



Integrated Action Plan

Where New Talents Rise – Empowering Youth Through Sports and Collaboration City of Lezha (Albania)

Credits

The preparation of the **Integrated Action Plan (IAP)** was made possible through the dedicated efforts of the **Directorate of Strategic Projects, Europe, Migration, Diaspora, Communication, and Transparency**, whose guidance, coordination, and strategic oversight were instrumental in shaping the plan. The Directorate worked closely with **Project Expert Raffaella Lioce**, whose technical expertise, experience in youth and sports development, and support throughout the drafting process ensured that the IAP is both comprehensive and actionable. Their combined efforts reflect a collaborative commitment to advancing inclusive, sustainable, and innovative sports and youth initiatives in the city of Lezha.

Re-Gen Project Brief

The Re-Gen initiative in Lezha marks a significant step toward urban revitalization by fostering a collaborative approach that brings together local government, community organizations, and residents, especially young people. At its core, the project centers on transforming a former school building – damaged during the devastating earthquake – into a fully functioning youth center. This adaptive reuse not only addresses the physical loss of educational and public infrastructure but also creates a dedicated space where youth can engage in learning, culture, recreation, and sports. This transformation responds directly to the challenges faced by Lezha's young population, including limited access to public spaces and extracurricular opportunities.

Re-Gen is more than a renovation effort; it is a movement aimed at empowering youth to take an active role in shaping their city's future. By fostering dialogue between young citizens and local authorities, the initiative ensures that youth voices influence how public spaces are designed and utilized. A hallmark of the project is the co-design process, where young people collaborate directly with urban planners and architects to reimagine outdoor areas. This includes plans for skate parks, graffiti-friendly walls, and spaces for pop-up community events, creating vibrant, youth-driven environments that reflect their creativity and aspirations.

Beyond the physical and social renewal, Re-Gen seeks to cultivate a culture of youth participation in governance and urban planning. The Municipality of Lezha is committed to organizing youth consultations that gather input on their needs and priorities. Alongside this, leadership training and mentorship programs will equip young people with the skills and confidence to take on active roles in community projects. This approach not only enhances civic engagement but also fosters a sense of ownership and pride among youth, encouraging them to contribute meaningfully to local development. Complementing the Re-Gen initiative, the Integrated Action Plan for recreational and sports facilities is grounded in the Local Youth Strategy 2024–2027 and the flagship program focused on the “Massification of Sports Among Young People.”

The plan envisions a dynamic, inclusive sports culture in Lezha that inspires youth to explore a broad range of athletic disciplines and discover their talents. Investments will be made in modern indoor game rooms, fitness areas, and outdoor spaces designed for street basketball, skateboarding, and other street sports, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all young people.

City Overview / Presentation

Lezha borders the north with the municipalities of Vau i Deja and Puka, west with the Adriatic Sea, east with the Mirdita Municipality and south with the Kurb Municipality. The center of this municipality is the city of Lezha. According to the 2011 Census, Lezha has 65,633 inhabitants. While according to the Civil Registry, this municipality counts 106,245 inhabitants. With an area of 509.1 km², Lezha's new municipality has a density of 208.69 inhabitants/km² according to the Civil Registry data and 128.91 inhabitants/km² according to the 2011 Census. The rich historical and cultural heritage makes this municipality an attractive destination for cultural tourism. Lying on both sides of the Drin River, surrounded by the Kuna and Vain lagoons like and from the beautiful beach of Shengjin, Lezha offers diverse natural beauty and opportunities many for tourism development not only within its territory, but also at a near distance. The favorable geographical position enables access to agricultural, agricultural, livestock and fisheries, which also affect economic potential and increase employment in the municipality.

The Directorate of Education, Youth and Sports is a structure responsible for the good management of any issue related to education, youth and sports. It is tasked with drafting, in cooperation with other partners, projects for the development of the education, youth and sports sector in the territory of the Municipality of Lezha. It is also responsible for the good management of issues related to the drafting of policies and strategies with the aim of promoting, creating a network of youth activities, aiming to achieve contemporary standards, in accordance with national and regional ones in the infrastructure of youth environments in the city, with the aim of achieving its strategic objectives and fulfilling the results required by this organizational unit. This unit will be responsible for the implementation of the PSVR. The Directorate consists of the Education and Youth Sector and the Sports Sector.

Executive Summary

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Lezha, guided by the vision “Where New Talents Rise – Empowering Youth Through Sports and Collaboration,” sets out a comprehensive framework to transform the city into a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable sports ecosystem. The overarching Strategic Objective is to empower youth, strengthen community engagement, and promote local talent development through the revitalization of abandoned spaces, creation of modern and accessible sports facilities, and implementation of structured training and talent development programs.

The IAP adopts a holistic, cross-sectoral approach, integrating infrastructure development, human capital growth, community participation, and collaboration among municipal departments, schools, sports associations, civil society, national agencies, and international partners. By aligning with the Local Youth Strategy 2024–2027, the national program for the “Massification of Sports Among Young People,” and broader European frameworks for youth empowerment and sustainable urban development, the plan ensures policy coherence and strategic impact.

Key actions of the IAP include:

1. Revitalization of Abandoned Spaces: Mapping and transforming underutilized urban areas into multifunctional, safe, and inclusive sports environments.
2. Development of Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities: Construction of modern facilities that accommodate individuals of all abilities and promote long-term community use.
3. Implementation of Comprehensive Training and Talent Development Programs: Structured programs for skill enhancement, talent identification, and professional development of youth and coaches, complemented by community events and competitions.

The plan emphasizes sustainability and community ownership, integrating environmental, social, gender, digital, and cultural aspects, alongside long-term maintenance, governance, and monitoring strategies. By combining physical infrastructure, innovative programs, and participatory approaches, the IAP aims to foster a culture of active, healthy lifestyles, social inclusion, and civic pride, while creating a model that can be replicated in other municipalities.

In summary, the IAP positions Lezha as a forward-looking city where youth are empowered to realize their potential, new talents emerge, and sports act as a catalyst for social cohesion, community development, and sustainable urban transformation.

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The Action Planning Process

ULG

The Urbact Local Group (ULG) has played a pivotal role throughout the Action Planning Process, serving as the central coordinating body for all activities. Its responsibilities encompassed both strategic and operational dimensions, including planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating sports-based testing actions across multiple public spaces in Lezha Municipality. The ULG coordinated closely with schools, youth associations, community representatives, and municipal departments, particularly the Directorate of Strategic Projects, Europe, Migration, Diaspora, Communication, and Transparency, as well as the Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports.

The ULG's involvement was comprehensive: it ensured proper preparation of public spaces, coordinated logistics for equipment, registration, and safety measures, and supervised the implementation of each activity. During the testing actions, the ULG also collected structured feedback from participants and facilitated communication between stakeholders. By taking an active role in the process, the ULG fostered community ownership, strengthened institutional collaboration, and created a platform where youth voices were central in shaping local urban and rural regeneration efforts.

Testing Action

Between December 2024 and September 2025, the Municipality of Lezha implemented six structured testing actions across different administrative units: Dajç, Kallmet, Mabë, Shënkoll, Zejmen, and the Lezha Public Youth Center. These pilot activities were designed to evaluate the potential of underused public areas for transformation into multifunctional sports hubs, and to engage young people directly in co-creation and decision-making processes.

In total, **154 youngsters** aged 11–18 participated in the series of testing actions. They were supported by teachers, school staff, local coordinators, and municipal representatives. The sports activities included volleyball, basketball, football, athletics, ping pong, and traditional coordination games that encouraged teamwork, agility, and inclusion. Each session was structured to balance recreation, experimentation, and participatory feedback.

During these activities, students were invited to share their sports preferences, reflect on the usability of the public spaces, and suggest improvements for infrastructure and facilities. The testing sessions provided opportunities to observe youth engagement, assess space adaptability, and evaluate logistical requirements. In addition to sports engagement, the events emphasized the social dimension of public space regeneration, encouraging young participants to interact, collaborate, and take an active role in shaping their community environment.

The feedback collected from participants highlighted clear preferences for football, volleyball, and basketball, while students also expressed enthusiasm for diverse sports like ping pong and athletics. All participants supported the idea of transforming the tested areas into multifunctional sports spaces, noting the benefits for physical fitness, teamwork, and social interaction.

Planning

The insights gained from the testing actions were instrumental in shaping the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). Based on participant feedback, observed engagement, and logistical feasibility, each area tested was included as a priority site for transformation into inclusive sports hubs. The planning process emphasized creating multifunctional spaces that cater to different age groups and interests, ensuring accessibility, safety, and sustainability.

Key lessons from the testing actions informed practical planning decisions: space adaptation needs, equipment requirements, scheduling of activities, and the integration of participatory methods for continuous feedback. These considerations allow the municipality to design interventions that are not only physically feasible but also socially meaningful.

Moreover, the planning phase focused on scalability and replicability. The tested methodology — small-scale, youth-centered sports activities combined with structured feedback — provides a model that can be applied across other rural and urban areas within Lezha Municipality or in neighboring municipalities. To replicate success, municipal commitment, space preparation, minimal equipment, and school and youth engagement are essential.

Sharing

Sharing the outcomes of the testing actions has been a critical component of the process. The results, feedback, and lessons learned have been communicated with municipal authorities, schools, youth associations, and the wider community. This transparency strengthens trust, encourages collaboration, and ensures that future urban and rural regeneration projects reflect the needs and preferences of local young people.

The shared knowledge includes practical insights into youth engagement, preferred sports activities, infrastructure needs, and organizational approaches. By documenting these findings and disseminating them among stakeholders, the municipality has created a replicable framework for participatory urban regeneration and sports-based community activation. The sharing process also fosters long-term community ownership and encourages sustainable use of public spaces, ensuring that the transformed areas remain vibrant, inclusive, and well-maintained.

Overall Impact and Outcomes

The testing actions have directly influenced the Integrated Action Plan, identifying key sites for multifunctional sports spaces that promote youth participation, social inclusion, and community cohesion. Beyond infrastructure, these activities have strengthened collaboration between municipal departments, schools, and youth groups, creating a culture of participatory urban planning. Challenges such as limited sports infrastructure, uneven terrain, and weather dependency were identified, with solutions incorporated into planning for future interventions.

The series of testing actions demonstrates that engaging youth in urban regeneration through sport is highly effective in fostering physical activity, teamwork, social inclusion, and civic engagement. By combining recreation with co-creation, the Municipality of Lezha has established a sustainable model for participatory planning and evidence-based decision-making.

PART 1 - Background

1.1 Challenges Addressed and Anticipated Solution

In the territory of the Municipality of Lezha, sports activities occupy an important place, aiming to provide numerous opportunities for citizens of all ages. Sport not only promotes a healthy lifestyle, but also helps strengthen social ties and develop young talents. In order to ensure the highest quality experience for children, young people and all sports lovers, it is essential to invest in the creation and maintenance of appropriate sports infrastructure. This includes the construction and rehabilitation of gyms, sports fields, swimming pools and other spaces that meet the necessary standards for the development of various sports disciplines.

One of the main challenges faced by the citizens of Lezha and the sports community is the lack of urban spaces suitable for sports activities. In many cases, the lack of organized terrains forces athletes and youth groups to practice their activities in unsuitable or improvised environments, affecting the quality and safety of sports practice. This situation creates limitations not only for those who see sport as a way of entertainment and well-being, but also for those who want to pursue it professionally.

To address this issue, a comprehensive approach is needed that includes continuous investments in infrastructure and planning of spaces dedicated to sports. The Municipality of Lezhë should take concrete steps to create more suitable environments for sports activities, integrating sports as an essential part of urban and social development. The construction of modern terrains, the creation of spaces dedicated to outdoor sports and cooperation with sports organizations can be some of the effective strategies to improve the situation and offer more opportunities to all citizens who want to do sports.

In order to alleviate the lack of sports grounds and to further develop the sports sector in the territory of the Municipality of Lezha, abandoned urban spaces are being identified that can be transformed into sports and recreational areas. These spaces, which are often neglected or have lost their functionality, can be reused to create open fields for various sports, running tracks, playgrounds for children and other environments that encourage physical activity and socialization.

This process would not only solve one of the main challenges of the city regarding the lack of sports infrastructure, but would also have a positive impact on the urban and environmental development of Lezha. The revitalization of these spaces would help improve the quality of life for residents, creating more opportunities for recreation and physical exercise in nature. In addition, the transformation of abandoned spaces would help reduce unused and degraded areas, contributing to a cleaner and greener city.

To implement this initiative, the Municipality of Lezha should collaborate with the local community, sports organizations and urban planning experts to identify and plan the development of these spaces. The process could also include financial support through grants and public-private partnerships, which would help create modern and sustainable infrastructure for sports. In this way, the city would not only improve opportunities for sports and physical activity, but would also raise awareness about the importance of an active and healthy lifestyle.

1.2 Context Analysis

The Municipality of Lezhë recognizes the crucial role that sports and youth development play in shaping a healthier, more engaged, and dynamic community. Young people represent the driving force of society, and investing in their well-being, education, and recreational opportunities is a key priority for the local government. In recent years, challenges such as limited access to sports and recreational facilities, a lack of youth engagement in structured physical activities, and the need for improved infrastructure have highlighted the importance of targeted initiatives to support youth development in Lezhë.

Understanding these challenges, the Municipality of Lezhë has placed a special focus on the sports and youth sector, aiming to harmonize these two critical areas to enhance the well-being of young people living in the region. The overarching goal is to create more inclusive, accessible, and engaging spaces where youth can cultivate their talents, build social connections, and lead healthier lifestyles. Through this vision, the municipality has undertaken the initiative of identifying abandoned and underutilized spaces across the territory of Lezhë and transforming them into vibrant sports grounds that cater to the needs of the youth.

One of the key spaces identified for transformation is the area surrounding the Public Youth Center in Lezhë. Historically, this space functioned as a sports ground for the Old Hydajet Lezhë High School. However, following the relocation of the high school to a new facility, the old building remained largely unused until it was repurposed to house the first public youth center in Lezhë. This center has since become a vital hub for young people, fostering creativity, collaboration, and personal development through various programs and activities.

Given the increasing interest and engagement of youth at the center, there is a pressing need to expand its services both indoors and outdoors. To meet this demand, the Municipality of Lezhë has developed a strategic plan to transform the second floor of the building into additional multipurpose spaces for youth activities while simultaneously revitalizing the outdoor area into modern sports fields. This project aligns with the broader vision of promoting youth participation in sports, encouraging physical activity, and fostering a sense of community and ownership among young people. The transformation of these spaces is not merely about infrastructural improvements; it is about creating an ecosystem where young people can thrive. By integrating sports, education, and social activities, the initiative seeks to address various social challenges, including youth isolation, limited extracurricular opportunities, and the need for safe and inclusive recreational environments.

The Municipality of Lezhë is committed to collaborating with local stakeholders, organizations, and young people themselves to ensure the successful implementation of this initiative. Through

participatory decision-making, the voices of the youth will be at the heart of this project, ensuring that the resulting spaces truly reflect their needs and aspirations.

Ultimately, this initiative represents a bold step toward building a more youth-friendly city where every young person has access to opportunities for growth, self-expression, and physical well-being. The Municipality of Lezhë remains dedicated to fostering an environment where the youth can dream, develop, and thrive.

1.3 Mapping Stakeholders

The governance of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) in the Municipality of Lezha is built upon a collaborative and inclusive structure that involves public institutions, civil society, educational institutions, and youth bodies. Each actor plays a distinct and complementary role, ensuring that the implementation of the IAP is efficient, participatory, and aligned with the needs of the community.

At the core of the governance structure stands the **Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports**, which functions as the lead authority for the IAP. This directorate is responsible for policy development, strategic planning, and overall coordination. It works in close collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to design and implement youth and sports policies. The directorate ensures that all initiatives under the IAP reflect the municipality's long-term vision and national priorities, while also securing funding, monitoring progress, and evaluating impact.

Supporting the directorate in the operational implementation of the plan is the **Sports Sector within the Municipality of Lezha**. This sector takes the lead in organizing and managing sports-related initiatives, aligning them with national frameworks and legal standards. It also oversees the monitoring and maintenance of sports and educational facilities across the municipality. To carry out these responsibilities effectively, the Sports Sector works in coordination with school directorates, the “Besëlidhja” Sports Club, professional trainers, the Local Educational Office, the Directorate of Finance and Budget, and the Directorate of Public Services, Infrastructure, and Environment.

A crucial implementing partner in this structure is the **Lezha Multi-Sports Association**, which brings together a wide range of sports disciplines. This association provides young people and athletes with opportunities to develop their talents in a supportive and organized environment. By organizing competitions and training programs, it not only contributes to athletic development but also plays a significant role in promoting a healthy lifestyle, discipline, and social cohesion among youth. The association also collaborates with schools and local institutions to enhance the conditions and infrastructure necessary for sports development.

Another important pillar in the governance structure is the network of **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** operating in Lezha. These organizations contribute to the social dimension of the IAP by addressing key issues such as gender equality, youth empowerment, education, and social inclusion. Through their projects and activities, CSOs provide professional training, psychological support, community education, and policy advocacy. Notable organizations such as the Mary Ward Loreto Foundation, Terre des Hommes, Hana Centre, Social Inclusion for

Development (SIFD), National Youth Congress, and Ambassadors of Peace ensure that the IAP is inclusive and responsive to the needs of vulnerable groups.

Schools play a foundational role in the promotion of sports and physical education within the IAP framework. With over 50 educational institutions in the municipality, schools serve as the primary environment where young people are introduced to sports. They organize regular physical education classes, intra- and inter-school tournaments, and sports festivals. Beyond fostering athletic skills, schools contribute to character development by instilling values such as teamwork, respect, and perseverance. They also serve as early identification points for talented youth who can be guided into more structured sports programs.

Lastly, the **Local Youth Council (LYC)** of Lezha acts as the official advisory body representing the voice of youth in the municipality. Operating under Law No. 75/2019 "On Youth," the LYC plays a consultative role in the planning and evaluation of youth policies, including those related to sports. It ensures that young people are actively involved in decision-making processes and that their needs and perspectives are taken into account. The LYC's engagement enhances accountability and ensures the IAP is truly youth-centered.

This inclusive and multi-tiered governance structure ensures that the Integrated Action Plan is not only well-coordinated and strategically guided, but also community-driven, youth-focused, and sustainable in the long term.

Nr.	Partner/Stakeholder	Role	Involvement on IAP
1	Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports (DEYS) - Lead Autho	Role: Strategic Leadership, Policy Development, Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Drafts and implements policies related to youth and sports in coordination with other actors. ✓ Leads the strategic planning and ensures alignment with national and municipal development plans. ✓ Oversees the overall implementation of the IAP and ensures inter-institutional coordination. ✓ Mobilizes funding and monitors progress and outcomes.
2	Sports Sector within the Municipality of Lezha - Technical Coordinator	Role: Operational Management and Infrastructure Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implements sports strategies and ensures legal and transparent management of municipal programs. ✓ Conducts regular inspections and maintenance of sports facilities. ✓ Coordinates with key stakeholders such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School Directorates (for school-based sports programs) ○ "Besëlidhja" Sports Club and trainers (for technical expertise and athlete development) ○ Directorate of Finance and Budget (for budgeting and funding allocations) ○ Directorate of Public Services, Infrastructure and Environment (for public space rehabilitation) ○ Local Educational Office (for educational integration)
3	Lezha Multi-Sports Association -	Role: Sports Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Organizes local and national sports activities and competitions across multiple disciplines. ✓ Provides training and development for young athletes.

	Implementation Partner	and Youth Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promotes a healthy and active lifestyle through sports participation. ✓ Works with schools and local institutions to enhance sports infrastructure and opportunities.
4	Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) – Supporting Partners	Role: Social Inclusion, Capacity Building, Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement community-based projects that complement the IAP (e.g., youth development, gender equality, inclusion). ✓ Provide training, psychosocial support, and advocacy for vulnerable and marginalized groups. ✓ Act as watchdogs and facilitators, ensuring transparency and responsiveness to community needs. <p>Key CSOs Involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Ward Loreto Foundation • Terre des Hommes • Hana Centre • Social Inclusion for Development (SIFD) • National Youth Congress • Ambassadors of Peace
5	Schools – Institutional Partners	Role: Grassroots Engagement and Sports Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Integrate physical education and sports activities in the school curriculum. ✓ Organize internal and inter-school sports events. ✓ Identify and support talented students in collaboration with sports associations. ✓ Serve as a key platform for instilling the values of sports and teamwork from an early age.
6	Local Youth Council (LYC) of Lezha – Youth Voice and Oversight	Role: Youth Representation and Policy Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advises the municipality on youth priorities and sport's needs. ✓ Participates in the planning and evaluation of IAP activities. ✓ Ensures that youth voices are reflected in decisions and strategies. ✓ Advocates for inclusive and participatory approaches to sports development.

1.4 Target Groups and their needs

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Lezha is designed to address the diverse needs of multiple target groups, ensuring that sports, youth development, and community engagement activities are inclusive, accessible, and impactful. The primary target group is youth aged 10–25, who will benefit from revitalized spaces, modern sports facilities, structured training programs, competitions, and talent development initiatives. Their needs include access to safe and inclusive sports environments, opportunities to develop physical and social skills, mentorship, and exposure to local, national, and international competitions.

Secondary target groups include schools and educational institutions, which require collaborative programs, facility access, and curriculum support to integrate sports and physical activity into daily learning. Coaches, trainers, and mentors form another key group, with needs

centered on professional development, modern training methodologies, and opportunities to engage with youth through structured programs.

The IAP also targets community members and local residents, who benefit from increased access to recreational spaces, inclusive sports programs, and community-building activities. Their needs include participation in consultations, events, and volunteer opportunities to ensure the facilities and programs reflect community priorities.

Finally, municipal departments, civil society organizations, and external partners are critical stakeholders, requiring clear coordination mechanisms, transparent communication, and collaborative planning to support implementation, sustainability, and long-term impact. By addressing the needs of these target groups, the IAP fosters an environment where young people can thrive, communities are actively engaged, and sports serve as a catalyst for social inclusion, personal development, and civic pride in Lezha.

1.5 Relevant policies framework

1. Law 75/2019 ‘On Youth’

The purpose of this law is to protect the rights of young people in a comprehensive manner, creating the necessary conditions for the activation, participation and support of young people, determining the functions and competencies of institutions at central and local levels, as well as cooperating with organizations that carry out activities in the field of youth.

The Law on Youth specifies the age of being considered young by specifying persons from 15 to 29 years old. The law defines the activities, mechanisms and authorities responsible for the protection and promotion of the rights of young people both in Albania and the diaspora and increases the participation of young people in policy-making and decision-making processes both at central and local levels. The law was adopted to protect the rights of young people and to create conditions for their activation, participation and support.

This law defines several important concepts in the youth sector such as: non-formal education for young people; structured dialogue between young people; youth organizations; organizations for young people or “Youth policies”.

2. National Youth Strategy 2022-2029

The vision of this strategy is intended to be implemented through three policy goals:

- ❖ Policy goal 1: Young people actively participate in society and feel empowered to express their voice. Cross-sectoral youth policies are coordinated, based on analysis, with well-funded mechanisms.
- ❖ Policy goal 2: Youth innovation and the growth of skills and professionalism of young people are supported and encouraged through quality education in ICT and other fields of digital development, thus increasing and improving opportunities to enter the labor market.

- ❖ Policy goal 3: Active, healthy, physical, social and mental well-being of young people. Safety, protection and inclusion of young people in all their diversity, especially for those young people who are at risk or socially excluded (vulnerable).

Some of the measures that are intended to be implemented for young people by or in cooperation with the LGUs are:

- Informing young people about opportunities to learn, gain organizational experience and volunteering, and to actively participate in civic, social and political life.
- Protection, support and security of young people, especially those in a situation of risk, in the place where they live and the digital space.
- Support young people in their inclusion and integration into society and have recreational and cultural opportunities, including arts and sports.

3. LAW No. 79/2017 ON SPORT, Amended by LAW No. 105/2020

This law defines the basic principles of the functioning of sport in the Republic of Albania:

- ❖ The principle of equality – Every citizen has the right to engage in sports activities, without discrimination.
- ❖ The principle of systematic and scientific approach – Physical education and sport should be developed in a structured and differentiated manner throughout the individual's life.
- ❖ The principle of connection with other sectors – Sport is interconnected with health, education and culture, creating a unified system with a balanced impact on the entire population.
- ❖ ç) The principle of fair play and sports ethics – Sports activities should be guided by Olympic ideals and ethical norms.
- ❖ The principle of safety – Sports activities should be developed in a safe environment for all participants.

This law also establishes that the administrative units of local government have the responsibility to draft and guarantee local policies in the field of school sports, mass sports and elite sports. They create institutions responsible for sports, manage sports facilities under their ownership, build new facilities according to needs, and support the development of sports organizations operating in their territory.

STRATEGY AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

1. UN Youth Strategy 2030

This strategy is based on a global vision of a world where the human rights of every young person are realized; where every young person is empowered to achieve their full potential; and where

the capacity, resilience and positive contributions of young people are recognized as agents of change. Equipped with the skills and opportunities needed to achieve their potential, young people can be a driving force for supporting development and contributing to peace and security. From a sustainable development goals (SDG) perspective, it is particularly important to leave no child or young person behind. The SDGs that are directly relevant to young people and their development in this SDG are:

- ❖ • SDG 3 – good health and well-being.
- ❖ • SDG 4 – quality education is closely linked to better employment opportunities and career advancement, leaving poverty behind.
- ❖ • SDG 5 – gender equality, as developments in Albania demonstrate, is a necessary foundation for sustainable and peaceful development.
- ❖ • SDG 8 – decent work and economic growth
- ❖ • SDG 13 – climate action in a global situation where each year reaches higher global warming records than the next and where air and water quality are declining, requires the engagement of young people and youth organizations to bring about a change in the global approach to this phenomenon.

2. European Youth Strategy

The European Youth Strategy is based on 11 goals for young people in Europe. The YES is based on these goals:

- ❖ Connecting the EU with youth;
- ❖ Gender equality;
- ❖ Inclusive society;
- ❖ Constructive dialogue and information sharing;
- ❖ Mental health and well-being;
- ❖ Incentives and priorities for rural youth;
- ❖ Quality employment for all;
- ❖ Quality learning;
- ❖ Space and participation for all;
- ❖ A green and sustainable Europe.

3. Council of Europe Youth Strategy

This strategy aims to encourage young people across Europe to actively support, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe's core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The strategic objectives of this document aim to increase the engagement and participation of young people in democratic processes, the strengthening of human rights and decision-making. The Council of Europe in its youth strategy document has targeted the following thematic priorities: revitalising pluralist democracy; young people's access to rights; living together in an inclusive society; youth work.

4. Western Balkans Agenda for Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sports

It presents a long-term strategy and framework for economic cooperation while providing a positive and forward-looking vision, in particular for youth, based on:

- ❖ Supporting the digital transformation;
- ❖ Promoting the implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and its five pillars;
- ❖ Promoting and supporting brain circulation, in particular with the Western Balkan diaspora;
- ❖ Raising high quality standards of European vocational education and training as a reference for skills development, including micro-credentials.

Other projects with private investment

A. Sports in schools

- ❖ Development of policies to review and improve the subject of physical education, making it more dynamic and suitable for all age groups.
- ❖ Reorganization and supervision of the activities of the School Sports Federation, the University Sports Federation and Sports Associations in pre-university and university educational institutions.
- ❖ Promotion of the values arising from engagement in sports and their integration into the field of physical education.
- ❖ Review and update of the legal framework for sports in educational institutions, ensuring a comprehensive and efficient approach.
- ❖ Organization and monitoring of projects aimed at bringing children and young people closer to sports, to promote a healthy and active lifestyle.
- ❖ These measures help build a sustainable sports culture and positively impact the physical and social development of young people.

B. School Sports Teams Program

The Sports Teams Program aims to promote healthy sports life, to remove young people from bad habits that bring passivity to their social life, and to help them spend their time after school in a quality way. This program was developed by the Albanian Government, and is implemented at the national and local levels by the Albanian National Olympic Committee. The mission of this project is to restore the sports culture, which promotes a healthy active life, with Olympic principles as part of everyday life. The overall objective is the return of a national sports program, which during the year 2022-2023 will be developed in two sports, basketball and volleyball. As part of the Sports Teams Program, during the month of November 2022, uniforms and material bases were distributed for girls and boys of sports teams, which are fully covered by the Albanian government fund. This project includes about 10,000 children and young people from volleyball

and basketball sports teams from 61 cities in Albania, with 225 participating schools. About 700 basketball and volleyball teams have been formed for both genders, in pre-university education. Every child and young athlete included in the sports team program will receive free of charge all the necessary material base to develop training and sports matches as part of sports championships at the municipal, regional and national levels.

PART 2 – Vision, Objectives, Expected Changes

Introduction

The Re-Gen initiative in Lezha marks a significant step toward urban revitalization by fostering a collaborative approach that brings together local government, community organizations, and residents, especially young people. At its core, the project centers on transforming a former school building – damaged during the devastating earthquake – into a fully functioning youth center. This adaptive reuse not only addresses the physical loss of educational and public infrastructure but also creates a dedicated space where youth can engage in learning, culture, recreation, and sports. This transformation responds directly to the challenges faced by Lezha's young population, including limited access to public spaces and extracurricular opportunities.

Re-Gen is more than a renovation effort; it is a movement aimed at empowering youth to take an active role in shaping their city's future. By fostering dialogue between young citizens and local authorities, the initiative ensures that youth voices influence how public spaces are designed and utilized. A hallmark of the project is the co-design process, where young people collaborate directly with urban planners and architects to reimagine outdoor areas. This includes plans for skate parks, graffiti-friendly walls, and spaces for pop-up community events, creating vibrant, youth-driven environments that reflect their creativity and aspirations. Beyond the physical and social renewal, Re-Gen seeks to cultivate a culture of youth participation in governance and urban planning.

The Municipality of Lezha is committed to organizing youth consultations that gather input on their needs and priorities. Alongside this, leadership training and mentorship programs will equip young people with the skills and confidence to take on active roles in community projects. This approach not only enhances civic engagement but also fosters a sense of ownership and pride among youth, encouraging them to contribute meaningfully to local development. Complementing the Re-Gen initiative, the Integrated Action Plan for recreational and sports facilities is grounded in the Local Youth Strategy 2024–2027 and the flagship program focused on the “Massification of Sports Among Young People.”

The plan envisions a dynamic, inclusive sports culture in Lezha that inspires youth to explore a broad range of athletic disciplines and discover their talents. Investments will be made in modern indoor game rooms, fitness areas, and outdoor spaces designed for street basketball, skateboarding, and other street sports, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all young people.

The Action Plan emphasizes the importance of expert coaching, community-driven sports events, and strategic partnerships between schools, sports associations, civil society organizations, and local businesses. This collaborative framework aims to nurture physical well-being, skill development, and strong social connections among youth. By fostering teamwork and collaboration, the plan aspires to create lasting friendships and a shared sense of civic pride, embedding physical activity and sports participation as key elements of young people's daily lives. Together, Re-Gen and the Integrated Action Plan represent a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to youth empowerment in Lezha. By investing in both infrastructure and human capital, the municipality is paving the way for a vibrant, youth-centered future. These initiatives not only enhance the urban environment but also build resilient communities by equipping young people with the tools, spaces, and opportunities they need to thrive.

Lezha's commitment to inclusive planning and youth leadership serves as an inspiring model for other cities seeking to harness the potential of their young populations for sustainable development. Ultimately, Re-Gen is about more than renovating spaces – it is about transforming the relationship between young citizens and their city. By integrating youth perspectives into urban planning and fostering leadership and active participation, Lezha is creating a future where young people are empowered to innovate, lead, and build a stronger community. This holistic approach ensures that the next generation is not only supported but actively engaged in shaping the cultural, social, and economic fabric of the municipality.

2.1 Vision

The vision of the IAP, **“Where New Talents Rise – Empowering Youth Through Sports and Collaboration,”** guides all actions and interventions aimed at transforming Lezha into a hub of inclusive sports, youth development, and community engagement. It reflects the commitment to unlock the potential of every young person, providing opportunities to develop skills, discover talents, and build confidence through sports and collaborative activities.

This vision emphasizes the integration of infrastructure, training programs, and community participation, ensuring that revitalized spaces, modern facilities, and structured talent development initiatives create an environment where young people can thrive. By fostering partnerships among municipal departments, schools, sports associations, civil society, national agencies, and international partners, the IAP ensures that youth empowerment is supported by a coordinated, participatory, and sustainable framework.

Ultimately, the IAP vision aims to establish a lasting culture of inclusion, excellence, and civic pride, where new talents emerge, young people lead healthy and active lives, and communities grow stronger through shared engagement, innovation, and collaboration.

2.2 Objective/s

❖ Strategic Objective

The Strategic Objective (St.Ob) of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) is to foster an inclusive, sustainable, and vibrant sports ecosystem in Lezha that empowers youth, strengthens community engagement, and promotes local talent development. This objective guides all specific actions and interventions, ensuring that the revitalization of abandoned spaces, construction of modern and accessible sports facilities, and implementation of structured training and talent development programs collectively contribute to a long-term transformation of the city's sports and youth landscape.

The strategic objective emphasizes a holistic approach, integrating physical infrastructure, human capital development, community participation, and cross-sector collaboration. It aligns with national priorities, including the Local Youth Strategy 2024–2027 and the “Massification of Sports Among Young People” program, as well as broader European and international frameworks for youth empowerment, inclusivity, and sustainable urban development. By achieving this strategic objective, the IAP aims to create an environment where young people can

discover and develop their talents, engage in healthy and active lifestyles, and contribute meaningfully to the social and cultural life of Lezha, while establishing replicable models of good practice for other municipalities.

- **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1:**

Revitalization of Abandoned Spaces for Sports Development Transform underutilized and abandoned spaces into sustainable, inclusive, and multifunctional sports environments. This initiative aims to optimize existing infrastructure, creating accessible spaces that encourage youth engagement, skills enhancement, and talent discovery, ultimately contributing to a thriving local sports culture. The plan aims to repurpose old, underutilized buildings in the city of Lezha into multifunctional sports centers equipped with modern, state-of-the-art facilities. These centers will support a variety of sports activities and training programs, providing inclusive, accessible spaces for the community. The transformation will focus on creating high-quality infrastructure that encourages youth participation, fosters talent development, and promotes active lifestyles. By revitalizing these spaces, the centers will become vibrant hubs where young people can engage in diverse sports, contributing to both individual growth and community well-being.

- **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2:**

Development of Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities Construct modern, fully equipped, and universally accessible sports facilities to support a diverse range of athletic activities. These spaces will serve as key community hubs fostering active participation, social integration, and long-term sports engagement, ensuring equal opportunities for individuals of all abilities and backgrounds. The plan involves the creation of both indoor and outdoor sports facilities within the multifunctional centers, designed to accommodate a variety of team and individual sports. These will include fields for popular team sports such as football, basketball, and volleyball, as well as dedicated spaces for activities like table tennis, gymnastics, aerobics, and martial arts. The facilities will be built with an emphasis on inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring that all individuals can participate. By providing diverse sports options, these centers aim to make sports a central part of young people's lives in Lezha, fostering community engagement and active lifestyles.

- **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3:**

Implementation of Comprehensive Training and Talent Development Programs. Establish structured training and development programs focused on skills enhancement, talent identification, and professional growth. Through certified coaching, mentorship, and sports education, this initiative will build a sustainable pipeline of future athletes and promote a competitive and inclusive sports culture. A series of structured training programs and sports activities will be organized for young people, offering them ample opportunities to participate in physical sports and uncover their talents. These programs will take place in the newly modernized sports facilities, with instruction provided by professional coaches and experienced trainers. By focusing on skill development and offering tailored guidance, these initiatives aim to boost youth interest and participation in sports. Additionally, they will promote a healthier lifestyle and foster community cohesion through active engagement in sports, creating a positive and supportive environment for youth development.

Together, these three specific objectives form a comprehensive and transformative strategy for Lezha, addressing the infrastructure, inclusivity, and human development pillars necessary for a vibrant sports ecosystem. By revitalizing existing spaces, building accessible and inclusive facilities, and implementing structured talent development programs, this initiative ensures that young people in Lezha are not only provided with opportunities but are also empowered to pursue sports as a means of personal growth, community connection, and future career pathways. The integrated approach reflects a long-term vision of a healthier, more engaged, and united community, where sports act as a powerful tool for inclusion, education, and social transformation.

2.3 Smart Goals

Specific Objective	Key Performance Indicator - Description	Measurement Unit	Baseline (starting point at year zero)	Target to be achieved at end of actions implementation	Sources of verification /data
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: Revitalization of Abandoned Spaces for Sports	Report on Consultation Findings	Nr. Of meetings Nr. of participants Nr. Of schools Nr. Of sports		5 Meetings 50 Participants 10 Schools 5 Different sports	List of Attendance Reports Pictures
	Field Visit Report	Nr. Of visits Nr. of participants Nr. Of places identified		5 Visits	List of Attendance Reports Pictures
	Questionnaire Responses	Nr. Of questionnaires' Nr. of participants		100 Questionnaires	Questionnaires Copy Report
	Action Plan	Nr. Of meetings Nr. of participants Nr. Of schools Nr. Of sports		5 Meetings 50 Participants 10 Schools 5 Different sports	List of Attendance Reports Pictures
	Hackathon	Nr. Of Hackathons done Nr. Of participants Nr. Of ideas proposed Nr. Of reports		3 Hackathons 90 Participants	List of Attendance Reports Pictures
	Selection of One Abandoned Space for Transformation	Nr. Of sites identified Nr. Of abandoned spaces selected Nr. Of reports		5 Spaces	List of Attendance Reports Pictures
	Maintenance Plan Document	Nr. Of plans Nr. Of studies done Nr. of funding options		1 Plan	Document

	Volunteer Program Framework	Nr. Of programs Nr. Of calls for recruitment		1 Program 1 Call open	Reports List of Registration
	Volunteer network	Nr. Of Volunteers		50 Volunteers	List of Attendance Reports Pictures

Specific Objective	Key Performance Indicator - Description	Measurement Unit	Baseline (starting point at year zero)	Target to be achieved at end of actions implementation	Sources of verification /data
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2: Development of Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities	Flexible Design Blueprints	Nr. Of projects proposed Nr. Of spaces proposed			
	Multi-Use Area Strategy Document	Nr. Of projects proposed Nr. Of spaces proposed Nr. Of Audit Reports			
	Signed contracts with construction contractors, outlining project scope, budget, and timeline.	Nr. Of procurement procedure Nr. Of signing contract			
	Completed construction of sports facilities, including indoor and outdoor spaces as per the design specifications.	Nr. Of procurement procedure Nr. Of signing contract Nr, of work done			
	Accessibility audit report, ensuring all-inclusive design features are in place and fully functional.	Nr. Of testing actions Nr. Of evaluating reports Nr. Of participants in testing actions			
	Organization of an Integrated Conference	Nr. Of conferences done Nr. Of participants Nr, of reports			
	Creation of a Platform for Information and Promotion	Nr. Of social media strategy Nr. Of social media content			

	Nr. Of platforms created Nr. Of viewers on social media			
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Specific Objective	Key Performance Indicator - Description	Measurement Unit	Baseline (starting point at year zero)	Target to be achieved at end of actions implementation	Sources of verification /data
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3: Implementation of Comprehensive Training and Talent Development Programs	Database of identified young sports talents across various disciplines	Nr. Of training courses provided Nr. Of sport disciplines Nr. Of youngsters involved Nr. Of sport dance hours provided			
	A clear framework outlining the stages of athlete development from beginner to elite levels.	Framework developed			
	Signed agreements or MOUs with professional coaches and scouts to participate in talent identification and development.	Nr. Of MOU Signed Nr. of coached contracted Nr. Of training courses provided Nr. Of youngsters involved Nr. Of sport dance hours provided			
	Official partnerships with national and regional sports organizations for athlete advancement	Nr. Of partners Nr. of athletes involved			
	Reports on the participation and performance of local talents in national and regional sports competitions	Nr. Of competitions done Nr. Of schools involved Nr. Of youngsters involved			

A detailed training manual or curriculum for coaches and mentors, including modules on coaching techniques, youth development, and injury prevention.	Nr. Of training manuals Nr. of coaching modules prepared			
Reports from training sessions and evaluations of the effectiveness of the training, including feedback from participants and trainers.	Nr. Of trainings Nr. Of expert coaches Nr. Of topics covered Nr. of youngsters involved			
Increased local youth participation in sports, arts, and performance activities, with a focus on skill development and exposure. Strengthened community involvement, with local sports clubs, schools, and community centers actively participating in the scouting camps.	Nr. Of talent series done Nr. Of young athletes Nr. Of sport disciplines Nr. of sport clubs involved			
Successfully organized talent promotion events in five different disciplines, providing a platform for 100 young individuals to showcase their skills.	Nr. Of events done Nr. Of participants Nr. Of promotions materials			

	Signed MoUs between the project and 3 key stakeholders (schools, sports associations, and civil society organizations), formalizing partnerships and outlining collaborative roles and responsibilities.	Nr. Of memorandums Nr. Of schools involved Nr. Of Civil society organizations involved Nr. Of sport associations			
	Formalized agreement with the Ministry outlining the funding, grants, and technical support allocated for local sports development initiatives.	Nr. Of agreement signed with the Ministry Nr. Of grants provided from the Ministry			

2.4 Actions

❖ SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: Revitalization of Abandoned Spaces for Sports Development

This objective focuses on transforming underutilized and abandoned spaces across the city of Lezha into sustainable, inclusive, and multifunctional sports environments. The aim is to optimize the existing but neglected infrastructure, turning it into community-driven hubs that promote youth engagement, healthy lifestyles, and local sports development. The first step in this initiative will involve site mapping and community consultation. A comprehensive survey and mapping process will identify all potential abandoned spaces that could be repurposed for sports development. This will be followed by structured consultation sessions with local residents, youth groups, sports associations, and municipal stakeholders. These meetings will help prioritize redevelopment areas by aligning the project goals with the actual needs and aspirations of the community.

Once the priority sites are selected, the next phase will focus on design and infrastructure upgrading. Architectural and engineering teams will be engaged to develop tailored plans that ensure the transformation of spaces into safe, multifunctional sports centers. These designs will emphasize environmental sustainability through the use of eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient technologies. Special attention will also be given to accessibility, making sure the facilities are inclusive for individuals of all abilities and backgrounds.

Modern sports equipment and versatile layouts will enable diverse activities ranging from team sports to individual training. Following the planning and design phase, the initiative will move into the implementation of a pilot project. A single high-potential site will be selected for a full-

scale transformation into a modern, operational sports facility. This pilot will serve as a model for future replications, demonstrating best practices in space revitalization and community engagement. To ensure the long-term impact and functionality of these revitalized spaces, a sustainability and maintenance strategy will be developed. This will include a robust management structure involving local authorities, public-private partnerships, and active community participation. Maintenance protocols, funding mechanisms, and volunteer engagement plans will be established to secure the continued use, care, and evolution of these facilities over time. Ultimately, this objective seeks to breathe new life into abandoned areas, turning them into vibrant, well-maintained, and inclusive environments that enhance the quality of life for the youth and the broader community of Lezha.

1. **Action 1.1** Site Mapping and Community Consultation: Conduct a detailed survey and mapping of abandoned spaces, followed by consultation meetings with local communities, sports organizations, and stakeholders to identify priority areas for redevelopment based on community needs.
2. **ACTION 1.2** Design and Infrastructure Upgrading: Develop architectural and engineering plans to repurpose spaces into safe, inclusive, and multifunctional sports areas, incorporating eco-friendly materials, accessibility features, and modern sports equipment.
3. **ACTION 1.3** Pilot Project Implementation: Select a high-impact location for a pilot revitalization project, transforming an abandoned space into a fully operational sports facility, serving as a model for future initiatives.
4. **ACTION 1.4** Sustainability and Maintenance Strategy: The continuous use and upkeep of revitalized sports space. Establish a long-term management and maintenance plan, including community-led initiatives, public-private partnerships, and local governance involvement to ensure sustainability.

1.1 Site Mapping and Community Consultation
1.1.1 Organization of 3 Consultation Meetings with Youth, School Students, and Sports Professionals
1.1.2 Organization of a Field Visit Across the Entire Lezha Municipality
1.1.3 Development of a Questionnaire for the Lezha Municipality with at Least 100 Interviewees
1.2 Design and Infrastructure Upgrading:
1.2.1 Selection of One Abandoned Space for Transformation
1.2.2 Contracting a Project Company to Develop the Technical Design for Transforming the Spaces into a Sports Recreation Area
1.3 Pilot Project Implementation
1.3.1 Organization of a Test Sports Event in 3 Key Identified Spaces with Participation from 3 Schools and 25 Youths
1.3.2 Organization of a Hackathon with 30 Youth Participants to Generate Ideas for the Transformation of Identified Spaces
1.4 Sustainability and Maintenance Strategy
1.4.1 Develop a detailed maintenance plan that outlines routine checks, repairs, and upgrades needed for the sports facilities.

1.4.2 Establish a volunteer program or collaboration with local businesses to support the sustainability efforts, ensuring the community takes ownership of the spaces.

❖ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2: Development of Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities**

This objective is centered on the creation of new, modern, and universally accessible sports facilities in the city of Lezha. These facilities will be designed to support a wide range of sports disciplines while ensuring inclusivity for individuals of all ages, genders, and physical or cognitive abilities. The ultimate goal is to establish safe, welcoming, and fully functional spaces that become pillars of community engagement and long-term athletic development. The process will begin with a comprehensive needs assessment and planning phase. This step involves detailed research and community consultations to identify which types of sports facilities are most needed. It will take into account the preferences of local youth, schools, community organizations, and underrepresented groups, especially individuals with disabilities. This assessment will guide the development of a strategic plan outlining the specific facilities to be built, their features, and their locations across Lezha. Following the assessment, efforts will move toward designing inclusive sports infrastructure. In collaboration with architects, engineers, and disability inclusion experts, design teams will craft infrastructure plans that embody universal design principles. This means ensuring wheelchair accessibility, installing sensory-friendly elements, and creating adaptable spaces that can accommodate a variety of sports and fitness activities.

The designs will integrate state-of-the-art sports technologies and equipment, creating multifunctional environments that can be used for both recreational and competitive sports. Once the designs are finalized, the project will proceed to the construction and facility development phase. This includes the actual building of sports fields, indoor gyms, running tracks, and multi-purpose courts—all tailored to meet the highest standards of sustainability, durability, and accessibility. Special attention will be paid to ensure the physical environment supports the full inclusion of athletes with disabilities, making these facilities usable and comfortable for everyone in the community. To maximize the impact of the newly constructed facilities, a strong emphasis will be placed on community engagement and program launch. Local sports clubs, schools, youth groups, and organizations advocating for people with disabilities will be actively involved throughout the final stages. This includes participating in the inauguration of the facilities and co-developing programs that encourage inclusive use. Introductory training sessions, adaptive sports events, and inclusive fitness classes will be organized to ensure these facilities are well-utilized and accessible to all segments of the population.

Through this objective, the city of Lezha will establish a forward-thinking approach to urban sports development—one that bridges accessibility, quality infrastructure, and community participation. These inclusive sports facilities will become key platforms for personal growth, social interaction, and a more active and united community.

1. **ACTION 2.1** Needs Assessment and Planning: Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the types of sports facilities required by the community, considering diverse sports and accessibility requirements for individuals with various abilities. Develop a strategic plan for the design and construction of these facilities.

2. **ACTION 2.2** Designing Inclusive Sports Infrastructure: Collaborate with architects and engineers to create universal design concepts that ensure facilities are accessible to all, including wheelchair access, sensory-friendly spaces, and facilities for people with disabilities. Integrate modern sports technology and adaptable spaces for various activities.
3. **ACTION 2.3** Construction and Facility Development: Begin the construction process based on approved designs, ensuring all facilities meet sustainability standards and accessibility regulations. This includes building sports fields, gyms, tracks, and multi-purpose courts that are suitable for athletes of all abilities.
4. **ACTION 2.4** Community Engagement and Program Launch: Involve local communities and sports organizations in the planning and opening phases of the new facilities. Organize events and programs that encourage diverse community participation, from introductory sessions for youth to specialize.

2.1 Needs Assessment and Planning:
2.1.1 Conduct surveys and interviews with local residents, schools, sports clubs, and community organizations to gather data on their needs and expectations for the sports center
2.1.2 Analyze the results from the surveys and interviews to identify common trends, gaps, and priorities.
2.1.3 Develop a Comprehensive Action Plan
1.2 Design and Infrastructure Upgrading:
2.2.1 Engage with architects, urban planners, accessibility consultants, and community members (including individuals with disabilities) to ensure that the design of the sports infrastructure is inclusive.
2.2.2 Incorporation of Multi-functional and Flexible Spaces
12.3 Construction and Facility Development:
2.3.1 Site Preparation and Infrastructure Development
2.3.2 Construction of Sports Facilities
2.3.3 Once the facilities are constructed, conduct thorough testing to ensure that they meet all safety, quality, and accessibility standards.
2.4 Community Engagement and Program Launch
2.4.1 Organization of an Integrated Conference for the Presentation of the Newly Transformed Space and Its Offerings
2.4.2 Promotion on Social Media of the Center and Creation of a Platform for Information and Promotion

❖ SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3: Implementation of Comprehensive Training and Talent Development Programs

This objective aims to establish a robust, structured training ecosystem that nurtures young talent, enhances athletic skills, and fosters professional development in the city of Lezha. Through

an inclusive and well-organized approach, the initiative will provide a comprehensive framework that supports athletes from the grassroots level to advanced stages of their sporting careers. The focus will be on skill development, talent identification, physical conditioning, and character-building through quality mentorship.

The foundation of this initiative will begin with curriculum development and program design, tailored to various age groups and skill levels. These programs will include progressive training modules focused on physical fitness, sport-specific techniques, and personal development. Additionally, the curriculum will integrate components of leadership, teamwork, and mental resilience, ensuring a well-rounded approach to athlete growth. Talent identification will be embedded throughout the process, allowing promising individuals to be recognized early and nurtured through focused development tracks.

To ensure the successful delivery of these training programs, a strong emphasis will be placed on recruitment and training of coaches and mentors. Qualified coaches, sports professionals, and experienced mentors will be selected and provided with specialized training to enhance their instructional capacity. Continuous professional development opportunities, such as workshops and certifications, will be offered to ensure that coaching methods remain up-to-date with international standards and evolving sports science. As training programs unfold, a structured talent scouting and development pathway will be established to systematically identify and support emerging athletes. Using both observational and performance-based assessments, potential athletes will be guided through personalized development tracks, offering increasing levels of challenge and opportunity. These tracks will lead participants through local competitions, regional showcases, and, for exceptional talents, pathways to national and international exposure.

To strengthen the long-term impact and sustainability of these programs, the initiative will pursue partnerships and collaborative programs with local sports clubs, educational institutions, national federations, and international academies. These collaborations will open doors for shared expertise, resource mobilization, and broader opportunities for athletes and coaches alike. Activities such as joint training camps, inter-city tournaments, coaching exchange programs, and specialized workshops will be organized, fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement. Ultimately, this objective positions Lezha as a forward-looking city that prioritizes youth development through sports. By creating a supportive ecosystem of training, mentorship, and opportunity, it aims to inspire a new generation of athletes who are not only physically capable but also socially responsible and community-minded.

1. **ACTION 3.1 Curriculum Development and Program Design:** Develop tailored training programs for different age groups and skill levels, focusing on skills enhancement, physical conditioning, and sport-specific techniques. Include components for talent identification and leadership development to ensure holistic growth of athletes.
2. **ACTION 3.2 Recruitment and Training of Coaches and Mentors:** Select and train qualified coaches, mentors, and sports professionals who are equipped to deliver high-quality, structured training sessions. Provide continuous professional development opportunities for coaches to ensure they stay updated with the latest training methodologies and best practices.
3. **ACTION 3.3 Talent Scouting and Development Pathways:** Establish a talent scouting system that identifies potential athletes from grassroots to elite levels.

4. **ACTION 3.4 Partnerships and Collaborative Programs:** Partner with sports academies, local clubs, and national federations to offer specialized training opportunities and create platforms for athletes to compete at higher levels. Implement collaborative workshops, training camps, and exchange programs to enhance exposure and foster networking opportunities for both athletes and coaches.

3.1 Curriculum Development and Program Design
3.1.1 To develop 1-year professional training courses for young people, providing training opportunities in five sports disciplines (Volleyball, Basketball, Tennis, Athletics, and one other discipline) to strengthen skills and identify new talents.
3.1.2 Development of 15 Hours per week of Dance Sports, Yoga, and Modern Dance.
3.1.3 Organization of 5 Sports Competitions in 5 Sports Disciplines with Participation from at Least 10 Schools in Lezha.
3.1.4 Work with schools and sports associations to create after-school sports clubs focused on providing additional training and practice sessions in various sports.
3.2 Recruitment and Training of Coaches and Mentors
3.2.1 Conduct a recruitment campaign to attract experienced coaches and mentors with specialized knowledge in various sports disciplines.
3.2.2 Create a structured training program for all newly recruited coaches and mentors, covering topics such as effective coaching techniques, child and youth development, motivational strategies, injury prevention, and fostering sportsmanship
3.3 Talent Scouting and Development Pathways
3.3.1 Organizing the "Lezha Talent Growth Festival"
3.3.2 Organize a 10 series of talent scouting camps across Lezha to identify young athletes with exceptional potential in sports such as football, basketball, athletics, and more.
1.3.3 Organizing 5 Events for Promoting Talents in Different Disciplines for 100 youngsters in total.
3.4 Partnerships and Collaborative Programs
3.4.1 Signing of 3 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Schools, Sports Associations, and Civil Society Organizations
3.4.2 Formalize an agreement with the Ministry to secure access to funding, grants, and technical support for local sports initiatives

The importance of this Action Plan lies in its direct alignment with the overarching goal and vision of the Local Youth Strategy 2024–2027 and the national flagship program “Massification of Sports Among Young People.” Rooted in the vision “Where New Talents Rise – Empowering Youth Through Sports and Collaboration,” this initiative is a concrete response to the growing need for inclusive, sustainable, and engaging sports opportunities for the youth of Lezha. By revitalizing abandoned spaces, constructing modern and accessible facilities, and implementing structured training and talent development programs, the plan actively contributes to building a vibrant local sports culture. It does more than just improve infrastructure – it empowers young people to participate, discover their potential, and grow within a supportive community framework.

Each action is purposefully designed to remove barriers to participation, promote lifelong physical activity, and establish clear pathways for talent identification and development. Moreover, through cross-sector partnerships with schools, civil society, sports associations, and local businesses, the plan fosters a sense of shared ownership and civic pride. Ultimately, this

action plan acts as a catalyst for long-term transformation, turning Lezha into a model city where youth are motivated to lead healthy lives, pursue their passions in sport, and contribute meaningfully to their communities – creating a legacy of inclusion, excellence, and collaboration that will thrive for generations

2.5 PRIORITIZATION of actions

The prioritization of actions within this Action Plan is based on a structured evaluation process designed to ensure that resources are directed toward activities with the highest potential for impact, feasibility, and sustainability. Six key criteria were applied to guide the selection and sequencing of actions.

1. **Impact on Youth Engagement:** This criterion measures the extent to which each action directly involves young people and contributes to their empowerment, participation, and development through sports. Actions that promote active youth engagement, capacity building, and long-term behavioral change are given higher priority.
2. **Feasibility and Readiness:** Feasibility assesses how easily an action can be implemented within the available timeframe, human capacity, and financial resources. Priority is given to actions that are practical, immediately implementable, and supported by existing institutional frameworks or partnerships.
3. **Sustainability Potential:** This criterion evaluates the likelihood that the benefits of each action will continue after the project's completion. Actions that include mechanisms for maintenance, local ownership, and community involvement score higher, ensuring the longevity and continuous relevance of project outcomes.
4. **Inclusiveness and Accessibility:** Recognizing the importance of equal participation, this criterion measures how well each action ensures accessibility for individuals of all abilities, genders, and social backgrounds. Priority is assigned to activities that promote universal design, social inclusion, and barrier-free participation in sports.
5. **Cost Efficiency:** This criterion examines the balance between the expected results and the financial investment required. Actions that deliver significant impact with moderate or low costs are prioritized to optimize the use of project funds and ensure value for money.
6. **Visibility and Replicability:** Visibility refers to the action's potential to generate public awareness and showcase success, while replicability considers whether the initiative can serve as a model for future projects. Actions that can be easily replicated in other areas or that enhance Lezha's profile as a city of youth innovation receive higher ranking.

Each proposed activity was assessed against these six criteria to determine its strategic importance and implementation order. This approach ensures that the Action Plan is both ambitious and achievable, focusing first on high-impact, feasible, and sustainable actions that will build momentum and set the foundation for the long-term transformation of Lezha's sports and youth development landscape.

The prioritization of actions under this Action Plan has been guided by six key criteria: impact on youth engagement, feasibility and readiness, sustainability potential, inclusiveness and accessibility, cost efficiency, and visibility and replicability. These criteria ensure that the implementation process begins with activities that are both high-impact and realistically achievable within available resources. The actions selected for the first phase of implementation are those that generate community ownership, visible results, and strong foundations for long-term success.

The highest priority is given to ***Action 1.1.1: Organization of consultation meetings with youth, students, and sports professionals***. This step is crucial as it lays the groundwork for the entire initiative through direct community engagement. These consultations will ensure that the transformation of spaces and the development of facilities truly reflect the needs and aspirations of Lezha's youth and stakeholders. Because of its low cost, high feasibility, and strong social impact, this activity stands as the cornerstone of the participatory approach the project promotes.

Following closely is ***Action 1.2.1: Selection of one abandoned space for transformation***, which provides a tangible and highly visible outcome early in the process. By identifying and prioritizing one pilot location, the project creates momentum, setting the stage for subsequent infrastructure and design activities. This action combines feasibility and replicability – serving as a model for future revitalization projects while producing quick, measurable results that can inspire community confidence and participation.

In parallel, ***Action 2.1.1: Conducting surveys and interviews for the needs assessment*** is prioritized as a foundational research activity that ensures evidence-based decision-making. This step promotes inclusiveness and long-term sustainability by identifying real community needs, accessibility requirements, and the most demanded types of sports facilities. The insights gained will directly inform both the design and implementation phases.

Among capacity-building initiatives, ***Action 3.1.1: Development of one-year professional training courses for young people in five sports disciplines*** ranks high in importance. It directly contributes to youth engagement, talent identification, and skill enhancement, aligning perfectly with the overarching goal of fostering athletic development and empowerment. This action is expected to have lasting effects by building a structured and professional training culture in Lezha.

Action 1.3.2: Organization of a youth hackathon to generate transformation ideas also stands out due to its innovative and participatory nature. The hackathon will encourage creativity, civic engagement, and teamwork, empowering young participants to contribute to real urban transformation solutions. The visibility of such an event is expected to attract attention from local and national stakeholders.

Equally critical is ***Action 2.2.1: Engagement of architects, urban planners, and accessibility consultants for designing inclusive sports infrastructure***. This action ensures that accessibility and universal design principles are fully integrated, guaranteeing that new sports spaces are welcoming and usable for individuals of all abilities. Its long-term impact and sustainability value make it a core priority despite its higher technical requirements.

Another high-impact and visible activity is **Action 3.1.3: Organization of five sports competitions in five different disciplines with participation from at least ten schools in Lezha**. This action strongly supports youth engagement and community visibility, offering young athletes a platform to showcase their skills, build teamwork, and strengthen school-level collaboration. It provides a direct and motivating way to promote the values of participation, inclusion, and healthy lifestyles.

Another priority, **Action 3.3.1: Organization of the “Lezha Talent Growth Festival”** is prioritized for its powerful symbolic and practical impact. The festival will serve as a celebration of youth talent, gathering athletes, schools, coaches, and community members in a large-scale public event. It will increase visibility, foster motivation, and strengthen the city’s identity as a hub for emerging sports talent and creativity.

Additionally, **Action 2.4.2: Promotion of the new facilities through social media and creation of an online information platform** is prioritized for its role in increasing visibility and encouraging participation. This communication effort will foster community pride, attract new users, and build public awareness about available opportunities, enhancing both inclusiveness and program reach.

Finally, **Action 3.4.1: Signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)** with schools, sports associations, and civil society organizations secures the institutional partnerships needed for sustainability and expansion. These formal collaborations will help mobilize additional resources, create shared ownership, and ensure the long-term continuity of sports programs in Lezha.

Together, these ten prioritized actions form a strategic sequence—starting with community engagement and needs assessment, followed by design and pilot implementation, and leading to sustainability, visibility, and partnership-building. This phased and criteria-based prioritization ensures that each step of the Action Plan builds on solid groundwork, maximizes impact, and establishes a lasting framework for inclusive sports development in the city of Lezha.

The implementation of this Action Plan is foreseen over a period of three years (2026–2029), allowing sufficient time for careful planning, effective execution, and sustainable results. The first year will focus on preparation and foundation, including consultation meetings with youth, students, and sports professionals, the selection of one abandoned space for transformation, the organization of a hackathon to generate creative ideas, and the engagement of architects and accessibility experts for inclusive design. These actions will ensure strong community participation, solid data collection, and well-prepared designs for the next stages.

The second year will emphasize implementation and capacity building, with activities such as the development of one-year professional training courses for young people, training for newly recruited coaches, and the organization of five sports competitions across different disciplines involving at least ten schools in Lezha. This phase will also include the physical transformation of the selected public space and the development of a detailed maintenance plan to guarantee long-term functionality. The focus will be on achieving visible results, strengthening local capacities, and demonstrating the benefits of inclusive sports initiatives.

The third and final **year** will concentrate on consolidation, visibility, and sustainability. Key activities will include the promotion of new facilities, the creation of an online information platform, and the organization of the “Lezha Talent Growth Festival” as a large-scale celebration of youth talent and community achievement. This phase will also involve the evaluation of project outcomes, the documentation of best practices, and the planning of follow-up initiatives to replicate successful models in other areas.

Overall, the three-year timeframe ensures a balanced and realistic progression from planning to implementation and long-term sustainability, creating lasting impact and positioning Lezha as a vibrant, inclusive, and youth-driven city that promotes sports as a key tool for empowerment and social cohesion.

2.6 Policies Areas/Sectors involved in the realization of the Action (Sectoral integration)

PRIORITY ACTIONs	Sustainable Sports Culture	Youth Participation	Accessible Sports Facilities	Talent Development	Urban Transition
Action 1.1.1: Organization of consultation meetings with youth, students, and sports professionals.					
Action 1.2.1: Selection of one abandoned space for transformation					
Action 2.1.1: Conducting surveys and interviews for the needs assessment					
Action 3.1.1: Development of one-year professional training courses for young people in five sports disciplines					
Action 1.3.2: Organization of a youth hackathon to					

generate transformation ideas					
Action 2.2.1: Engagement of architects, urban planners, and accessibility consultants for designing inclusive sports infrastructure.					
Action 3.1.3: Organization of five sports competitions in five different disciplines with participation from at least ten schools in Lezha.					
Action 2.4.2: Promotion of the new facilities through social media and creation of an online information platform					
Action 3.3.1: Organization of the “Lezha Talent Growth Festival					
Action 3.4.1: Signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)					

2.7 Schedule

The successful implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) requires a clearly defined schedule that organizes all activities into manageable phases, ensuring efficient coordination, timely delivery, and effective monitoring of outcomes. The overall duration of the project spans three years (2026–2028), structured into quarterly phases to facilitate systematic progress tracking and timely adjustments.

The implementation is divided into four main phases:

1. **Initiation and Planning (Q1–Q4 2026):** This phase includes the launch of the IAP, establishment of implementation teams and local coordination units, site mapping,

community consultations, development of architectural and engineering plans for revitalized and new sports facilities, drafting of training curricula, and recruitment of coaches and mentors. It lays the foundation for all subsequent actions.

2. **Pilot Implementation and Facility Development (Q1–Q4 2027):** During this phase, the pilot revitalization project begins, new inclusive sports facilities are constructed, and basic training programs for youth are launched. Talent scouting initiatives, community engagement campaigns, and collaborative programs with local and national partners are also initiated to ensure active participation and visibility.
3. **Full Operation and Sustainability (Q1–Q2 2028/2029):** This phase focuses on the full operation of revitalized pilot spaces, implementation of sustainability and maintenance strategies, and the delivery of advanced skills training and exposure opportunities for youth.
4. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Expansion Planning (Q3–Q4 2028/2029):** The final phase involves comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of all IAP components, documentation of best practices, and formulation of policy recommendations. This phase also prepares the groundwork for future scaling and replication of successful initiatives.

2.6 Necessary Resources

The implementation of the Action Plan will require a carefully planned combination of human, financial, technical, material, and institutional resources to ensure that all activities are executed efficiently and sustainably.

1. Human Resources:

- **Project Management and Coordination:** Project managers, coordinators, and administrative staff to oversee planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of all activities.
- **URBACT Local Group Members:** Active participation in decision-making, monitoring, and providing guidance throughout all phases.
- **Municipal Staff:** Personnel from relevant directorates (Urban Planning, Sports, Education, Social Services, Finance, Strategic Projects, Communication) to support coordination, implementation, and technical guidance.
- **Coaches, Trainers, and Mentors:** Qualified professionals to deliver training programs, talent development, workshops, and after-school sports activities.
- **Volunteers and Community Facilitators:** Engaging youth and community members in events, competitions, festivals, and maintenance activities.

2. Financial Resources:

- Costs for infrastructure development and renovation of abandoned spaces and construction of inclusive sports facilities.
- Procurement of sports equipment for multiple disciplines (indoor and outdoor).
- Funding for professional training programs, workshops, and talent scouting initiatives.
- Budget for organizing competitions, festivals, hackathons, and public engagement events.
- Operational and maintenance costs, including utilities, staffing, and facility upkeep.

- Communication, promotion, and outreach campaigns to ensure stakeholder engagement and visibility.

3. Technical Resources:

- Expertise from architects, urban planners, and engineers to design and implement infrastructure upgrades.
- Accessibility consultants to ensure inclusive and universally accessible facilities.
- Sports professionals and training experts for curriculum development, coaching, and talent identification.
- IT specialists and digital platform developers to manage online communication, engagement, and monitoring systems.
- Project management tools, data collection software, and reporting templates for effective monitoring and evaluation.

4. Material Resources:

- Construction materials and eco-friendly building components for facility upgrades and new construction.
- Sports equipment such as balls, nets, gym equipment, training aids, and protective gear.
- Furniture and fixtures for multi-purpose and indoor training areas.
- Digital devices (computers, tablets, projectors) and software to support training, communication, and reporting.
- Printed materials, banners, and signage for events, workshops, and public awareness campaigns.

5. Institutional and Partnership Resources:

- Collaboration with city departments to ensure policy alignment, administrative support, and integration of activities.
- Engagement of external partners including the Ministry of Sports, National Youth Agency, and National Fund for Development for technical guidance, funding, and strategic support.
- Participation of schools, sports clubs, civil society organizations, and diaspora networks for program delivery, community engagement, and knowledge sharing.
- Access to national and EU-level networks and funding programs to strengthen capacity, bring in best practices, and enhance sustainability.

By strategically combining these resources, the Action Plan aims to create high-quality, inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven sports and youth development initiatives. Proper planning and management of resources will ensure that every action, from infrastructure revitalization to talent development programs and community events, is effectively implemented and has long-term impact for the youth and the broader community of Lezha.

PART 3 – Cooperation framework for implementation: Multilevel governance - Multi Actor Approach ...

3.1 The Role of the URBACT LOCAL GROUP in the IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

During the implementation phase, the URBACT Local Group (ULG) will play a central and active role in ensuring that all actions are effectively carried out and remain aligned with the project's objectives. The ULG will be involved in every stage of the process – from planning and organization to monitoring and evaluation. Its members will actively participate in the preparation and execution of activities, contribute ideas for improving implementation, and support coordination among local stakeholders.

The group will serve as a key platform for dialogue, collaboration, and feedback, ensuring that the voices of different community actors – including youth, schools, sports clubs, local institutions, and civil society – are represented throughout the process. ULG members will also contribute by sharing lessons learned and good practices at each stage, helping to refine the approach and strengthen the project's overall quality and impact.

Through their consistent engagement, the URBACT Local Group will not only facilitate effective coordination and communication but will also enhance ownership, transparency, and local commitment. Their role as both contributors and observers will ensure that the implementation process remains participatory, innovative, and responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

3.2 Cities DPT to be involved in the Implementation

The successful implementation of the Action Plan requires the active engagement of multiple **City Departments**, each contributing its specific expertise and ensuring alignment with municipal, national, and European priorities. Key departments include the **Directorate of Human Resources and Support Services**, which will provide assistance in human resources management and operational logistics; the **Directorate of Finance and Budget**, responsible for budgeting, financial oversight, and procurement compliance; and the **Directorate of Strategic Projects, Europe, Migration, Diaspora, Communication, and Transparency**, which will coordinate strategic initiatives, facilitate EU alignment, engage diaspora networks, and oversee communication and transparency efforts.

Additionally, the **Directorate of Territorial Planning and Urban Development** will guide the identification, planning, and preparation of abandoned spaces for sports revitalization, while the **Directorate of Social Services and Care** will ensure that all activities are inclusive and accessible, particularly for vulnerable groups and individuals with disabilities. The **Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports** will oversee collaboration with schools, youth programs, and sports associations, supporting training, competitions, and youth engagement initiatives.

Active coordination among these departments will ensure integrated planning, efficient implementation, and the long-term sustainability of sports facilities and youth development programs. By leveraging the expertise and mandates of each directorate, the project will achieve

a participatory, transparent, and high-impact approach, strengthening Lezha's position as a model city for inclusive, community-driven sports and urban development initiatives.

ACTION	Directorate of Human Resources and Support Services,	Directorate of Finance and Budget,	Directorate of Strategic Projects, Europe, Migration, Diaspora, Communication, and Transparency,	Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports	Directorate of Territorial Planning and Urban Development	Directorate of Social Services and Care
Action 1.1.1: Organization of consultation meetings with youth, students, and sports professionals.						
Action 1.2.1: Selection of one abandoned space for transformation						
Action 2.1.1: Conducting surveys and interviews for the needs assessment						
Action 3.1.1: Development of one-year professional training courses for young people in five sports disciplines						
Action 1.3.2: Organization of a youth hackathon to generate transformation ideas						
Action 2.2.1: Engagement of architects, urban planners, and accessibility						

consultants for designing inclusive sports infrastructure.						
Action 3.1.3: Organization of five sports competitions in five different disciplines with participation from at least ten schools in Lezha.						
Action 2.4.2: Promotion of the new facilities through social media and creation of an online information platform						
Action 3.3.1: Organization of the "Lezha Talent Growth Festival						
Action 3.4.1: Signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)						

3.3 External Partners to be involved in the Implementation

The successful implementation of this Action Plan relies on collaboration with key **external partners** who bring expertise, resources, and strategic support at the national level. The **Ministry of Sports** will provide technical guidance, policy alignment, and access to national programs and funding opportunities, ensuring that local initiatives are consistent with broader sports development strategies. The **National Youth Agency** will support youth engagement, training programs, and talent development initiatives, offering expertise in youth policy, program management, and outreach to schools and community organizations.

For the financial and investment aspects of the project, the **National Fund for Development** will play a crucial role by providing funding and investment support for infrastructure, equipment, and facility upgrades. Their involvement ensures that the physical transformation of sports spaces is feasible and sustainable, complementing the technical and programmatic support from other partners.

These external partners will participate in planning, coordination, and monitoring activities, providing guidance, sharing best practices, and helping to evaluate the impact of the project. Their combined involvement ensures that the implementation of the Action Plan is locally driven, technically sound, and financially sustainable, enhancing visibility, impact, and long-term benefits for youth and sports development in Lezha.

ACTION	Ministry of Sports	National Youth Agency	National Fund for Development
Action 1.1.1: Organization of consultation meetings with youth, students, and sports professionals.			
Action 1.2.1: Selection of one abandoned space for transformation			
Action 2.1.1: Conducting surveys and interviews for the needs assessment			
Action 3.1.1: Development of one-year professional training courses for young people in five sports disciplines			
Action 1.3.2: Organization of a youth hackathon to generate transformation ideas			
Action 2.2.1: Engagement of architects, urban planners, and accessibility consultants for designing inclusive sports infrastructure.			
Action 3.1.3: Organization of five sports competitions in five different disciplines with participation from at least ten schools in Lezha.			
Action 2.4.2: Promotion of the new facilities through social media and creation of an online information platform			
Action 3.4.1: Signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)			
Action 3.3.1: Organization of the "Lezha Talent Growth Festival			

3.4 Methods, tools and channels to engage and to inform stakeholders and citizens

Effective engagement and communication are critical to ensuring the success and sustainability of the Action Plan. A variety of methods, tools, and channels will be employed to reach stakeholders and the broader community, promote participation, and keep everyone informed throughout the implementation process. Consultation meetings, workshops, and focus groups will be organized to actively involve youth, schools, sports associations, local authorities, and civil society organizations in decision-making and co-creation of project activities. These interactive sessions will provide opportunities for sharing ideas, giving feedback, and fostering a sense of ownership among participants.

Surveys, questionnaires, and polls will be used to gather data on needs, preferences, and satisfaction, ensuring that planning and program design reflect the community's priorities. Digital platforms, including official municipal websites, social media channels, and dedicated project portals, will serve as key communication channels for sharing updates, success stories, event announcements, and progress reports. These tools will ensure wide visibility and transparency, reaching both local residents and diaspora communities interested in supporting the project.

In addition, printed materials, newsletters, and public notice boards will be used to engage citizens who may have limited access to digital media, ensuring inclusivity in communication efforts. Public events such as sports competitions, festivals, and facility inaugurations will act as live engagement opportunities, drawing attention to project achievements while directly involving youth and local communities.

The combination of participatory methods, digital and traditional tools, and both formal and informal channels will guarantee that stakeholders and citizens are continuously informed, motivated to participate, and able to contribute ideas throughout the project. This multi-channel engagement strategy ensures transparency, accountability, and a strong sense of community ownership, which are essential for the long-term sustainability of the initiative.

3.5 Governance, cooperation and management methodology

The effective implementation of the Action Plan relies on a clear governance structure, strong cooperation mechanisms, and a well-defined management methodology. At the core of governance is the URBACT Local Group (ULG), which will act as the central coordination body, ensuring that all stakeholders, including city departments, external partners, schools, sports associations, and youth groups, are actively engaged and aligned with project objectives. The ULG will facilitate decision-making, monitor progress, and provide feedback on each action, ensuring participatory and transparent governance throughout the implementation phase.

A cooperative approach will be promoted by establishing regular coordination meetings, workshops, and communication channels among all involved parties. Internal stakeholders, including municipal directorates, will collaborate closely with external partners such as the Ministry of Sports, the National Youth Agency, and the National Fund for Development to

integrate technical, programmatic, and financial expertise. This multi-level cooperation ensures that infrastructure development, training programs, competitions, and community engagement activities are harmonized and mutually reinforcing.

The management methodology will be based on a structured, phased approach. Each action will have a dedicated timeline, assigned responsibilities, clear deliverables, and defined monitoring indicators. Project management tools, such as progress dashboards, reporting templates, and regular review sessions, will be used to track implementation, identify challenges, and adjust activities as needed. Feedback loops with the community will be incorporated to continuously refine approaches and ensure responsiveness to emerging needs.

By combining participatory governance, strong inter-institutional cooperation, and a results-oriented management methodology, the project will ensure efficient coordination, high-quality implementation, and long-term sustainability. This integrated approach will create a transparent, accountable, and inclusive framework that maximizes impact, fosters local ownership, and strengthens Lezha's capacity to sustain sports, youth, and urban development initiatives beyond the project lifecycle.

PART 4 – Impacts, Innovation and Sustainability

4.1 Expected changes and Impacts

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for the development of sports among youth in Lezha is designed around several interconnected areas of intervention. These areas align with the broader network themes – Youth, Sport, Public Space, and Shared Governance – while also addressing specific local needs through additional thematic clusters. The areas of intervention ensure a holistic approach that combines infrastructure, community engagement, and governance to foster a vibrant and sustainable sports ecosystem.

- **Sustainable Sports Culture**

This area focuses on creating and nurturing a sports culture that is inclusive, long-lasting, and deeply rooted in the local community. The IAP aims to embed sports as a key part of everyday life in Lezha by revitalizing abandoned spaces and transforming them into multifunctional sports hubs. Through community-driven initiatives, partnerships, and ongoing maintenance plans, the sustainability of sports activities is ensured, contributing to social cohesion and community pride.

- **Youth Participation**

Central to the IAP is the active involvement of young people as both beneficiaries and drivers of sports development. Youth participation is fostered through inclusive programming, training, and engagement activities that empower young people to take ownership of sports initiatives. The plan encourages youth leadership in decision-making processes and provides opportunities for all youth – regardless of background or ability – to participate in a variety of sports and physical activities.

- **Accessible Sports Facilities**

Recognizing the importance of physical infrastructure, the IAP prioritizes the development of modern, universally accessible sports facilities. This intervention area ensures that facilities cater to diverse sports disciplines and accommodate individuals with varying physical abilities, including those with disabilities. Facilities will be designed following universal design principles, ensuring equity in access and usability for all community members.

- **Talent Development**

To build a robust sports ecosystem, the IAP emphasizes comprehensive talent identification and development programs. Structured training, professional coaching, mentorship, and clear pathways for athlete progression are key components. This area supports the nurturing of local talent from grassroots to elite levels, enhancing competitive sports performance and encouraging personal and professional growth among young athletes.

- **Urban Transition**

The IAP integrates the revitalization of urban spaces as a strategic intervention for sustainable urban development. Transforming underutilized or abandoned urban areas into vibrant sports environments contributes to broader urban renewal, enhances public space usage, and improves the quality of life. This transition supports environmental sustainability by incorporating eco-friendly designs and promotes social inclusivity by reconnecting communities through shared

sports infrastructure. By clustering the IAP actions within these five strategic areas, the plan ensures a comprehensive, integrated approach that addresses infrastructure, social inclusion, youth empowerment, and urban regeneration. This holistic framework aligns with both local needs and wider network priorities, setting the foundation for a dynamic and inclusive sports future in Lezha.

4.2 Policy Innovation achievement

The implementation of this Action Plan represents a significant policy innovation for Lezha, introducing a forward-looking approach to urban sports development, youth engagement, and community participation. By integrating the revitalization of abandoned spaces, the construction of inclusive sports facilities, and structured talent development programs into a single coordinated strategy, the project goes beyond traditional infrastructure or youth initiatives. It fosters cross-sector collaboration between municipal departments, external partners, schools, sports associations, and civil society, creating a governance model that is participatory, transparent, and adaptable.

Innovation is also reflected in the inclusive and accessible design of facilities, ensuring that individuals of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds can actively participate in sports and recreational activities. The incorporation of modern training methodologies, talent scouting systems, and professional development programs for coaches introduces evidence-based practices that were previously unavailable at the local level. Moreover, the project's emphasis on community co-creation, feedback loops, and public events strengthens civic engagement and ownership, establishing a replicable model for other municipalities.

Through these elements, the Action Plan demonstrates a pioneering approach to combining urban planning, youth development, sports policy, and social inclusion. Its achievements in policy innovation lie not only in the creation of new facilities and programs but also in the establishment of sustainable, participatory, and integrated governance practices that can inform future local and national policies.

4.3 Economic Sustainability: Budget and sources of funding

The budget estimation for the Action Plan has been developed to provide a realistic financial framework for the implementation of all activities, including the revitalization of abandoned spaces, construction of inclusive sports facilities, youth training and talent development programs, and community engagement initiatives. The estimation takes into account design and construction costs, procurement of sports equipment, professional training programs for coaches, organization of competitions and festivals, operational and maintenance costs, and communication and engagement activities. Detailed cost breakdowns for each specific action, including timelines and responsible parties, are provided in the Annex, allowing for transparent planning and monitoring of expenditures.

The budget has been calculated to ensure feasibility and sustainability, providing sufficient resources for pilot initiatives, scaling up successful activities, and maintaining long-term

functionality of facilities and programs. Contingency provisions have also been included to accommodate unforeseen costs and ensure smooth project execution.

❖ Sources of Funding

The financing of the Action Plan will be secured through a combination of public and external sources to guarantee comprehensive support and sustainability. Key funding sources include:

- **Public budget of the Municipality of Lezha**, which will cover operational costs, maintenance, and part of infrastructure development.
- **National Fund for Development**, providing targeted investment for infrastructure upgrades, sports equipment, and facility construction.
- **Grants from foreign donors and European programs**, accessed through strategic projects, partnerships, and international cooperation initiatives.

This diversified funding strategy ensures financial stability, reduces dependency on a single source, and allows the Action Plan to leverage both local and external resources effectively. Detailed financial tables, cost estimations per action, and the planned allocation of funds from each source are provided in the Annex, serving as a transparent reference for project management, reporting, and accountability.

4.4 Social - environmental - political – administrative Sustainability

The Action Plan has been designed to ensure long-term sustainability across social, environmental, political, and administrative dimensions. From a **social** perspective, the project fosters inclusion, community participation, and youth empowerment. By creating accessible sports facilities, organizing competitions, and developing talent programs, it promotes active lifestyles, strengthens social cohesion, and provides opportunities for underrepresented groups, including individuals with disabilities. The participatory approach, involving schools, youth groups, sports associations, and civil society, ensures community ownership and engagement, which are critical for the continuation of activities beyond the project lifecycle.

From an environmental perspective, the revitalization of abandoned spaces and the construction of new facilities will integrate eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient technologies, and sustainable design principles. These measures reduce the ecological footprint of sports infrastructure while promoting environmental awareness and responsible practices among young people and the wider community.

In terms of political sustainability, the project aligns with national and local policies, including the Local Youth Strategy 2024–2027 and the national “Massification of Sports Among Young People” program. Close collaboration with municipal departments, the Ministry of Sports, and other governmental institutions ensures policy coherence, support, and legitimacy, which strengthens long-term commitment from political stakeholders.

Finally, administrative sustainability is ensured through the establishment of clear governance structures, defined roles and responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms involving the URBACT Local Group, city departments, and external partners. Systematic monitoring,

reporting, and maintenance plans, along with capacity-building programs for coaches and local staff, guarantee that the facilities, programs, and initiatives can be effectively managed, replicated, and sustained over time.

Through these four dimensions, the Action Plan establishes a holistic approach to sustainability, ensuring that the benefits of revitalized spaces, inclusive sports programs, and youth development initiatives are long-lasting and continue to positively impact the community of Lezha.

4.5 Horizontal aspects integration (green, gender, digital, cultural,)

The Action Plan integrates key horizontal aspects to ensure that all activities contribute to broader sustainability, equality, and innovation objectives. From a green perspective, all facility designs and infrastructure upgrades will incorporate eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient technologies, and sustainable landscaping, promoting environmental responsibility and reducing the ecological footprint of sports and urban development activities.

In terms of gender equality, the project will actively encourage participation of all genders in sports programs, competitions, and training initiatives. Facility designs will ensure inclusive access, and programs will address barriers that may prevent girls and young women from fully engaging in physical activity and talent development.

The digital dimension is addressed through the use of online platforms for communication, information sharing, and engagement with youth and stakeholders. Digital tools such as social media, dedicated project portals, and virtual training resources will enhance accessibility, transparency, and community participation while fostering digital literacy among participants.

Finally, cultural integration is promoted by incorporating local traditions, heritage, and values into the design and programming of sports facilities and events. Activities such as festivals, competitions, and community engagement sessions will celebrate local culture, strengthen social cohesion, and create a sense of pride and belonging among participants.

By systematically integrating these horizontal aspects – green, gender, digital, and cultural – the Action Plan ensures that all interventions are inclusive, sustainable, innovative, and socially responsible, contributing to a holistic and forward-looking approach to urban sports development in Lezha.

PART 5 Implementation framework

OBJECTIVE N	❖ SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: Revitalization of Abandoned Spaces for Sports Development									
ACTION	TASKS	WHE N	WHER E	WHO /RESP IN BOLD	PARTICIPANTS	OUTPUTS	RESULT	RESOURCES	BUDGET	FUNDING SCHEME
Action 1.1.1: Organization of consultation meetings with youth, students, and sports professionals.		2026		Directorate of Strategic Projects, Europe, Migration, Diaspora, Communication, and Transparency,	YOUTHS EXPERTS SPORT PROFESSIONALS	A set of consultation reports summarizing the feedback, needs, and priorities of youth, students, and sports professionals, providing community-driven recommendations for the design and programming of revitalized and new sports facilities.	Result 1: Transformation of underutilized and abandoned spaces into vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive multifunctional sports environments. These revitalized areas will foster community engagement, offer accessible venues for diverse sports activities, and serve as dynamic hubs for youth development and civic interaction.	Human (facilitators, municipal staff, URBACT Local Group), material (meeting spaces, stationery, survey tools), and financial (logistics, refreshments, communication).		MUNICIPAL PUBLIC BUDGET
	Identify Stakeholders		LEZHE							
	Prepare Meeting Agenda									
	Facilitate Discussions and Collect Feedback			Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports						
Action 1.2.1: Selection of one abandoned space for transformation	Conduct Site Evaluation	2026-2027	LEZHE	Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports		Identification and official designation of a high-potential abandoned space in Lezha, prioritized for revitalization into a safe, multifunctional, and inclusive		Human (project team, urban planners, municipal staff, URBACT Local Group), technical (maps, GIS data, feasibility reports), and		MUNICIPAL PUBLIC BUDGET
	Consult with Stakeholders			Directorate of Territorial Planning and Urban Development	YOUTHS EXPERTS SPORT PROFESSIONALS					NATIONAL FUND OF DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

	Make the Final Selection			DIRECTORATE OF FINANCE		sports facility, based on community consultations and feasibility assessments.		financial (site surveys, transportation, administrative costs).		
RISKS				LIKELIHOOD	EFFECT	MITIGATION MEASURES				
Risk 1: Low participation or engagement from target groups due to lack of awareness or conflicting schedules. Risk 2: Limited representation of diverse groups (e.g., girls, marginalized youth, or persons with disabilities), leading to biased feedback and incomplete needs assessment.				Medium	May reduce the representativeness and quality of input for planning.	Conduct early outreach through schools, social media, and youth networks; schedule meetings at accessible times and locations. Ensure inclusive invitations, collaborate with disability and gender equality organizations, and provide accessible meeting formats.				
Risk 1: Low participation or engagement from target groups due to lack of awareness or conflicting schedules. Risk 2: Limited representation of diverse groups (e.g., girls, marginalized youth, or persons with disabilities), leading to biased feedback and incomplete needs assessment.				Medium	May require redesign or additional funding, increasing project costs.	Engage municipal departments early, verify ownership and legal status, and establish clear approval procedures.	Conduct detailed preliminary assessments, including technical, environmental, and cost feasibility studies before final selection.			

OBJECTIVE N		❖ SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2: Development of Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities								
ACTION	TASKS	WHEN	WHERE	WHO / RESP IN BOLD	PARTICIPANTS	OUTPUTS	RESULT	RESOURCES	BUDGET	FUNDING SCHEME
Action 2.1.1: Conducting surveys and		2026		Directorate of Education,	YOUTHS EXPERTS	A comprehensive collection of	Result 2: Development	Human (survey team,		MUNICIPAL PUBLIC BUDGET
	Develop Survey and		LEZHË							

interviews for the needs assessment.	Interview Framework			Youth, and Sports	SPORT PROFESSIONALS	survey and interview data from local residents, schools, sports clubs, and community organizations, providing detailed insights into the community's sports facility needs, accessibility requirements, and preferences for youth programs.	of modern, accessible, and inclusive sports facilities that meet the needs of all community members, including individuals with disabilities. These facilities will offer a wide spectrum of athletic opportunities, promoting equal participation and strengthening social cohesion.	facilitators, municipal staff, URBACT Local Group), material (questionnaires, tablets/laptops, stationery), and financial (printing, data collection, transportation, communication).		
	Conduct Surveys and Interviews									
Action 2.2.1: Engagement of architects, urban planners, and accessibility consultants for designing inclusive sports infrastructure.	Organize Collaborative Workshops	2026-2027	LEZHE	Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports		Development of inclusive, safe, and multifunctional sports infrastructure designs that incorporate universal accessibility, sustainable materials, and adaptable layouts, ready for implementation and construction.		Human (architects, urban planners, accessibility consultants, project team), technical (design software, building codes, accessibility guidelines), and financial (consultancy fees, planning workshops, meetings).		MUNICIPAL PUBLIC BUDGET NATIONAL FUND OF DEVELOPMENT GRANTS
	Conduct Accessibility Audits and Assessments			Directorate of Territorial Planning and Urban Development						
	Incorporate Feedback into Design Revisions			DIRECTORATE OF FINANCE						

Action 2.4.2: Promotion of the new facilities through social media and creation of an online information platform.	Develop a social media strategy			Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports		An operational online platform and active social media presence that provide information, updates, and promotional content about the new sports facilities, programs, and events, ensuring visibility, accessibility, and community engagement.		Human (communication team, social media managers, content creators), technical (computers, cameras, design software, website hosting), and financial (platform development, content production, advertising).		MUNICIPAL PUBLIC BUDGET
	Set up and launch a dedicated website or online platform									
	Create a content calendar and regularly update social media channels and the platform with news, events, success stories, and user testimonials to maintain engagement and attract new visitors.									
	Develop a social media strategy									
RISKS				LIKELIHOOD	EFFECT	MITIGATION MEASURES				

Risk: Low participation or incomplete responses may result in data that does not accurately reflect community needs.	Medium	The resulting analysis may not represent the real priorities of the population, leading to poorly targeted interventions and reduced project effectiveness.	<p>Conduct awareness campaigns in schools, community centers, and local media to encourage participation.</p> <p>Offer both online and in-person survey options to increase accessibility.</p> <p>Engage local youth organizations and community leaders to mobilize respondents.</p>		
Risk: Delays in contracting and coordination among experts could postpone the design and planning process.	High	Project timelines may be extended, causing a delay in construction and subsequent phases, potentially increasing overall project costs.	Establish clear timelines and contractual obligations with all professionals from the start.	Assign a dedicated project coordinator to oversee collaboration among experts.	Maintain regular coordination meetings and progress monitoring to identify and resolve delays early.
Risk: Limited online visibility and engagement may reduce public awareness and participation in the use of new facilities.	Medium	<i>Reduced community involvement and underutilization of the facilities, diminishing the intended social impact</i>	Develop a targeted social media strategy using engaging visuals, videos, and storytelling.	Collaborate with influencers, schools, and youth organizations to amplify outreach.	Use multiple communication channels (website, local radio, newsletters) to reach diverse audiences.

		<i>and visibility of the initiative.</i>			

OBJECTIVE N	❖ SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3: Implementation of Comprehensive Training and Talent Development Programs									
ACTION	TASKS	WHEN	WHERE	WHO / RESP IN BOLD	PARTICIPANTS	OUTPUTS	RESULT	RESOURCES	BUDGET	FUNDING SCHEME
Action 3.1.1: Development of one-year professional training courses for young people in five sports disciplines.	Curriculum Design	2026		Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports	YOUTHS EXPERTS SPORT PROFESSIONALS	A structured one-year professional training program covering five sports disciplines, complete with detailed curricula, training schedules, and learning materials, ready to be delivered to young participants to enhance skills and identify emerging talents.	Result 3: Establishment of a well-structured and sustainable training and talent development ecosystem that enhances physical skills, identifies emerging talents, and fosters professional growth. This system will provide young athletes and coaches with greater opportunities for advancement, contributing to a thriving and competitive	Human (coaches, trainers, program coordinators, administrative staff), material (training manuals, sports equipment, protective gear, uniforms), technical (training facilities, indoor/outdoor courts, digital tools for monitoring progress), and financial (staff salaries, equipment purchase, facility maintenance, program logistics).		MUNICIPAL PUBLIC BUDGET
	Recruitment of Expert Coaches:		LEZHË							
	Promote the training courses									GRANTS
	Reports									
Action 3.1.3: Organization of	Curriculum Design	2026-2027	LEZHË	Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports		Successful completion of five sports competitions		Human (event coordinators, referees, coaches,		MUNICIPAL PUBLIC BUDGET

five sports competitions in five different disciplines with participation from at least ten schools in Lezha.	Recruitment of Expert Coaches:					across different disciplines, with active participation from at least ten schools in Lezha, fostering youth engagement, talent identification, and community involvement in sports activities.	sports culture in Lezha.	volunteers), material (sports equipment, uniforms, trophies, first-aid kits), and financial (venue rental, logistics, transportation, refreshments, promotion).		GRANTS
	Promote the training courses									
	Reports									
Action 3.4.1: Signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)	Identify and engage relevant stakeholders			Directorate of Education, Youth, and Sports		Formalized partnerships through signed MoUs with schools, sports associations, and civil society organizations, establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and collaboration frameworks to support the implementation and sustainability of sports and youth development initiatives.		Human (project team, legal advisors, representatives from partner organizations), material (official documents, stationery, communication tools), and financial (administrative costs, meeting logistics, travel expenses for coordination).		MUNICIPAL PUBLIC BUDGET
	Negotiate and draft the MoUs									
	Screen and Interview Candidates									
	Formalize the agreements by organizing a signing ceremony or meeting with all parties									

	involved to officially endorse the MoUs.									
RISKS				LIKELIHOOD	EFFECT	MITIGATION MEASURES				
Risk: Lack of qualified trainers or insufficient training materials may affect the quality and consistency of the courses.				Medium	Could reduce the quality of training, hinder skill development, and affect participant satisfaction and engagement.	<p>Conduct an early recruitment campaign targeting experienced coaches and trainers.</p> <p>Provide comprehensive training and orientation sessions for trainers.</p> <p>Prepare and distribute high-quality, standardized training materials in advance.</p>				
Risk: Logistical and coordination challenges (venue availability, scheduling conflicts, or low school participation) may disrupt the competitions.				High	May lead to cancellations or poorly organized events, reducing youth participation and undermining talent identification efforts.	Develop a detailed event plan including venues, schedules, and responsibilities	Engage schools, local authorities, and volunteers early to ensure coordination.	Prepare contingency plans for venue, equipment, or scheduling issues.		
Risk: Delays or lack of commitment from partner institutions may postpone or weaken formal cooperation agreements.				Medium	Could slow down collaborative initiatives,	Begin negotiations early and establish clear	Maintain regular communication and follow-ups	Draft agreements with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and benefits for all parties.		

		limit resource sharing, and reduce overall project impact.	timelines for signing.	with partner organizations.	

ANNEXES

REPORT ON TESTING ACTIONS

Youths Boards Recommendation

POLICY ADVICE

POLICY BRIEFS ADOVOCACY

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