Campaign	8 months (in parallel with other activities)	Municipality personnel Subcontractor	1 campaign in social media	Connection with municipality's social media / websites	
Advertising in Digital Nomads' Platforms (display / video ads)	6 months (in parallel with other activities)	Municipality personnel Subcontractor	1 campaign in digital nomads' platforms	Creation of articles that can be post in parallel with ads	
Evaluation of campaigns' performance	1 month	Municipality personnel Subcontractor	3000 unique foreign visitors to the digital nomads' website	Methodology to measure the real convertions (intend to come in Heraklion)	

3.3 Output Indicators and Timeline Summary

The overall result of the above actions is presented in the table below. The basic output indicators selected for each action are accompanied by the way in which the information was collected (source of information).

Table 8: Output indicators

| Action	Output Indicator	Baseline Value	Target Value	Source of Information
ACTION 1.1.: Expansion of the Public Open WiFi Network in areas of Heraklion	Number of Internet Hotspots	17 (2025)	32 (2027)	Annual Reports from ICT department of Heraklion's municipality
ACTION 1.5.: Scalability of Internet Network to Support Smart City's Applications and IoT Devices	Number of action plans for the integration of Heraklion's digital services to citizens / digital nomads	0 (2025)	1 (2026)	Annual Reports from ICT department of Heraklion's municipality
ACTION 2.2.: Development of a database of suitable houses for digital nomads	Number of residences (housing) for digital nomads registered in the database	0 (2025)	100 (2026)	Database performance report from ICT department of Heraklion's municipality
ACTION 2.6.: Accreditation programme for digital nomad-friendly local businesses	Number of businesses (companies) that are accredited as digital nomad-friendly	0 (2025)	60 (2026)	Performance report from the Planning department of Heraklion's municipality
ACTION 3.2.: Mobile App for the transportation/ mobility system of Heraklion	Number of registered users in the application who have declared themselves as digital nomads	0 (2025)	120 (2027) (+25% annually)	Mobile App performance report from ICT department of Heraklion's municipality
ACTION 3.5.: Enhancement of Walkability in Heraklion	Number of pedestrian areas in Heraklion city	12 (2025)	16 (2028)	Annual Reports from technical department of Heraklion's municipality for the implementation of L.U.P
ACTION 4.2.: Digital Nomads App	Number of registered users in the application	0 (2025)	180 (2027) (+25% annually)	Mobile App performance report from ICT department of Heraklion's municipality
ACTION 4.4.: Online Marketing Campaigns Promoting Heraklion to Digital Nomads	Number of unique foreign visitors to the dedicated digital nomads' municipal website	0 (2025)	3000 (2027)	Website performance reports form ICT department of Heraklion's municipality

In terms of timing, the following Gantt chart shows the programming of the actions. As some actions are in their initial phase and require funding, the Gantt chart shows their duration in quarters rather than dates.

Action	1st year				2nd year				3rd year			
	1q	2q	3q	4q	5q	6q	7q	8q	9q	10q	11q	12q
ACTION 1.1.: Expansion of the Public Open WiFi Network in areas of Heraklion	■	■	■	■	■							
ACTION 1.5.: Scalability of Internet Network to Support Smart City's Applications and IoT Devices	■	■	■	■								
ACTION 2.2.: Development of a database of suitable houses for digital nomads	■	■	■	■								
ACTION 2.6.: Accreditation programme for digital nomad-friendly local businesses		■	■	■	■	■	■					
ACTION 3.2.: Mobile App for the transportation/ mobility system of Heraklion	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
ACTION 3.5.: Enhancement of Walkability in Heraklion	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
ACTION 4.2.: Digital Nomads App		■	■	■	■	■	■					
ACTION 4.4.: Online Marketing Campaigns Promoting Heraklion to Digital Nomads		■	■	■	■	■						

Figure 7: Actions' Gantt Chart

IAP Section 4:
Implementation framework

This Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for the city of Heraklion has been prepared in the framework of the URBACT initiative. However, its implementation will mainly take place after the end of the Remote-IT project. This section presents the key elements related to the framework for the implementation of the actions presented in the previous sections.

4.1. Governance

Action Planning Details

↓

Implementation Framework
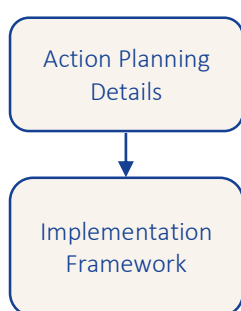
The Municipality of Heraklion is the owner of this IAP and will be responsible for the future coordination of stakeholders, the implementation and support of the above-mentioned actions. The Municipality of Heraklion has many individual departments that are expected to be involved in the project, such as the Planning and Development Department, the IT Department, the Tourism Department, etc. The allocation of activities and tasks to the individual departments of the municipality is a process that should start immediately after the completion of the Remote-IT project. For the implementation of the actions, the municipality will also need to do some additional planning in terms of human resources, as it is expected that most of the actions will require new partners with project contracts.

4.2 Ongoing stakeholder engagement

The participants in the ULG group, who have been involved in developing this IAP in both advisory and substantive roles, expressed a desire for their work to continue after the Remote IT project concludes. A steering committee could be established, which would meet either in person or online three to four times a year. This committee would continue to analyze the current and future situation of the city concerning digital nomads. The Municipality of Heraklion, as the lead partner, will keep the other partners informed about the implementation of actions, seek their contributions, and record any new or additional proposals. This more permanent coordination committee for digital nomads could potentially be integrated into the Tourism Committee of the Municipality of Heraklion.

4.3 Overall costings and funding strategy

Most of the actions outlined in the Plan require funding, which varies in amount. A mix of funding sources is needed, ranging from internal resources to large grants from national and European programs.

In addition to the funds that the Municipality of Heraklion can allocate from its reserves (own funding), several national co-financed programs can assist in this effort. These include the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) with its specific national guidelines, the Operational Programme Kriti (Crete), and the Public Investment Programme.

European funding sources that may contribute to the realization of this project, indicatively include programmes such as URBACT, HORIZON Europe, the Digital Europe Programme, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), REACT-EU, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the European Social Fund+, and Erasmus+.

The municipality of Heraklion has the administrative capacity to prepare studies and funding proposals for the funding sources mentioned above. It is also crucial to plan actions related to similar existing or future projects to ensure the successful implementation of the current plan after its execution.

4.4 Overall timeline

The vision for Heraklion, as outlined in this plan, has a time horizon set for 2035. In section 3.3, a three-year timetable for priority actions has been presented. Assuming that the implementation of these actions will begin at the end of 2025, the following high-level timeline can be established:

- **late 2025 - early 2026**: Completion of planning, budgeting, and stakeholder commitments
- **2026**: Launch of all initial actions - Completion of the majority of the actions regarding the digital infrastructure and the improvement of awareness/marketing
- **2028**: Completion of the majority of the actions regarding the local transportation /mobility system and the Work and Accommodation Facilities for Digital Nomads
- **2028 and beyond**: Maintenance, iteration, or expansion of actions based on monitoring feedback - design of new actions according to current needs and contexts

4.5 Risk assessment

The detailed description of the priority actions in this IAP outlines the risks associated with each planned action. Many of these risks are similar across different actions. The table below provides a comprehensive assessment and mitigation strategy for seven (7) risk categories identified in the entire action plan.

Table 9: Overall risk assessment and risk mitigation strategy

Risk Type	Likelihood / Impact	Possible Risks & Challenges	Risk Mitigation Strategy
Bureaucratic / Administrative	Medium / Medium	- Delays in public procurement and tendering - Complex approval procedures for EU funding	- Prepare technical documentation early - Assign experienced staff to funding management
Financial	Medium / High	- Delays in securing EU/national funds - Over-dependence on external funding sources	- Diversify funding sources - Include internal contingency funds in budgeting
Technical / Infrastructure	Low / Medium	- Use of non-interoperable IT systems - Supply chain delays for equipment	- Use modular and open-source systems - Engage suppliers early in planning
Stakeholder Engagement	Medium / High	- Low engagement from business owners - Stakeholder fatigue after	- Continuation of the awareness campaign for local businesses

		the project ends	- Incentivize participation (branding, support) - Institutionalize stakeholder engagement groups
Human Resources	Medium / Medium	- Lack of skilled staff for implementation - Difficulty in hiring experts on time	- Planning more recruitment in critical departments of the Municipality of Heraklion dealing with sustainability and tourism development - Outsource technical tasks - Allocate budget for consulting support
Social / Cultural	Medium / High	- Local resistance to digital nomads - Perceived pressure on housing market	- Run awareness and integration campaigns - Highlight local benefits and success stories
Political / Strategic	Medium / High	- Change of political leadership or priorities - Lack of long-term commitment post-project	- Include IAP in strategic city plans - Secure cross-party support and documentation - Commitment of resources in future budgets for specific project actions

4.6 Monitoring and reporting

The successful implementation of the IAP requires a robust and transparent monitoring and reporting framework. This system will ensure that the actions defined in the IAP are delivered effectively, on time, and in alignment with the strategic objectives of the Remote-IT project. Key components of the monitoring framework will be:

- **Performance Indicators (KPIs)**: Each strategic and operational objective has already been linked to specific, measurable indicators. Examples include the number of Wi-Fi hotspots installed, the number of businesses accredited as "digital nomad-friendly", the number of digital nomads in Heraklion, etc.

- **Progress Tracking:** The Municipality of Heraklion should establish a monitoring cycle involving internal reporting by the municipal implementation team, partner updates from stakeholders (e.g., business networks, IT providers), and feedback sessions within the stakeholders' steering committee that will replace ULG after the Remote-IT project.

- **Evaluation Reports:** An annual IAP implementation report will be compiled and published by the Municipality of Heraklion. This will include status updates on all actions, assessment of outcomes and impacts, and recommendations for corrective measures or strategic adjustments.

- **Feedback Mechanisms:** User feedback will be collected systematically through surveys for digital nomads and residents, stakeholder interviews or co-evaluation meetings, social media and app-based engagement tools.

- **Integration with Municipality's Policy:** The monitoring system will be aligned with the city's broader planning and budgeting cycles, ensuring that corrective actions are timely and institutional memory is preserved beyond the duration of the Remote-IT project.

The above monitoring framework will be further strengthened by combining it with the proposed "Action 4.7. Establish an Observatory / Monitoring Mechanism for Digital Nomads". Specifically, data from the Observatory will be systematically incorporated into the monitoring framework to record quantitative and qualitative statistics on the number and experience of digital nomads in Heraklion.

Conclusion

The Integrated Action Plan of Heraklion city under the Remote-IT project represents a strategic and timely effort to harness the opportunities of remote work and digital nomadism. It offers a well-balanced mix of actions targeting digital infrastructure, physical space adaptation, mobility enhancement, and socio-economic inclusion.

What distinguishes Heraklion's approach is the participatory process that shaped the plan, ensuring alignment with local aspirations, assets, and limitations. The involvement of public, private, academic, and civic actors through the URBACT Local Group (ULG) has laid the foundation for a collaborative governance model that will continue beyond the project's end.

The IAP not only focuses on attracting digital nomads; it can leverage their presence to promote urban innovation, support local entrepreneurship, and diversify the city's tourism model. By connecting digital nomads / remote workers with local communities and resources, Heraklion can strengthen its identity as a dynamic, open, and knowledge-based city.

To successfully implement this plan, strong political support, efficient coordination, and ongoing engagement with stakeholders are essential. With these components in place, Heraklion is poised to become a model city for digital resilience and the integration of remote work in the Mediterranean region and beyond.

APPENDIX I: Heraklion's ULG Members

ULG Standing Members

- Renia Drosou, Head of the Directorate of Programming, Planning and ICT, Municipality of Heraklion - Project Coordinator
- Panagiotis Tsakmopoulos, Head of European Programs Department, Municipality of Heraklion, Financial Manager
- Zacharenia Vitorou, European Programs Department, Municipality of Heraklion, Communication Manager
- Manolis Koutentakis, Head of ICT Department, Municipality of Heraklion
- Karagiannakis Georgios, Network Security Expert, Municipality of Heraklion
- Manolis Petrakis, External associate of the European Programs Department, Municipality of Heraklion
- Kiriakos Kotsoglou, Deputy Regional Governor of Tourism of the Region of Crete
- Perisinakis Athanasios, Deputy Regional Governor of Electronic Government of the Region of Crete
- Mariana Dimitriou, Head of the Development Planning Department of the Development Organization of Local Self-Government Heraklion S.A of the Municipality of Heraklion
- Ioannis Papadimitriou, Coordinator at the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Hub Hellenic Mediterranean University (HMU)
- George Mastorakis, Associate Professor, Hellenic Mediterranean University of Crete (HMU)
- Maria Liontaki, Tourism and Hospitality & Chief Auditor, TUV HELLAS (TUV NORD) S.A
- George Karapidakis, Technical Advisor of the Chamber of Heraklion, Municipal Councilor of the Municipality of Heraklion
- Alexandra Karapidaki, BIZRUPT NGO, Business maturation organization // incubator & accelerator
- Popi Daskalaki, Women Do Business NGO, (actions for female entrepreneurship and the elimination of stereotypes)
- Ourania Giakoumaki, Head of the ICT Department, Region of Crete
- George Christodoulakis, President of the Association of Business entrepreneurs of apartments – Rooms for Rental "Filoxenia"
- Evi Martimianaki, Head of the Department of Culture, Municipality of Heraklion
- Varverakis Kostantinos, President of Multi-shareholding Municipal Corporation of the Municipality of Heraklion – DEPANAL S.A
- Aikaterini Vlasaki, Head of the Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete

ULG Guest Members (after invitation)

- Alexandros Apostolakis, Professor of the Department of Business Administration & Tourism, Hellenic Mediterranean University
- Maria (Mara) Panagiotaki, Vice-president of DEPANAL SA (municipal company)
- George Papamichail, Director of Technological Park of Crete, FORTH
- Jack Gomarasca or Brittany Loeffler, Nomads Embassy Portal Founders
- Nikolaos Fountoulakis, Association of Hotels Heraklion
- Nikolaos Sirigonakis, Deputy Regional Governor of Heraklion of the Region of Crete
- Theodora Koutentaki, Appointed Young Generation and Youth Entrepreneurship Advisor, Region of Crete.
- Representantive of Digital Nomads Observatory Civil Non-Profit Company, seated in Rhodes, Greece
- CO-WORKING SPACES Representatives

ULG Coordination

- Markos Kourgiantakis, Associate Professor of the Department of Business Administration & Tourism, Hellenic Mediterranean University
- Sofia Maragkaki, Project Manager, Hellenic Mediterranean University

Presidents of Municipal Communities

A. MUNICIPAL UNIT OF HERAKLION:
- Aggelidaki Theodosia, President of the 1st Municipal Community
- Binihakis Michail, President of the 2nd Municipal Community
- Vamvoukas Michail, President of the 3rd Municipal Community
- Vrouchou Dorothea, President of the 4th Municipal Community
- Chourdakis Stilianos, President of the Municipal Community of Vasilies
- Alogdianakis Charalampos, President of the Municipal Community of Voutes
- Petrogiannis Vasilios, President of the Municipal Community of Dafnes
- Stiakakis Konstantinos, President of the Municipal Community of Skalani
- Chiotakis Zacharias, President of the Municipal Community of Stavrakia

B. MUNICIPAL UNIT OF NEA ALIKARNASSOS
- Tsouloufas Alexandros, President of the Municipal Community of Nea Alikarnassos
- Chourdaki Maria, President of the Municipal Community of Kalithea

C. MUNICIPAL UNIT OF GORGOLAINI
- Sifakis Ioannis, President of the Municipal Community of Agios Mironas
- Piperakis Evaggelos, President of the Municipal Community of Ano Asites
- Christodoulakis Astrinos, President of the Municipal Community of Kato Asites
- Giamniadakis Ioannis, President of the Municipal Community of Pentamodi
- Aggouridakis Emmanouil, President of the Municipal Community of Petrokefalo
- Chairetis Michail, President of the Municipal Community of Pyrgou

D. MUNICIPAL UNIT OF PALIANI
- Maragakis Evaggelos, President of the Municipal Community of Venerato
- Dermitzakis Ioannis, President of the Municipal Community of Avgeniki
- Kogkakis Ioannis, President of the Municipal Community of Kerasia
- Ktistakis Georgios, President of the Municipal Community of Siva

E. MUNICIPAL UNIT OF TEMENOS
- Tsatsarakis Emmanouil, President of the Municipal Community of Profitis Ilias
- Kypraki Maria, President of the Municipal Community of Agios Syllas
- Stavrakaki-Kavou Maria, President of the Municipal Community of Kiparissi