



Final IAP Report

By Lead Expert, Stine Skot

COPE

– Coherent, place-based, citizen centered climate action



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Index

COPE Action Planning Network, December 2025

This report was written with help and support from all COPE partners. And with contributions through conversations and activities with the many stakeholders and public servants and politicians, who generously shared their experiences, knowledge and interests during the network and local activities. And based on several review processes of the IAPs of the 8 COPE municipalities as well as on activities in the 8 Core Network Meetings and site-visits, one one-on-one meetings and through the 4 webinars.

Cover image taken in Copenhagen at the site-visit at our final Core Network Meeting.

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1. The COPE network and participating cities

COPE is an URBACT APN IV network. The network consists of 8 European municipalities, with the City of Copenhagen as lead partner. The seven partners are the cities of A Coruña in Spain, the two Greek cities Kavala and Korydallos, the Romanian city Bistrița, the French city Saint-Quentin, the Portuguese city Pombal and the Lithuanian capital Vilnius.

The COPE Network is about changing mindsets. As an URBACT Action Planning Network, the focus is on testing smaller initiatives to develop meaningful integrated action plans for urban development. To succeed in the green transition, change is needed in our political institutions, in the way we govern and plan our cities, and in civil society. Through co-created actions, deliberative dialogue, and the testing and evaluation of activities and governance structures, cities in the COPE network are working on developing and adjusting municipal policies, strategies and structures to become coherent and integrated and to push their cities for a green and just transition in line with the European Green Deal¹. In practice, this means that the municipality must be able to facilitate citizens' green actions in balance with the need for equity and a just transition.



URBACT



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¹ [The European Green Deal - European Commission](#) retrieved the 12th of December 2025

2. Network thematic focus and methodology

The COPE SCOPE

The COPE network purpose is to unlock the local green potential of citizen action by using a coherent place-based approach based on the principles in the ABCD with a certain degree of Open Governance. Specifically, it requires procedures for building the capacity and organization to both facilitate the necessary participatory processes and for embedding the results and input in the policy development and not least is the requirement to build and earn the trust of the local citizens and stakeholders essential.

Citizen participation is about the distribution of power.

- Professor Oliver Escobar, chair of public policy and democratic innovation.²

ABCD stands for Asset Based Community Development. The ABCD approach is an overall attempt to empower the citizens and to strengthen a community by **creating relations** and **building trust** to make it sustainable and to create a base for action.

By applying the ABCD approach we force the local authorities to step out of the box and **be curious and open to new ideas** based on **the local resources, hopes and ambitions** and **to empower the citizens in taking action**, leaving very little room for thinking of the citizens as users of the municipality services.

ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) represents a shift in the traditional governance perspective on communities. Unlike the conventional needs-driven approach that centres on addressing problems within a community while responding with services and top-down strategies, ABCD takes a different approach. In ABCD, the emphasis is on recognizing the individual and collective strengths of citizens, actively listening to their aspirations, and identifying the energy and motivations that drive action. This approach focuses on the positive aspects within a community, harnessing its inherent capabilities and motivations to foster meaningful change.

Open governance³ is a concept related to how organizations, communities, or governments operate and make decisions in a transparent, inclusive, and collaborative manner. Key principles associated with open governance are:

Transparency: Making information, data, and discussions about policies, actions, and decisions accessible to the public or relevant stakeholders. Transparency ensures that people can see how and why certain decisions are made.

Inclusivity: Inclusivity ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, which can lead to more well-rounded decisions. This includes not only leaders and officials but also citizens, members of a community, or participants in an organization.

Participation: Open governance encourages active participation from stakeholders. This can take the form of public consultations, community meetings, online forums, or other mechanisms that allow individuals to voice their opinions and contribute to the decision-making process.

Accountability: Open governance holds decision-makers accountable for their actions and decisions. When the decision-making process is transparent and inclusive, it becomes easier to identify who is responsible for

² From: [Inaugural Lecture: Professor Oliver Escobar | School of Social and Political Science](#)

³ Wirtz, B.W. & Birkmeyer, S. (2015): "Open Government: Origin, Development, and Conceptual Perspectives". *International Journal of Public Administration*. VOL 38, NO.5, pp.381-396, doi: 10.1080/01900692.2014.942735

specific choices and outcomes. Accountability can help prevent corruption and ensure that those in power are acting in the best interests of the community or organization.

Collaboration: Open governance often involves collaboration among various stakeholders. This collaborative approach can lead to more innovative and effective solutions to complex problems because it draws on a wider range of expertise and perspectives.

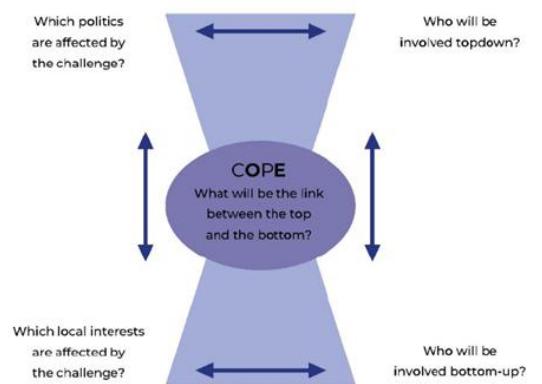
Digital Technology: In today's digital age, open governance is often facilitated by technology. Online platforms, social media, and digital tools can make it easier to share information, gather input, and engage with stakeholders in a transparent and inclusive manner.

To unfold this purpose COPE focused on developing Integrated Actions Plans (IAPs) on three key levels of intervention areas:

Governance. What is the level of openness in the city governance? What governance development is needed to support a place-based participatory process?

Local collaboration. Mapping and engaging local stakeholders and mapping the local resources and dreams.

Local actions. Empowering the local resources through participatory processes. Support local initiatives and build the local capacity to make sustainable just green transition through meaningful local actions.



Exploring and developing a new role in the government structure first of all requires a **massive change of mindset** and second of all a **profound organizational change** of structures and procedures.

In COPE we are taking small steps according to the different levels of experience the COPE partner cities already have. We believe that municipal officers can take on an important role in facilitating and coordinating the commitment that already exists among citizens, businesses, and local communities.

For example, by supporting local communities of action in the form of energy communities, recycling initiatives and citizen-driven efforts to preserve and restore nature. It makes sense for many citizens and other parties to act concrete, close to their place, together with others - and it motivates them to seeing concrete results and progress.



Involving citizens and local action groups will in many cities ask for a change in working procedures. This change entails a development of governance procedures into a more open approach implementing place-based policies. In doing so the administration will bring decision-making closer to citizens and local stakeholders and thereby increase the focus on equality and diversity.

Considering the governance framework, the level of openness and the ability to integrate local context in policymaking also includes considering the role and leadership of public governance as such. The green transition challenges are often technical or environmental and a big mistake in leadership and in our public governance is treating adaptive challenges as technical problems. The COPE network explores our own practice throughout the project e.g., by reflecting on our own relation to the division of technical problems versus adaptive problems according to Ronald Heifetz analysis in this figure.



Technical issues

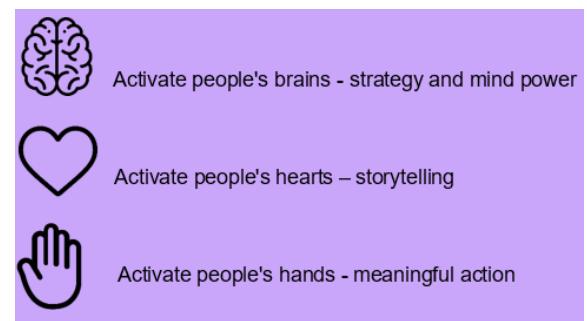
- 1 Easy to identify.
- 2 Likely to be solved with quick and easy solutions.
- 3 Can often be solved by an expert or authority.
- 4 Require change from one or a few places, often within clear organizational boundaries.
- 5 Those involved are generally receptive to technical solutions.
- 6 Solutions can be implemented quickly – often even by diktat from above.



Adaptive challenges

- 1 Difficult to identify (easy to dismiss).
- 2 Requires changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships and approaches to work.
- 3 Those with the problem must work to solve it themselves.
- 4 Requires change in multiple places; often across organizational boundaries.
- 5 People often refuse to acknowledge adaptive challenges.
- 6 "Solutions" require experimentation and new discoveries; they take a long time to implement and can't just be implemented from the top down.

Regardless of **what problem we are looking at**, we cannot start by looking at solutions. If we accept the thesis that not everything can be solved with a hammer, we must approach the task with an understanding that we do not have the solution ready in advance. This means that local authorities will not get very far if they simply implement a standard involvement process or have not fully understood the problem or the context for behavioural change. That is why we started as local authorities by taking a step back.

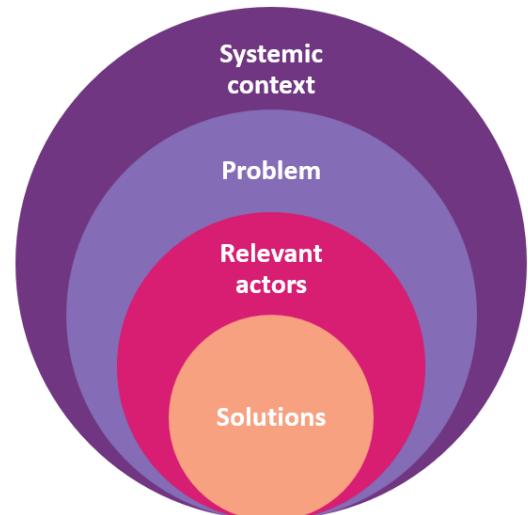


In the ActionCatalogue you can find more than 50 deliberative methods for local needs:
<http://actioncatalogue.eu/search>

Instead of asking:
 What should we do? Can we develop new solutions by building on insights from stakeholders?

We take a step back asking:
 What is our problem? Why hasn't the problem been solved? Who has the resources to solve it? What would the world look like if the problem were solved? Who is ready to accept shared responsibility?

All COPE partners had processes with citizens to explore these very issues.



Thematic focus

The eight COPE Integrated Action Plans have a core theme. They are reflecting the integrated approach in line with the COPE SCOPE and the URBACT methodology all centering around the processes of finding each other across the departments and across policies on engaging citizens locally in the green transition. But from here the themes are crystalizing into very different approaches. This diversity is a direct consequence of the fact that context means everything.

The fact that the COPE municipalities have very different experiences with collaborating with citizens and stakeholders and therefore the governance structures and set-up needed to be explored and at the same time the local needs and resources are very different. In COPE the municipalities started with defining problems in cooperation with the citizens and stakeholders and from that they explored the possible solutions. Some partners already had projects they as a city had started and here the ULG focused on how to work on accepting the changes.

“The most important theme is a people-powered green transition. We start with awareness and participation, residents, schools, and youth co-design. Then we deliver small, visible changes like pocket forests, tree gardens, park upgrades, and simple reuse/composting actions so habits shift.” - Panagiotis Moumoutsakis, ULG Coordinator Kavala Municipality.

“At the start of the COPE journey, the municipality aimed to strengthen its ability to co-design public policies with citizens and local partners. The ambition was to establish a more participatory approach, improve coordination between municipal departments, and develop innovative solutions to key urban challenges. A large part of these objectives has been achieved. The municipality now benefits from a more engaged local network, clearer methodologies, and concrete tools to continue co-constructing projects.”

– Alexandra Paux, Saint-Quentin Municipality



THE THEMES LISTED HERE ARE SOME OF THE MAIN THEMES FOUND IN MANY VARIETIES:

- 
-) **Environmental targets** (air, water, soil, quality, mobility, energy, waste, green infrastructure & biodiversity, adaption & mitigation etc.)
 -) Community gardens
 -) Housing renovation and energy efficiency, with the aim of improving the quality of housing while reducing energy consumption and emissions.
 -) Sustainable mobility to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking.
 -) Public space and green infrastructure to improve the sustainability and resilience of the city, with an emphasis on urban green spaces and biodiversity.
 -) Strategies for social and economic development; creating opportunities and improving the quality of life of local communities.
 -) **Governance targets** (city economy, efficiency, open data, smart & intelligent city, transparency, citizen involvement etc.)
 -) Calling for and supporting citizens' initiative
 -) Neighbourhood cohesion
 -) Adaptable designs, development of infrastructure, volunteer management
 -) Guided frameworks
 -) Education and creativity

During the Core Network Meetings, we used different facilitation tools and process tools to build the facilitation capacity within the COPE partners. In this way everything we have done have been a peer-to-peer exercise giving everyone first-hand experience and a toolbox to be used when facilitating their ULGs.

In this spirit we co-created the roadmap using the facilitation method O.S.T (Open Space Technology). Through this exercise we agreed on the framework of our cooperation in this early stage. We determined when we wanted our Core Network Meetings and who should be hosting them. We also agreed on specific subjects and themes we wanted to dive into online on webinars and what kind of communication output we wanted to create. This was confirmed in our midterm review. And we followed it throughout the network lifetime – only with small corrections and with a small delay on some of the communication products.

« Practitioners are not just organising citizen participation. They are at the forefront of very difficult culture change processes across institutions and societies. In that context it takes a skilled political work to carve up a space for democratic innovations and there is a real risk of burn out amongst this community of practise. »⁴ - Professor Oliver Escobar, chair of public policy and democratic innovation

⁴ From: [Inaugural Lecture: Professor Oliver Escobar | School of Social and Political Science](#)

COPE Roadmap

Stages	Small scale actions				Integrated Action Plan			Present IAPs	
	PLANNING ACTIONS				PREPARING IMPLEMENTATION				
	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9		
Core Network Meetings	CNM#2 March 20 +21 A Coruña, Spain Themes: Integrated approach Deliberation and participation	CNM#3 June 18 +19 Kavala, Greece Themes: Cross-cutting themes on small-scale actions		CNM#4 October 1+2 Pombal, Portugal Themes: IAP workshop Casestudies MTR	CNM#5 January 28 + 29 Saint-Quentin, France Themes: IAP peer review clustered by the policy challenges	CNM#6 May 19 + 20 Vilnius, Lithuania Themes: Network peer-review of IAP concerning local actions	CNM#7 September Bistrita, Romania Themes: IAP Peer review	CNM#8 November Copenhagen, Denmark Themes: Celebrating and sharing	
Online webinar	February Lead Expert: Online tool and IAP template			November 29 Circular Economy Ad Hoc Expert: Eleni Felegi					
1:1 meetings		Lead Expert + ULG Focus: Status on ULG Status on IAP Status on small scale actions		November Lead Expert + LP Focus: MTR Ad Hoc Expert Mario Cunat					
ULG	ULG meeting								
Comms video	Network video #1 Kavala	Network video #2 Vilnius							
Comms Case study									
Comms Article									

Even though we have had a common understanding of the theme and the framework, we have still struggled along the way to pinpoint the main focus of our network theme.

Being considered as a green network with the tagline “unlocking the green potential of citizen action”, we needed to take a step back and first work on how to work with citizens before we could engage citizens in taking green action.

This process has been very handheld, and the COPE partners have done some brave work on changing mindsets and routines within their organizational set-up.

The final result was presented in Copenhagen at a big COPE final conference called ***Citizen Driven Climate Solutions – Empowerment, democracy and local communities***. Here we had fast, and focused presentations followed by slow and plentiful time for reflections and cross-cutting conversations between professionals, politicians and local citizens.

The COPE partners presented in pairs with shared headlines:

Citizen Gardens and Seeds for Community Building – creating engagement and green spaces by Copenhagen and Saint-Quentin.

Through Garden to Community
by Vilnius and Kavala.

Move Green
by Pombal and Bistrița.

The Youth Paving the Green Road
by Korydallos and A Coruña.



POLITICAL MANDATE AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Two themes that has followed us all the way are **Political mandate** and **Cultural background**.

Political mandate has only been expressed little in written terms, but a lot orally during one-on-one meetings and in conversations during meetings. The fact that engaging citizens means sharing power through delegating the mandate to co-define solutions can be very difficult without a clear political mandate. We sense that with capacity building projects like COPE, the understanding of the added value of engaging citizens is real and that through sharing and inspiration from each other in a safe environment it is possible to change the mindset of the political level as well.

Cultural background is already in the baseline report defined as something that influences the local opportunities. Since several cities in COPE have a background as occupied by communist regimes, they also have a more recent experience of having more personal wealth and freedom just as they have a trained mistrust in authorities. This combination makes it hard for the municipality to gain trust and even more to cut the privileges as for example reducing private use of cars can feel like.

These challenges are also seen in cities without that historical background and are challenges that most partners relate to.

We have discussed the importance of building relations with community leaders and to gain their trust and not least to be transparent and committing all the way through.

3. Integrated Action Plans (IAPs)

At network level

The COPE IAPs can roughly be divided in two categories:

1. IAPs building on a planned construction or process, where COPE have shaped the entrance for inviting the local neighbourhood into the detailed planning and implementation. In this way the approach has been trying new ways to engage people through an ULG in developing, adapting and implementing political and administrative decisions.
2. IAPs starting with forming an ULG and having a process where the ULG define local problems and possible solutions considering the green transition in both climate and biodiversity.

We have used basic tools to initiate the exploration of the URBACT Local Group (ULG) from considering the **quadruple helix** including the four categories: Civil society, Academia, Business and Authorities.

Since we worked with local neighbourhoods the cities could have a very concrete search for potential participants. And we also had a principle of always remember to ask who is not present, who should be here and, in this way, establish an organic approach to the ULG.

More concrete tools used was the Problem Tree and the Stakeholder Mapping matrix from the URBACT toolbox as well as the Newspaper of Tomorrow to help identify the city vision. This was kick started in the URBACT University. The tools gave us a common starting point but also clashed a bit between our COPE focus on resources starting by defining problems in the Problem Tree and also the fact that we wanted this to be done with the ULG and local neighbourhoods. These tools are good for their purpose, but they came in a bit too fast in our process.



During the process we also had different webinars giving us some time to dive into a specific subject. Early on we identified difficulties in relating to identify and understand EU funding in the cooperation on the IAPs – maybe due to our very local and citizens-oriented approach. When citizens and non-professionals are participating in developing the plan and setting direction then abstract and very complex funding programmes are difficult to understand.

And many of the planned actions are also small and centered on human and nature with smaller needs for funding and have more a character as actions that lies within local or national funding possibilities.

“THE MAIN THEMATIC FOCUS OF THE IAP IS CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND THE STRENGTHENING OF LOCAL COOPERATION. THIS THEME RUNS ACROSS ALL ACTIONS AND FORMS THE CORE OF THE PROJECT: DEVELOPING MORE INCLUSIVE, CO-CREATED URBAN SOLUTIONS THAT ADDRESS THE REAL NEEDS OF THE TERRITORY.” – ALEXANDRA PAUX, SAINT-QUENTIN

Another specific theme we identified was the need for skills concerning the planning and facilitation of deliberative and participatory processes. We had a webinar on facilitation, where we discussed key elements for creating a safe space for people to participate in and not least, we discussed some of the experiences of the COPE partners.

At local level

In our first Core Network Meeting we made a gallery of city posters with the story of their city. These posters were meant to set a direction of reflections and to share our starting points. The task was to answer questions like:

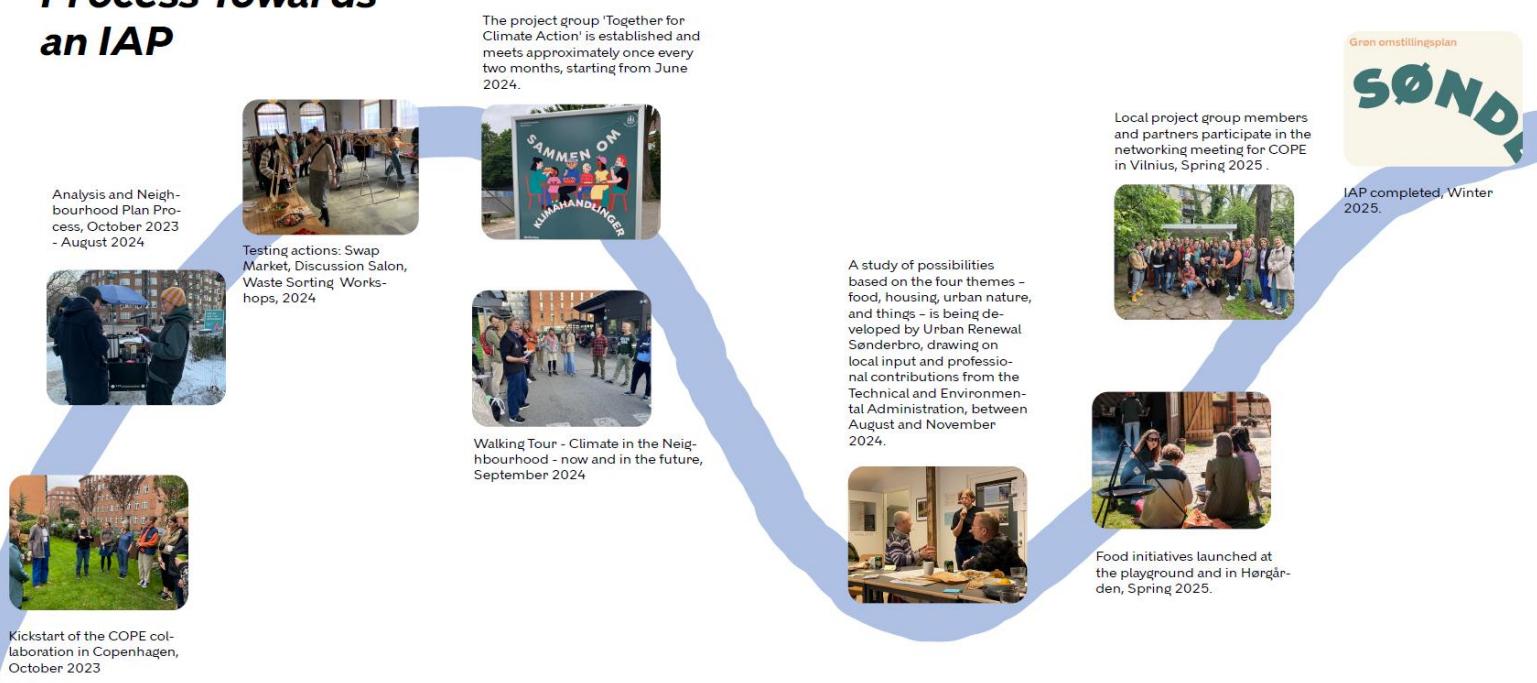
- _) What is the level of citizen engagement in your city? How do you involve the citizens and other stakeholders in planning, implementing, and evaluating the city climate policy making and activities? (Baseline for your citizen engagement).
- _) Potential focus and objectives of IAP
- _) Potential themes and subthemes.
- _) Learning needs: skills and thematic knowledge to be developed.
- _) Contributions in terms of experience and practice



The process of producing the IAPs locally have taken many forms and the cities have taken both known and new paths. Some cities have worked with ULGs before and already had a group to reach out to and in these cases they have worked on adjusting these groups. Most cities tend to start with bilateral meetings engaging people meeting them in their field of interest. And then in time call for workshops using the tools already introduced, like Problem Tree and Newspaper of Tomorrow. Along the way some have gone in new directions like engaging specific schools and students in specific cooperations and others have had a bigger need to look at own organisational structures and to work on municipal support and understanding across departments and political levels.

In Copenhagen their process highlights is drawn like this by Lise Arre Nygaard, ULG Coordinator, Copenhagen :

Process Towards an IAP



On concrete tools the COPE partners have also gone in different directions. Most partners have gathered input through conversations in the streets, meetings, workshops, surveys and then analysed data that have then been discussed and prioritised during ULG meetings in multiple loops. One partner have used WhatsApp to have a continuous conversation and to be able to move fast when needed and get quick feedback. Another city have used shared online documents in a co-writing process and a one-page "action canvas" that asked five things: what do we want to do, where, who is responsible, what does it cost and some simple KPIs and also a city map with pins for proposed and confirmed sites, with photos and notes from street walks.

« CREATING OUR IAP WAS A TEAM EFFORT THAT INVOLVED A LOT OF BACK-AND-FORTH. AS THE ULG COORDINATOR, I WORKED CLOSELY WITH BOTH LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS AND MUNICIPALITY STAFF—ORGANISING WORKSHOPS, LISTENING TO IDEAS, AND HELPING CONNECT WHAT PEOPLE NEED ON THE GROUND WITH WHAT THE CITY CAN SUPPORT. THIS HELPED US MAKE A PLAN THAT IS BOTH REALISTIC AND AMBITIOUS. »

— LAURA PETRUSKE, ULG COORDINATOR, VILNIUS

The very important element of the URBACT APNs are the **testing of actions**. This makes a lot of sense when working with citizens since the time from idea to actual action and implementation is short. This element of time supports the challenge of sustaining the engagement. And from a design perspective, it supports the idea of failing fast ; meaning that you should try your ideas in the real setting fast before you have spent all your time on thinking and discussing leaving no time to test and adjust.

In COPE we have very diverse **testing of actions** that mirrors the two above mentioned categories of IAPs. **IAPs building on a planned construction** or process and **IAPs starting with a process with the ULG** defining local problems and possible solutions.

Here you can see examples from each of the categories :

- _) Bistrita testing if putting up bicycle shelters in schools can support the change from hard mobility to soft mobility and nudge children to go to school by bike.
- _) Kavala exploring how a local group of citizens can co-create a pocket park with local citizens using used materials and volunteers.
- _) Copenhagen exploring the interest of the local citizens through activities and creating a space where citizens can learn and connect everyday life with possible change in mind-set and behaviour.

BISTRITA – TESTING ACTION

In School No. 6, Ștefan cel Mare they have started the discussions about the change of transport and why it is needed. The new bike racks are a visible way of testing if more children and teachers are shifting to using bikes and a way to encourage them to go by bike.

And the local police, the municipality and teachers yearly run educational events on traffic where small children are taught how to move around in the traffic and where older children have a day where they in different ways work with their city and the traffic. This gives a great opportunity to learn and discuss the challenges they face and how they as children and as municipality can develop it together.

The aim is to increase the number of people using the bike lanes by 25550 in 5 the next years!



KAVALA – TESTING ACTION

During their third ULG session, Kavala took a practical approach and decided on initiatives for restoring the park. The high level of community participation ensured that all voices were heard, and they incorporated a diverse range of proposals into their plan.

A map of the neighbourhood provided a visual representation of the area and ideas gathered during the meeting offered a comprehensive overview of the proposals for the restoration of the park.

They visited the park with representatives from the municipality, public servants, and workers to finalize the plans and distribute the workload. The Neapolis Neighborhood Association Kavala played an active role, contributing significantly to the restoration efforts by putting in a lot of hard work.

The neighborhood citizens now have a place to meet. The children do not have to play at the parking places and the place is no longer dirty and unsafe. And just as important, this co-creation project showed municipality that they can work with citizens and low budgets with high impact and the citizens experienced a process of being involved and taken seriously with a concrete result in their neighbourhood.



« We built the IAP with short, clear, and open procedures. First, we listened. We did street walks, school visits, and small meetings with residents and local groups. Then we wrote some ideas: what we will do, where, who is responsible, and how much it costs. We tested a small pilot to see what works. After each step, we checked with our city teams so rules, onwership and maintenance were clear. » – Panagiotis Mounatsai, ULG Coordinator, Kavala

COPENHAGEN – TESTING ACTION

All of 2024 Copenhagen have worked on ways to enhance the community feeling when it comes to recycling. They have worked together with facility managers and the local recycling stations in Hørgården and Urbanplanen. In October they co-hosted 8 workshops at Hørgården Nærgenbrugsstation (local recycling station) and Lykkebazaren where you could design your own system for recycling at home.



« The IAP production process was highly collaborative. Regular meetings with the ULG, municipal departments, and local partners created a strong sense of shared ownership. A key element was our cooperation with the 1st Vocational High School of Korydallos, where students co-designed the name and visual identity of the Kanaria Entrepreneurial Hub. This partnership brought creativity, innovation, and youth perspective into the IAP, linking education with local regeneration efforts. »

– Mimina Pateraki, Korydallos

Main focus of the COPE IAPs

A Coruña	<p>Overall improvement of the neighborhood's environmental sustainability.</p> <p>Change the narrative of the neighborhood and the external perception of it.</p> <p>Boost the local economy, making it sustainable, local and inclusive.</p>
Bistrița	<p>Behavioural change in relation to mobility, energy use and civic participation</p>
Copenhagen	<p>Food: There is a local desire to develop communities around climate-friendly food culture. This involves working with urban gardens, learning how to avoid food waste and providing inspiration for plant-based food.</p> <p>« Things »: There is interest in promoting recycling, sharing communities and repairs, as well as increasing knowledge about proper waste sorting. Work is underway to create an infrastructure that strengthens opportunities to avoid new purchases.</p> <p>Urban Nature: There is considerable local interest in increasing the amount of urban nature in the neighbourhood. Efforts are being made to strengthen biodiversity and habitats for more species.</p> <p>Housing: The Sønderbro district is mainly a residential area, and this theme focuses on creating measurable climate footprints by working together on more climate-friendly operations and consumption in residential communities.</p>
Kavala	<p>Strengthening environmental awareness, participation and dissemination.</p> <p>Developing green infrastructure and circular economy.</p>
Korydallos	<p>Inclusive governance and civic engagement.</p>

	<p>Local entrepreneurship and youth innovation</p> <p>Energy efficiency and green urban Transformation.</p>
Pombal	<p>Green public space: Public spaces in the historic center, have been neglected by both local and non-resident populations, due to their declining appeal. The physical space is increasingly impermeable and arid, and the lack of social, cultural, and even commercial dynamics.</p> <p>Energy efficiency : Improve the energy efficiency of the historic center, particularly its buildings, by reducing fossil fuel consumption by utilizing renewable energy sources and substantially improving the thermal comfort of residents and visitors by improving the thermal environment.</p> <p>Mobility: The historic center underwent an urban regeneration process that focused on promoting soft modes of transport to promote decarbonization, healthier living for the population, and the enjoyment of public spaces. However, it's important to continue this process, as no restrictions have ever been imposed on road traffic, which negatively impacts the enjoyment of public spaces.</p>
Saint-Quentin	<p>Reduce dependence on private cars.</p> <p>Develop a circular and inclusive local economy</p> <p>Raise awareness among citizens and renature urban spaces to address climate change.</p>
Vilnius	<p>Community Gardening: To promote local food production and green spaces by expanding urban agriculture and community use of municipal land.</p> <p>Resource Sharing: To promote resource sharing and sustainability by establishing tool libraries in local elderships.</p> <p>Food Sharing: To reduce food waste and improve access to free food for community members by establishing a network of community fridges across Vilnius.</p>

All COPE partners have throughout the network lifetime been reviewing parts of each others IAPs as well as across networks meeting with the [APN Let's Go Circular!](#) And all COPE ULG coordinators also met several times online with Lead Expert Stine Skot for a review on the full IAPs. These meetings gave room for zooming in on specific details and to test the overall logic of the IAP.

The 8 COPE partners are in very different situations, they have very different opportunities and experience – in short their contexts for writing this plan makes their IAPs turning out as very different in both content and style.

The process of producing our IAP was highly collaborative and strongly supported by the COPE network from the start. The Lead Expert, Network Coordinator, and other partners provided crucial guidance, especially during the network meetings held in our city and in other partner cities. Working with the Urban Local Group and municipal colleagues, we co-created actions aligned with the city's strategies, building trust and ensuring the IAP was both ambitious and feasible – Maria González, ULG Coordinator, A Coruña

Our main conclusion during the one-on-one meetings were that the IAP should bring value to their local context and should be a plan that could bring their local citizens and stakeholders closer to the municipality and nourish their collaboration. And therefor the IAPs are reflecting these different target groups and participants.

Here two very different approaches to in how to communicate something as difficult as ACTION TABLES

Food - Action #1						
Strategic objective: Grow communities around climate-friendly food culture by 2029						
Cultivation Community in Hørgårdens Urban Garden						
Project Status:	Idea	Completed				
Next Step:	Monthly workshops are ongoing					
Resources needed:	Lightbulb, sun, raindrop icons					
Neighborhood Project:	Climate actions in the everyday life					
Facts:	The initiative is funded by Urban Renewal Sønderbro. It takes place in Hørgårdens Urban Garden and consists of an open series of workshops. The main target groups are adults and children from the neighborhood, members of the urban garden association, and anyone else interested in learning about cultivation.					
Goals:	To create a vibrant community around Hørgårdens Urban Garden, where vegetable cultivation goes hand in hand with good neighborliness. By the end of 2025, we aim to have held six workshops with the participation of people across all sessions.					
Champions:	Urban Renewal Sønderbro (co-partner), Amagerplanen (co-partner), Garden Association (co-partner)					
The project can help ensure that:	- More people can use the space - There are more activities that create safety and foster community around green cultivation and reduce food waste - Responsibility is taken for the garden - There is positive participation from the neighbors					



When?	February - March 2025	April 2025	April - October 2025	November 2025
Find instructor				
Form an urban garden association				

OE1: OVERALL IMPROVEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD						
Area	Target	Means required	Responsible	Budget	Funding	Calendar
A1: RENATURALISING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT						
1. Increase green spaces in the neighbourhood for both recreational and community use (urban gardens).	Increase of green areas and sustainable water management. To create spaces for regeneration and interaction.	Technical project and implementation of the project.	Project Manager, Urban Renewal Sønderbro (co-partner), Amagerplanen (co-partner)	3.000	URB-COPE	2026/2026
2. Rehabilitation of old gardens to use the existing green areas and the possibilities of urban gardens within the neighbourhood.	Increase of green areas and sustainable water management. To create spaces for regeneration and interaction.	Implementation of the project.	Project Manager, Urban Renewal Sønderbro (co-partner), Amagerplanen (co-partner)	2027/2028		
3. Increase of green spaces in the neighbourhood, related their green spaces and develop their maintenance.	Increase of green areas and sustainable water management. Climate change mitigation and adaptation.	Implementation of the project.	Project Manager, Urban Renewal Sønderbro (co-partner), Amagerplanen (co-partner)	2027/2028		
4. Project for the renovation and revitalisation of the Square of the Sagene Parish to promote a recreational and community use (urban gardens).	To renew the objectives in view of climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to create a new vibrant and attractive urban environment.	Project.	Project Manager, Urban Renewal Sønderbro (co-partner), Amagerplanen (co-partner)	200.000	EDL	2026-2027
5. Project for the rehabilitation of the multi sports field at the Sagene Parish to generate a use with the Plaza as a Sagene Parish. To renew the objectives in view of climate change mitigation and adaptation.	To renew the objectives in view of climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to create a new vibrant and attractive urban environment.	Project.	Project Manager, Urban Renewal Sønderbro (co-partner), Amagerplanen (co-partner)	400.000	EDL	2027/2028
6. Installation of street furniture and green areas in the neighbourhood.	Balancing social cohesion and accessibility.	Project.	Project Manager, Urban Renewal Sønderbro (co-partner), Amagerplanen (co-partner)	150.000	EDL	2028
7. Rehabilitation environment monitoring system of the neighbourhood.	Follow-up of actions and implementation of the environmental transformation of the neighbourhood.	Project.	Project Manager, Urban Renewal Sønderbro (co-partner), Amagerplanen (co-partner)	250.000	PENHOS	2027/2028
A2: IMPROVEMENT OF THE WATER CYCLE AND EFFLUENT MANAGEMENT						
Promoting sustainable drainage solutions and improving maintenance of the neighbourhood's infrastructure.	Implementation of urban drainage systems and other means of reducing water runoff.	Assessment and management.	Project.	ENVIRONMENTAL AREA	250.000	PENHOS
A3: CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION, SUSTAINABLE AND ACCESSIBLE ENERGY						
1. Reduce the neighbourhood's contribution to climate change through mitigation measures linked to energy efficiency, renewable energy and energy savings.	Creating a healthy and sustainable environment in the neighbourhood and a sustainable energy community.	Meeting reduction targets, increasing energy efficiency and reducing energy poverty.	Healthystat	ENVIRONMENTAL AREA	15.000	FUND: GRØNBYG
2. Regeneration sustainable homes project.	Increasing energy efficiency and reducing energy waste in the sector.	Implementation.	Project	ENVIRONMENTAL AREA	5.000	FUND: GRØNBYG-COPE

See all the IAPs here: COPE | urbact.eu

4. COPE learnings and added value

*Sustainability is not only the end goal – it is part of the process.
- COPE partner, from final reflections*

The COPE partners have identified a lot of learnings on different levels. Some are small things like personal skills, that in the big picture might faint or risk being left out but nonetheless are critical in order to succeed. In COPE the spoken language has for some partners been an issue. Speaking English professionally can be difficult, but you have to try if you want a chance to access the bigger learnings. In COPE the partners have supported each other in this transformation and cheered when actually going on stage presenting in front of many people – in English!

Others come from cultures where the municipality is seen as bad guys not listening to or acting on behalf of the citizens. Moving from a place where you feel that you must defend yourself underlining that you are actually also an individual and NOT just an employer from the municipality and that you actually want to change status quo, is one heavy norm to be a frontrunner to change. This shift of mindset is something that COPE partners have experienced and even confirmed by very engaged ULG members representing some of the critical voices.

*COPE changed the way we work with citizens on green actions. Before most initiatives were designed top-down by the municipality. Through COPE, we learned how important it is to co-create, to invite citizens, schools and local groups to take part in decisions.
People feel ownership, they don't just use the space. – COPE partner*

The COPE municipalities took their first steps acting as a facilitator – both as a municipality and some also as a public officer. We aimed to spark participation, make dialogue simple, and to invite citizens to co-create changes in their own neighborhoods. We brought academics and neighbors to the same table to turn ideas into real steps. Some of the partners opened the city's first broad conversation on the environment, making sustainability easy to join. From tree-planting at schools to a kids' Halloween party, a shared community garden, and mobility activities - focusing on practical, joyful actions and keeping messages fun and friendly, even with memes. We have cooperated across departments, used URBACT tools with ULG members, and co-designed green actions for buildings, places and neighborhoods. Our tools and methods are simple and human. We walk the streets with residents to spot problems and solutions. Some partners have had success in welcoming participation with small gestures like food gifts and flower boxes, and we go door to door. During the COPE lifetime some partners are also making structural changes and developing new processes. Step by step, we are shaping a new way of governing that builds mutual trust and shared insights.

Looking ahead, we will share the COPE project's ideas and results more widely, hoping to build political confidence in this new way of working. We will explore the COPE SCOPE clearly, include more of the community and invest in caring for results over time. Most partners hope to keep the ULG active beyond URBACT through official channels and bring in new partners. There is also a wish to seek European funds for more citizen-led sustainability projects and maybe even consider a new URBACT project to advance local climate policy. The local IAP format can guide other urban renewal efforts. Some COPE partners hope to be able to help ULG members move from project-driven work to steady continuation, keep decision-making open, and nurture citizen interest.

COPE MUNICIPALITIES new experiences AS FACILITATORS

STRUCTURAL CHANGES AND LEARNINGS DURING COPE

-) To empower the citizens to take ownership of the transformation of their neighbourhoods.
-) To facilitate the adaptation of a shared decision-making process.
-) To bring Academics and citizens together for sharing knowledge to improve the neighbourhood.
-) To create actions for citizens, by citizens
-) To use storytelling and memes bringing fun into communication.
-) To collaborate between different municipal services.
-) To bring different stakeholders under the same ceiling
-) To develop a new governance process that creates mutual trust between the citizens and the city council
-) To develop the strategy for the city based on the URBACT COPE prospect
-) To nourish and support a political will to go further and upscale the COPE actions beyond the duration of the project
-) To re-use of old materials: advancing the principle of circularity

NEEDS FOR FUTURE GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENTS

-) To show the political level that the new governance process will have results and the citizen's support
-) To invest more in the participation of all segments of the local population. Not only the elected members of the neighbourhood council
-) To include more stakeholders in the future establishing a long term ULG.
-) To engage in more URBACT projects for changing policy on climate on own municipality
-) To integrate the local IAP as a format to be used in other integrated urban renewal projects
-) To anchor the ULG-members from being driven by this project to finding its own continuation
-) To develop the political decision making
-) To capacity build strong integrated project teams from all departments
-) To create ownership in local stakeholders to implement their own actions
-) To replicate good practices from other partners and transfer locally

URBACT - THANK YOU!

-) For providing our ULG members with the opportunity to travel and experience cities like and unlike their own. It gave perspectives and commitment.
-) For pushing participation and collaboration through the ULG meetings.
-) For enhanced capacity building in urban design.
-) For pushing interdepartmental cooperation.
-) For providing valuable URBACT tools for planning and designing with ULG members.
-) For supporting the small scale actions that the ULG proposed

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE NETWORKS

-) ...less writing and planning and more DOING
-) ...even more focus on involving the ULG
-) ...less funding for traditional communication and more funding to test actions...
-) ...more guidance and innovation on FUNDING

COPE NETWORK CITIES: A CORUÑA (SPAIN), BISTRITA (ROMANIA), COPENHAGEN (DENMARK), KAVALA (GREECE), KORYDALLOS (GREECE), POMBAL (PORTUGAL), SAINT-QUENTIN (FRANCE), VILNIUS (LITHUANIA)

COPE LEAD PARTNER: THE CITY OF COPENHAGEN (DENMARK)

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