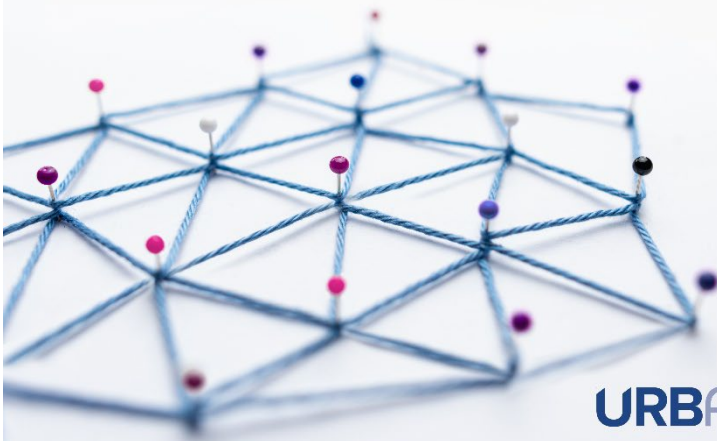




INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN TIRANA

LET'S GO CIRCULAR!

Paving the way for a circular transition of cities



URBACT



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QUICK FACTS

- What is URBACT
- The LET’S GO CIRCULAR! Network
- What is the IAP
- ULG contributors

1.1 What is URBACT

URBACT is a European Union program that promotes sustainable urban development by fostering cooperation and knowledge exchange between cities across Europe. It provides a platform for cities to share best practices, develop integrated action plans, and implement innovative solutions to challenges such as climate change, social inclusion, mobility, and the circular economy. By connecting municipalities, policymakers, and stakeholders, URBACT strengthens local capacities and promotes participatory governance, ensuring that urban policies are both inclusive and impactful.

1.2 The LET’S GO CIRCULAR! Network

“LET’S GO CIRCULAR” is an Action Planning Network under the URBACT IV program, officially launched in June 2023 with **Munich** as Lead Partner. It unites ten European cities Munich, Cluj-Napoca, Corfu (Kapodistriaki Development S.A.), Granada, Malmö, Riga, Oulu, Guimarães, Lisbon, and **Tirana** (as an IPA partner) to design integrated strategies for circular urban transition. The network operates under the **10R Ladder** framework (from *Refuse* to *Recover*), addressing themes such as governance, education and awareness, innovation and entrepreneurship, and circular infrastructure. Its main objective is to develop **Integrated Action Plans (IAPs)** by 2025 that support sustainable, inclusive, and resource-efficient circular economies helping cities close material loops, foster behavioural change, and implement tangible reuse-based solutions at the local level.

1.3 What is the IAP

An **Integrated Action Plan (IAP)** is a locally co-created strategic document that translates a city’s vision into practical measures. Developed by the **URBACT Local Group (ULG)**, it outlines concrete actions to address key urban challenges, detailing timelines, responsibilities, costs, funding sources, and monitoring indicators. For Tirana, the IAP focuses on enabling a **local circular transition** through measures that promote reuse, green innovation, sustainable events, and behavioural change bridging environmental goals with local economic opportunities.

1.4 ULG Contributors – Tirana

The **URBACT Local Group (ULG)** of Tirana brings together stakeholders from across the city’s ecosystem municipal departments, public companies, civil society, academia, and local

businesses.

Key contributors include representatives from the **Municipality of Tirana** (Directorate of Environment, Directorate of Parks and Recreation, Directorate of Economic Development, Directorate of Education), **Eco Tirana**, the **Ministry of Tourism and Environment**, universities, NGOs, and private enterprises engaged in reuse and sustainability. Through regular workshops, surveys, and peer exchanges, this group co-designed the vision, prioritized actions, and contributed to shaping Tirana's IAP as a shared roadmap toward a more circular, resilient, and innovative city.

IAP IN A NUTSHELL

If you time to read only one page. Indicatively:

- Purpose of this document
- Vision and strategic objectives
- Focus on lines of intervention
- Actions per line of intervention
- Overall time plan for execution of actions

PART I: City context and definition of the policy challenge

Note: Part I must be max. 5 pages

The first IAP section on the city context, needs & vision should be focused on the most relevant information for understanding the theme and informing the subsequent plan. The aim is not to write either a marketing guide or a thesis on the town, but to understand the context, situation and needs to which the planned actions are a direct response.

2 Local context and policy challenge

2.1 Country context

Albania is increasingly adopting a circular economy to achieve sustainable growth, address environmental issues, and pursue integration with the EU and its regional neighbors.

Economic growth and rising consumption in Albania are expected to boost the demand for raw materials. This could hinder efforts to reduce environmental pressures and limit opportunities to improve economic competitiveness and resilience. Despite resource productivity doubling from 2016 to 2021, Albania still faces significant challenges in improving its environmental sustainability. This exacerbates challenges in waste management, threatening ecosystems and increasing climate change vulnerabilities. Although waste generation in Albania is about 30% below the EU average, rising consumption could worsen problems with illegal landfills, littering, and poor waste management, followed by low recycling rate of municipal waste (around 17% largely informal collection) and significant marine pollution due to high plastic leakage.

Albania's drive for EU membership and its commitment to the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans are major motivations for its circular economy initiatives. As Albania moves toward EU membership, it aligns its environmental policies with EU standards and regulations. Efforts to improve energy and resource efficiency, reduce waste, promote recycling, and implement eco-friendly practices are increasing, showing a commitment to reducing environmental harm. However, these efforts need to be strengthened.

To move toward a circular economy, Albania needs a unified strategy. This includes building necessary infrastructure, raising awareness about the circular economy, and providing financial support for significant transformation.

2.2 Local context

Suggested content indicatively:

- Key generic data about the city ☒
- What is the overall local challenge in relation to the theme?
- Existing strategies and local development plans in relation to circular economy ☒
- Institutional context, roles and different agencies involved in the theme locally

2.3 Key generic data about the city

Tirana, the capital of Albania, is located at an elevation of approximately 110 meters above sea level. The Tirana plain has an average height of 521 meters, with the surrounding geography featuring notable peaks such as Dajti Mountain at 1,612 meters and Mali me Gropa at 1,828 meters. The city lies about 34 kilometers from the Adriatic Sea to the west. Hills surround Tirana on the south and west, while the northwestern side opens up into a flat area.

Tirana has seen significant business development, with diverse sectors contributing to its economy. The primary sectors driving Tirana's business environment include services, construction, retail, and real estate. The city has a dynamic mix of industries, with services being

the largest sector, encompassing trade, education, health services, and information technology. Retail and construction are also vital, reflecting the city's rapid urbanization and growing consumer base.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of Tirana's economy, accounting for a substantial portion of employment and economic activity. SMEs in Tirana are diverse, spanning across various sectors such as hospitality, manufacturing, and professional services. These businesses are crucial for innovation and job creation in the city. Despite their importance, SMEs face challenges such as limited access to finance, regulatory hurdles, and a need for improved business infrastructure and support services.

The private sector in Tirana is increasingly focusing on sustainable development goals (SDGs) and integrating circular economy practices. Initiatives are underway to enhance sustainability in business operations, particularly in sectors like agro-processing and textiles. International cooperation and projects are also playing a role in promoting sustainable practices and improving waste management and recycling efforts.

With about 35% (about 900,000) of the country's population concentration and 42% of businesses (52,000),¹ of which 34% women led², Tirana Municipality is the most vital one in Albania, where the business thrives and most of innovation and progress happens. As the richest Municipality³, Tirana has the highest consumption of goods and use of services.

2.3.1 What is the overall local challenge in relation to the theme?

The Municipality of Tirana has a clear vision towards sustainable development, innovation, and circular economy. This vision is implemented through General Directorate of Environment and Sustainable Development, designs programs in accordance with the implementation of policies or strategies in the field, which aim to address critical environmental issues and optimize existing resources, in building capacities for a sustainable environmental development.

The Directorate of Environmental Policies, Innovation and Intelligent Solutions administers concrete issues and projects and ensure the coordination of new initiatives undertaken in the field of the environment, including water, land, air pollution, acoustic pollution, projects that deal with innovation and Smart projects City.

This Directorate is organized in 4 sectors respectively: Sector of Environmental Management, Circular Economy and Energy Resources; Sector of Innovation, Sustainable Development and Implementation of Smart-City Projects; Sector of Environmental Coverage of the Territory and Environmental Complaints; and, Environmental Data, Mapping and Reporting Sector.

Business activity and innovation are vital parts of the economy in general. Tirana is a leading city in innovation with all innovation activities and hubs located in the city.

¹ INSTAT, Active enterprises by municipality and economic activity, tab-1.xlsx (live.com)

² INSTAT, Active enterprises by municipality and the gender of the administrator / owner. tab-3.xlsx (live.com)

³ The highest level of GDP per capita, by Statistical Region Level 3 for 2021, was in Prefecture Tiranë with around ALL 886 thousand and has registered an increase in nominal terms by 13.83 % compared with 2020. https://www.instat.gov.al/media/11571/regional-gdp-2021-english_press-release.pdf

Several companies have already embraced reuse models and have plans to continue this trend which is both driven by EU model of doing business and consumers behavior change towards sustainability.

Research reports indicate that some businesses have already adopted reuse models, suggesting that the actual number may be higher and that this shift is rapidly gaining momentum. This trend is particularly evident among young entrepreneurs, who bring a modern vision to sustainable business practices by integrating innovative approaches to consumption and resource valorization. Their efforts are driving the adoption of more sustainable business models. Besides this remarkable progress, there are yet many challenges faced in shifting from linear to circular economy.

Some of these challenges are:

- Legal framework incentivizing the change to CE is yet not developed
- Low societal awareness of circular economy concepts
- Municipal and industrial waste management is a challenge. Waste separation at source is almost non-existent and 80% of waste is landfilled. Recycling is mainly conducted by informal waste pickers.
- Businesses are reluctant to change its policy because it risks losing customers.
- Some small businesses may be inclined to embrace circular economy initiatives but do not have the necessary funds to implement them.

2.3.2 Existing strategies and local development plans in relation to circular economy

Currently, the legislation is under development and is expected to create better conditions for shifting to circularity. There is a high interest and motivation to support the shift towards CE, but however the real barriers at legislative, operational and financial level are not properly explored. The Municipality of Tirana incentivizes innovation and green businesses, through innovation hubs, grant schemes on CE and promotes businesses which integrate sustainability in their activity.

Albania recently (March 2024) adopted Roadmap Towards Circular Economy. The roadmap was launched by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and produced by the OECD. The document offers guidance to the Albanian government in laying a strong policy foundation for a successful circular transition.

The Roadmap identifies three key areas where circular economy reforms could yield significant impact for Albania: 1) leveraging economic instruments for sustainable consumption and production; 2) supporting circular business models for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); and 3) addressing the plastics value chain with a specific focus on marine litter.

Economic instruments and circular business models for SMEs are both cross-cutting areas, but while economic instruments focus on measures that change the behavior of private actors through price signals, circular business models pay specific attention to providing an enabling framework for businesses. Plastics is a material-specific area, which covers measures to address (marine) plastic pollution throughout the life cycle.

This document is a guiding one for developing and aligning this plan aiming at achieving maximum results and coordinated support from all levels. The priority areas 1 and 2 are fully in line with the aims of this plan.

The Ministry of Tourism and Environment is currently updating the entire waste management legislation to incorporate new circular economy (CE) concepts and align with the EU acquis. As part of this initiative, a Waste Prevention Plan will be drafted, and new laws on Integrated Waste Management and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) are expected to be adopted by 2024. These legislative advancements will lay the foundation for integrating CE strategies across all sectors of the economy.

2.3.3 Institutional context, roles and different agencies involved in the theme locally and specific challenges

In Albania, various stakeholders are involved in circular economy activities, primarily focusing on waste management and awareness-raising, though their efforts remain uncoordinated.

Public institutions: The key public actor in shifting to CE is the Ministry of Tourism and Environment which has established the Circular Economy Directorate, organized in two sectors namely 3R and awareness raising. The Directorate sets a clear vision towards Circular Economy which has already started the agenda for the Waste Prevention, legislation harmonization including Circular Economy concepts, new Law on EPR and Circular Economy Roadmap. Circular Economy is a continuous narrative at the level of the Ministry, and it is promoted and incentivized by the Ministry to all public authorities at national and local level as well as through cooperation with business sector. Other authorities responsible and with a stake in CE are the Ministry of Economy and Innovation, Ministry for Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, Ministry of Education and several Agencies which are focused on resource efficiency, business development and youth.

International Development Partners: They conduct projects providing financial and technical support to the government, mainly enhancing municipal and industrial waste management, waste prevention, and recycling programs. However, private sector involvement is limited, and phase-out processes are often lacking.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Active in promoting environmental awareness, some NGOs focus on the circular economy, conducting research, raising awareness, and implementing circular waste management projects. Despite their efforts, initiatives remain uncoordinated and lack strategic government direction.

Academia and Research Institutes: Universities in Albania offer courses on circular economy concepts and conduct relevant analyses. While the Ministry of Tourism and Environment includes environmental aspects in school curricula, there is no comprehensive circular economy program at the university level.

Private Sector Organizations: Chambers of commerce, export associations, and sector-specific unions are key in promoting circular business models among SMEs through awareness activities, conferences, and networking events. Some companies adopt circular practices, focusing on reusing agricultural by-products, sustainable packaging, and recycling waste. However, governmental support for these initiatives is minimal.

Overall, while many actors are involved, coordination and strategic direction from the government are needed to effectively map and integrate circular economy efforts across Albania.

Local government: In the Municipality of Tirana, in January 2022, has been created the Environmental Management, Circular Economy and Energy Resources Sector in the General Directorate of Environment and Sustainable Development. This Sector is responsible for the

sound administration of issues related to the protection of the environment and natural resources of the territory covered by the municipality of Tirana. This Sector is responsible for the promotion of circular economy programs in the various themes that carry out the activity in the city of Tirana through the policies of waste prevention, reuse, recycling of the resources of production materials. Likewise, this Sector is responsible for promoting the integration of renewable or environmentally friendly energies, energy efficiency programs, with the aim of reducing energy consumption locally.

List of overarching policy documents relevant to the circular economy in Albania

- Overarching Green Agenda - Green Agenda for the Western Balkans - 2020-30⁴
- Waste - National Plan for Integrated Waste Management - 2020-35⁵
- Climate - National Strategy for Climate Change - 2020-30⁶
- Sustainable development - National Strategy for Development and Integration - 2022-30⁷
- Climate and energy - National Energy and Climate Plan - 2021-30⁸
- Private sector - Business Investment and Development Strategy - 2021-27⁹
- Tourism - National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development - 2019-23¹⁰

Overall, several plans relevant to the circular economy are currently being designed, including the local waste management action plan, the climate change action plan.

This Integrated Action Plan that is being drafted in the frame of the LET'S GO CIRCULAR network will be the first plan at the local level that aims directly at enhancing circularity locally, in line with the national documents and efforts.

2.4 The policy challenge

Suggested content indicatively:

- Baseline situation of existing actions: why is CE a priority, when did the city start the journey concerning boosting of CE and which is the starting point?

Issues related to the circular economy began to be prioritized with the establishment of the General Directorate of Environment and Sustainable Development in January 2022. Private initiatives related to the circular economy are emerging in the city, such as repair shops, second-hand stores, and eco-friendly cafes and restaurants. In the first six months of the year, the Environmental Management, Circular Economy, and Energy Resources Sector focused on identifying and has created a map of businesses suitable for inclusion in circular economy

⁴https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-10/green_agenda_for_the_western_balkans_en.pdf

⁵<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/alb204067.pdf>

⁶https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2.-Strategjia-e-Ndryshimeve-Klimatike-dhe-Planet-e-Vepremit-Qershor-2019_-1.pdf

⁷<https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/Konsultime/Detaje/538>

⁸https://www.energy-community.org/dam/jcr:a0c2b8a8-96c8-4423-993a-537cf51daa65/Draft_NECP_AL_%202021.pdf

⁹<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2021/07/30/466>

¹⁰<https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/National-Tourism-Strategy-2019-2023-EN.pdf>

projects, including shoemakers and tailors. Also currently household appliances are being identified, to be included in the map.

- Which are the barriers identified to boost circularity in your city?
- Legal Frameworks- The current legal framework, including national strategic documents and action plans does not provide the basis for implementing CE concept in the country. It is very important to have improvements in the current legal framework that will increase the country's ability to better utilize its resources.
- Funding gaps-The lack of funds dedicated to the circular economy may have an impact on the feasibility and financial sustainability of circular economy initiatives. Limited access to funding is a major obstacle, particularly for social enterprises pursuing circular economy principles.
- Awareness gaps-There is a lack of citizen awareness of what the circular economy is, its benefits and their role in the transition.
- Capacity gaps- Tirana municipality will need to build and strengthen internal capacities to accelerate the transition. The City would need to build the technical and human capacities required for the transition, lead by example by incorporating circular economy principles in daily practices and enhance co-ordination across departments.
- Which are the needs to face the barriers? If you have evidence about the problems i.e. problem tree or other infographics from your problem analysis phase, you can depict them here to support your case



3 Vision

"Our city's smart and innovative transformation aims to pioneer a circular economy, through innovative business solutions, maximizing resource efficiency, and fostering a sustainable urban ecosystem for European inspiration and lasting impact for its citizens."

4 Short reference to the methodological framework

You can use an infographic, with some text

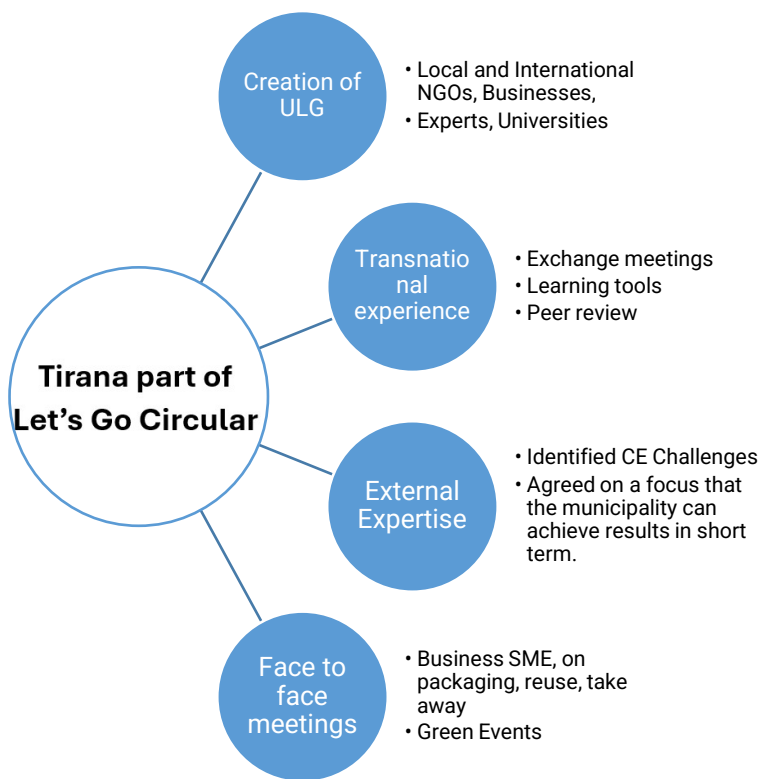
Don't forget to underline:

- Establishment of the ULG, in respect to the lines of integration
- Self-assessment on integration and peer reviewing of the IAP with your peers
- Steps undertaken at local level (refer to problem analysis stage, ideation, description of actions piloted, towards building the IAP, following the intervention logic model and then how you tested the logic – see the guiding presentation)

In developing this plan, our team employed a multi-stakeholder and cross-learning methodology, incorporating national and international collaboration. We worked closely with local knowledge platforms, subject matter experts, and partner municipalities participating in the initiative. To ensure seamless integration, a ULG (Urban Local Group) was established to guide and support the plan throughout its various stages, utilizing tools developed specifically for the project.

Central to the process were self-assessments on integration and peer reviews of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP), which helped refine objectives and actions to ensure they were both effective and feasible. The logical framework approach was used to structure the plan. This included understanding the current situation, analyzing key problems, facilitating an ideation process, assessing the city’s capacity to progress on the topic, and drafting actionable objectives. Additionally, we evaluated the potential to allocate human and financial resources needed to implement meaningful change.

The following sections outline the methodology and conclude with a detailed SMART plan of action, ensuring a clear, results-oriented path forward.



PART II: Overall logic and integrated approach

Setting out the full breadth and scope of the IAP for delivering on the overall vision. IAP Section 2 is crucial not only in resulting in a final full list of planned actions under the IAP, but also in demonstrating that these actions have been designed logically to meet the identified needs.

Part II should be 10-15 pages

5 Strategic objectives of the IAP

Body text and infographic

- Use the information depicted in our Baseline study, in respect to your interest in the specific LGC! themes and lines of intervention
- Try to show a clear link between what you NEED (as in section 1.2) and HOW you are meeting these needs through the LINES OF INTERVENTION (FOCUS) and the ACTIONS that you planned.

Based on the analysis presented in this plan, country developments, willingness to advance the agenda towards CE in Albania and the agreed vision, the following Strategic Goals are set:

- 1. The City of Tirana, a dynamic SMART City, a starting point of change for innovative businesses towards a circular economy in distribution and consumption. (in line with SDG12: EFFECTIVE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION & GCAP)**
- 2. The City of Tirana recognizes the role and enables stakeholders in exchanging knowledge as well as stimulating entrepreneurship, towards green growth and sustainable innovation. (in line with Green Agenda)**

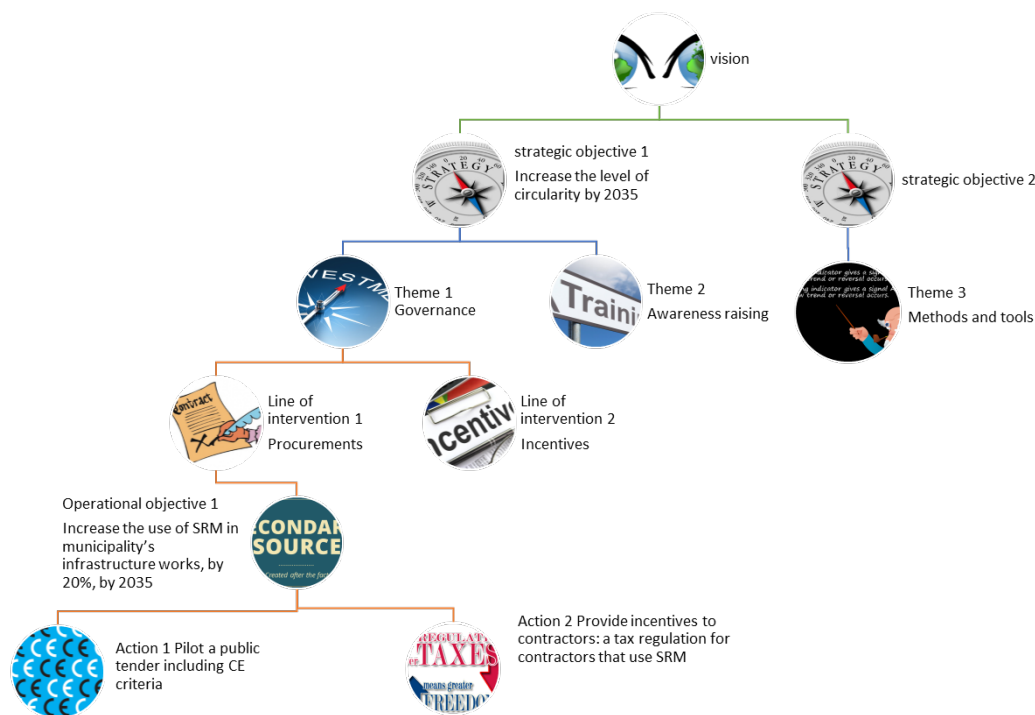
6 Themes and lines of intervention of focus

6.1 Specific (operational objectives)

Think about result indicators that you will be able to measure

The following matrix provides an overview of the integration of the actions across objectives, themes, lines of interventions, operational objective and actions.

Integrated Action Plan Mapping



Strategic Objective 1: The City of Tirana, a dynamic SMART City, a starting point of change for innovative businesses towards a circular economy in distribution and consumption. (in line with SDG12: EFFECTIVE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION & GCAP)

Specific Objective 1: By 2030, increase the market share of goods produced by local farmers and producers within the Municipality of Tirana by 40%, by implementing sustainable distribution and packaging systems that reduce reliance on imported goods and packaging waste. This will be achieved by supplying at least 200 local farmers with recyclable and reusable packaging, enabling green transport solutions for at least 100 distributors, supporting 100 local sellers with promotional and eco-display materials, and engaging 1,000 consumers through campaigns and loyalty programs that favor local and low-waste products.

Actions:

1. **Support for Farmers:** Provide standardized, **recyclable and reusable packaging boxes** to local farmers for transporting and selling their products, reducing single-use packaging and enhancing product visibility in markets.
2. **Green Distribution Solutions:** Promote and subsidize **eco-friendly transport options** (e.g., electric vehicles, bike logistics) for distributors who handle local produce, lowering the carbon footprint of last-mile delivery.
3. **Retail Support:** Equip local sellers with **eco-certified display tools** (e.g., reusable crates, biodegradable signage), and offer training to promote the environmental and economic benefits of locally sourced goods.
4. **Consumer Engagement:** Launch an annual “**Buy Local, Waste Less**” campaign that promotes local goods in supermarkets and markets, integrated with the existing digital platform to offer **eco-rewards** for purchasing locally produced, low-packaging items.
5. **Local Value Chain Collaboration:** Facilitate at least **50 partnerships** among farmers, distributors, and retailers to strengthen the local supply chain and co-develop sustainable logistics and branding strategies.

Specific Objective 2: By 2030, increase the adoption of circular business models and solutions among 50% of local SMEs by providing €0.5 million in public funds grants and subsidies, establishing a Circular Economy Hub that delivers training and networking to at least 50 businesses annually, and fostering at least 100 partnerships between SMEs, academic institutions, and eco-packaging innovators to drive sustainable innovation."

Promote Circular Business Models and Practices Among SMEs:

Aim: Support the adoption of circular economy principles in local businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to enhance sustainable production and consumption, with a focus on packaging.

Alignment with SDG 12: This objective addresses targets 12.1 and 12.2 by integrating sustainable practices into business operations and promoting resource efficiency.

Actions:

1. Provide grants and subsidies for SMEs that implement circular practices such as product-as-a-service models, remanufacturing, and sustainable supply chain management.

2. Establish a Circular Economy Hub to offer training, resources, and networking opportunities for businesses transitioning to circular models.
3. Facilitate partnerships between businesses and academic institutions to foster innovation in sustainable practices and product design.
4. Partnerships with Packaging Innovators: Facilitate partnerships between SMEs and companies specializing in eco-friendly packaging materials and technologies

Specific Objective 3: By December 2026, support the creation and growth of 20 green startups by providing €0.1 million in public financial incentives, establishing 5 public and private green-focused incubators serving at least 50 entrepreneurs annually, partnering with 2 universities to facilitate access to sustainability R&D, and hosting 5 Green Events to showcase innovations, share best practices, and connect entrepreneurs with potential partners and investors

Implement Entrepreneurship Support Programs Focused on Sustainable Innovation including Green Events as part of these programs.

Aim: Provide resources and support to entrepreneurs and startups that are developing sustainable and green technologies or business models.

Alignment with Green Agenda for the Western Balkans: This objective aligns with the agenda by promoting entrepreneurial activities that contribute to green growth and sustainability, enhancing regional innovation capacity.

Actions:

1. Offer grants, subsidies, and low-interest loans specifically for green startups and sustainable business ventures.
2. Establish incubators and accelerators with a focus on green technology and sustainable practices, providing mentorship, technical support, and business development services.
3. Collaborate or partner up with universities and research institutions to facilitate access to cutting-edge research and development in sustainability.
4. Organize Green Events: Host workshops, conferences, and networking events that focus on sustainability topics, allowing entrepreneurs to showcase their innovations, learn best practices, and connect with potential partners and investors

Specific Objective 4: By 2030, establish and implement policies and incentives that encourage at least 100 businesses to adopt green practices by introducing tax benefits and subsidies, launching a certification program with 20 businesses certified annually, and creating a monitoring framework to evaluate compliance and measure the impact of circular business initiatives, ensuring reduction in environmental footprint among participating businesses.

Create Policies and Incentives for Green Business Practices:

Aim: Develop and implement policies that incentivize businesses to adopt sustainable practices and technologies.

Alignment with Green Agenda for the Western Balkans: This objective supports the agenda by creating an enabling environment for businesses to adopt sustainable practices, thus driving green growth and innovation across the region.

Actions:

1. Introduce tax incentives, subsidies, and regulatory benefits for businesses that demonstrate a commitment to green practices and sustainability.
2. Develop certification programs that recognize and reward businesses for their sustainable efforts, helping them gain market advantage and consumer trust. Implement monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure compliance and measure the impact of circular business initiatives.

Strategic Objective 2: The City of Tirana recognizes the role and enables stakeholders in exchanging knowledge as well as stimulating entrepreneurship, towards green growth and sustainable innovation. (in line with Green Agenda WB)

To achieve the strategic objective of recognizing the role of stakeholders in exchanging knowledge and stimulating entrepreneurship towards green growth and sustainable innovation, the following specific objectives can be implemented:

Specific Objective 1: By 2030, establish a Green Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Platform that engages at least 30 local and international organizations annually, by launching a digital portal hosting at least 10 webinars and 100 curated knowledge resources per year, organizing biannual Green Growth Conferences with over 100 participants, and promoting cross-sector collaboration by enabling companies to present sustainability challenges and co-design solutions with innovators, researchers, and policymakers. The platform will also issue certificates of participation to promote learning recognition and support access to green investment opportunities.

•Actions:

1. **Develop a Digital Platform** that:
 - Hosts **monthly webinars and workshops** featuring industry leaders like **Maccaferri** (on resilient infrastructure and green construction) and **ProGena** (on sustainable urban planning and innovation in bio-design).
 - Contains a **repository of tools**, reports, funding opportunities, and case studies from local and international contexts.
 - Includes a **feature for companies to post real-world sustainability challenges**, inviting startups, researchers, and NGOs to collaborate on solutions.
2. **Organize Biannual Conferences:**
 - Led by **Future One**, Maccaferri, and other innovation-oriented businesses, to showcase best practices, attract **foreign green investments**, and foster **matchmaking between solution-seekers and providers**.
 - Include pitch sessions for startups and SMEs to attract green funds and potential partners.
3. **Foster Multidisciplinary Collaboration:**
 - Create an **“Innovation Needs & Offers Board”** on the platform, allowing companies to share specific needs (e.g., waste valorization, smart irrigation, energy optimization) and receive proposals from academia, civil society, and other businesses.
 - Provide structured networking tools and thematic discussion forums.
4. **Issue Digital Certificates:**

- Offer **recognized certificates of participation** for individuals attending webinars or completing capacity-building modules, helping them build credibility in green sectors and access job/investment opportunities.

Specific Objective 2: By 2030, achieve a 30% increase in consumer participation in circular economy activities by launching at least 5 annual city-wide awareness campaigns, and developing a digital platform with at least 100 active users that enables ecological footprint tracking, offers tailored tips for sustainable practices, and integrates rewarding schemes for waste stream management.

Enhance Consumer Awareness and Participation in the Circular Economy:

Aim: Educate and engage residents on the importance of sustainable consumption and production, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility.

Alignment with SDG 12: This objective supports targets 12.8 and 12.3 by promoting knowledge and practices that lead to more sustainable lifestyles and reducing food waste.

Actions:

1. Launch city-wide campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits of the circular economy and sustainable consumption.
2. Develop a digital platform (possibly mobile app) that allows consumers to track their ecological footprint and provides tips and resources for adopting sustainable practices along several waste streams (these can be further analyzed for rewarding schemes).

Specific Objective 3: By 2030, empower youth-led innovation in circular economy solutions by engaging **at least 200 students** from universities and high schools annually in a **Municipal Circular Design Challenge**, guided by experts (e.g., from ICLEI, universities, or green design institutes), and supporting the **best-performing ideas** to evolve into **startups** through seed funding, mentoring, and incubation.

Actions:

1. Launch an annual Circular Design Challenge focused on sustainable packaging and product design, open to students from Tirana's educational institutions.
2. Invite experts from ICLEI, international networks, or local universities to mentor and guide students in applying circular design principles to real-life challenges.
3. Provide financial and technical support for the best idea(s), including seed funding, incubation services, and connections to local business ecosystems to turn them into viable green startups.
4. Showcase winning solutions during the Green Growth Conference and offer winners fast-track access to the Green Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Platform.

6.Summary of actions

Definition of actions per intervention area, serving the specific objectives. You can use infographic and tables for the actions' summary

Line of intervention

Title of action	Support for Farmers: Providing standardized, recyclable and reusable packaging boxes to local farmers.		Relevant strategies, policies, development programmes	National Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development 2021 - 2027 Circular Economy Roadmap (MoTE, 2024); SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption & Production;
Link to specific objective	Specific Objective 1 – Increase the market share of goods produced by local farmers and producers by 40% through sustainable distribution and packaging systems.			
Output				
Short description	Output	Timescale	Rough cost estimation	Other assets needed
This action supports local farmers by supplying standardized recyclable and reusable packaging boxes to reduce single-use packaging, improve product visibility, and strengthen circular value chains in Tirana’s markets. It includes procurement, farmer training, a return-logistics system, and collaboration with distributors for continuous reuse cycles.	20,000 reusable crates/boxes distributed 200 farmers equipped Training sessions delivered Return/tracking system established	2025–2028	€200,000 – €250,000	Logistics partner(s);
Estimated impact on sustainability	Reduction of single-use packaging by approx. 30% in supported supply chains; improved reuse rates; lower material consumption; reduced CO ₂ emissions from packaging production and disposal; enhanced competitiveness of local produce.			
Cross-cutting topics addressed	Sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12); Local economic development;			

	Waste prevention; Innovation in supply chains; Community engagement.
Status of the action	(New action building upon Green Grants pilot model).
Rough risk estimation	Medium – risks include adoption reluctance by farmers, insufficient logistics coordination, and procurement delays.
Action owner	Municipality of Tirana, Eco-Tirana
Key stakeholders involved	
Horizontal level of governance	
Directorate of Agriculture & Rural Development; Directorate of Public Services; Directorate of Local Economic Development; Directorate of Markets Management.	
Sectorial	
Farmers' associations; Packaging manufacturers; Distribution/logistics companies; Local agri-food SMEs; Eco Tirana; Market operator	
Vertical level of governance	
Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development; Ministry of Tourism and Environment; National Agency for Natural Resources.	
Territorial level	
Municipality of Tirana – peri-urban agricultural areas, local markets, wholesale distribution points.	
Hard and soft investments	
Hard: reusable boxes, collection/storage points, digital tracking tools. Soft: training sessions, awareness materials, monitoring, logistics coordination.	

7 Pilot actions

Description of pilot actions undertaken and their results, lessons learnt.

7.1 Pilot Action 1 – Financial Support for Businesses Focused on Reuse

The challenge

Businesses, particularly SMEs and startups, in Tirana face persistent barriers in shifting from linear to circular models due to limited financial capacity and regulatory support. Despite the growing interest in reuse and resource efficiency, many entrepreneurs lack access to the necessary funding or expertise to transform their business models.

The background

It was assumed that providing direct municipal financial support would accelerate the transition of small businesses toward reuse-based models, while inspiring others through concrete, demonstrable examples. The pilot aimed to test whether financial incentives could act as an effective catalyst for circular innovation at the local level.

The testing scope

The action sought to understand whether targeted municipal grants could encourage companies to adopt reuse practices more systematically and how these practices translate into measurable economic and environmental benefits for the local economy.

Description of the testing action

The pilot was implemented through the *Green Grants* scheme, designed to support businesses offering reuse-oriented products and services. Grants were awarded to companies such as **RawMode**, **ReUse Tirana**, and **EcoGreaseSolution**, enabling them to strengthen their activities, expand their customer base, and demonstrate the tangible value of reuse. The action was coordinated by the Directorate of Environment and Sustainable Development, in collaboration with Eco Tirana and local partners.

Monitoring

Implementation of the funded projects was followed through regular reporting, site visits, and interviews with beneficiaries. Economic and environmental indicators were assessed before and after the funding, focusing on:

- Number of businesses supported and their market growth;
- New reuse-oriented products and services developed;
- Reduction in waste generation and resource use;
- Level of satisfaction and perceived value of municipal support.

Results

The *Green Grants* scheme provided visibility and support to dozens of businesses, enabling them to strengthen their operations and expand their positive impact. Several reuse-based solutions were introduced to the market, while beneficiaries gained recognition through international circular economy initiatives, positioning Tirana as a local leader in the reuse movement.

Learning points

The pilot highlighted several operational challenges:

- **Timeline management:** Delays occurred due to supply chain issues and administrative complexities.
- **Documentation burden:** First-time entrepreneurs found reporting and compliance demanding.
- **Monitoring gaps:** Periodic verifications revealed inconsistencies between initial proposals and actual progress.
- **Communication delays:** Limited follow-up from beneficiaries complicated data collection.

Iteration actions

Future rounds of the *Green Grants* will:

- Introduce more realistic timelines and staged deliverables;
- Simplify reporting templates and strengthen communication follow-up;
- Focus funding on more achievable and targeted projects;
- Offer dedicated technical assistance, especially for digital and innovation-based projects.

Impact on the IAP

The scheme will be scaled up through EU and international funding to expand its coverage. Moreover, the experience directly informed the IAP's proposal for establishing a **Green Innovation Hub**, to incubate circular startups and consolidate Tirana's leadership in circular entrepreneurship.

7.2 Pilot Action 2 – Green Events & Material Flow Analysis (ICLEI Support)

The challenge

Public events in Tirana often generate large amounts of single-use plastic and packaging waste. The city lacked experience and guidance on organizing *green events* that integrate circular economy principles.

The background

It was hypothesized that piloting a public event using only reusable cups, plates, and cutlery supported by mobile dishwashers—could demonstrate the feasibility of circular systems in real-life conditions, while engaging both citizens and event organizers in sustainable practices.

The testing scope

The action would test the environmental and social impact of replacing single-use packaging with reusable alternatives. It would quantify the waste reduction achieved and assess citizens' and organizers' acceptance of reuse systems.

Description of the testing action

To organize a practical demonstration of a zero-waste approach. All food and beverages would be served exclusively in reusable items. Mobile dishwashers would be installed on-site to ensure hygiene and smooth operations.

Iteration actions

Based on these findings, future actions will:

- Expand green event practices to multiple city events;
- Develop a **Green Events Guidebook/Manual** to standardize procedures;
- Require the inclusion of reuse systems in all publicly funded events;
- Continue MFA-based monitoring to inform regulatory adjustments and improve event logistics

Selection of 10-12 max actions that will be further detailed in Part 3 through a qualitative assessment with the ULG members about feasibility (considering the rough availability of funds, risks, impacts) and impact on sustainability of the listed actions. Selection needs to be done with the ULG members, following a voting methodology.

PART III: Action planning details

Part III should be 10-15 pages

8 Detailed presentation of the actions

Note: Decide how you will depict the reference to the theme of focus and the line(s) of intervention you reflect through your actions.

1. **Support for Farmers:** Provide standardized, **recyclable and reusable packaging boxes** to local farmers for transporting and selling their products, reducing single-use packaging and enhancing product visibility in markets.
2. **Consumer Engagement:** Launch an annual “**Buy Local, Waste Less**” campaign that promotes local goods in supermarkets and markets, integrated with the existing digital platform to offer **eco-rewards** for purchasing locally produced, low-packaging items

3. Establish a Circular Economy Hub to offer training, resources, and networking opportunities for businesses transitioning to circular models.
4. Organize Green Events: Host workshops, conferences, and networking events that focus on sustainability topics, allowing entrepreneurs to showcase their innovations, learn best practices, and connect with potential partners and investors
5. Develop certification programs that recognize and reward businesses for their sustainable efforts, helping them gain market advantage and consumer trust.
6. Launch city-wide campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits of the circular economy and sustainable consumption.
7. •Develop a Digital Platform that:
 - Hosts monthly webinars and workshops featuring industry leaders like Maccaferri (on resilient infrastructure and green construction) and ProGena (on sustainable urban planning and innovation in bio-design).
 - Contains a repository of tools, reports, funding opportunities, and case studies from local and international contexts.
 - Includes a feature for companies to post real-world sustainability challenges, inviting startups, researchers, and NGOs to collaborate on solutions
8. **Organize Biannual Conferences:**
 - Led by **Future One**, Maccaferri, and other innovation-oriented businesses, to showcase best practices, attract **foreign green investments**, and foster **matchmaking between solution-seekers and providers**.
 - Include pitch sessions for startups and SMEs to attract green funds and potential partners.
 - **Foster Multidisciplinary Collaboration:**
 - Create an “**Innovation Needs & Offers Board**” on the platform, allowing companies to share specific needs (e.g., waste valorization, smart irrigation, energy optimization) and receive proposals from academia, civil society, and other businesses.
 - Provide structured networking tools and thematic discussion forums.
 - **Issue Digital Certificates:**
9. Launch an annual Circular Design Challenge focused on sustainable packaging and product design, open to students from Tirana’s educational institutions
10. Showcase winning solutions during the Green Growth Conference and offer winners fast-track access to the Green Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Platform

9 Prioritized list of actions

9.1 Methodology for Prioritizing Actions

To determine the prioritized list of actions included in the Integrated Action Plan (IAP), the Municipality of Tirana applied a participatory and evidence-based evaluation process in collaboration with the Urban Local Group (ULG) members.

A structured **Action Plan Evaluation Checklist** was prepared and distributed to all ULG participants. The checklist aimed to ensure transparency, inclusiveness, and a common understanding of the feasibility and impact of each proposed action. It contained the full set of potential actions emerging from the co-creation and ideation workshops and required participants to assess each one against predefined criteria.

Each ULG member was asked to indicate whether an action was considered *doable* (“Yes/No”) within the city’s current context, and, if so, to identify the main type of **risk** associated with its implementation—technological, environmental, economic, social, political, legal, or data-related.

Where the answer was “No,” participants were invited to briefly describe the perceived **main challenge**. This approach allowed for both quantitative and qualitative insights and encouraged a cross-sectoral reflection from municipal departments, academia, NGOs, and private-sector stakeholders.

After collecting and consolidating all checklists, the project team performed a comparative analysis to identify those actions that received the highest feasibility rating and the lowest implementation risks. These results were then discussed in a follow-up session of the ULG to validate findings collectively and ensure alignment with Tirana’s strategic objectives under the LET’S GO CIRCULAR framework.

Through this process, **ten actions** were prioritized for inclusion in the final Integrated Action Plan. These represent the most feasible, impactful, and synergistic measures in advancing Tirana’s transition toward a circular economy. The prioritization reflects a balanced mix of *soft* (awareness, education, innovation) and *hard* (infrastructure, funding, certification) interventions, ensuring coherence with both local capacity and long-term sustainability goals.

Action name:

1. **Support for Farmers: Provide standardized, recyclable and reusable packaging boxes to local farmers for transporting and selling their products, reducing single-use packaging and enhancing product visibility in markets.**

List of activities per action	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing, resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
1. Identify 200 local farmers and assess packaging needs	2025 – 2026	Needs assessment consultants (€15,000)	Municipal budget (Environment Directorate)	Limited participation of farmers	Municipality of Tirana – Directorate of Environment	List of engaged farmers & baseline data
2. Design and procure standardized recyclable/reusable packaging boxes	2025 – 2027	Procurement of 20,000 boxes (€120,000)	EU Green Deal / Horizon Europe / National CE funds	Supply chain delays or higher costs	Packaging producers, local SMEs	Boxes distributed to farmers
3. Train farmers on sustainable packaging use & handling	2026 – 2027	Training workshops & materials (€25,000)	Erasmus+ training grants / NGO partnerships	Low adoption due to habits	Farmers' associations, NGOs	200 trained farmers with certification
4. Establish collection & return scheme for reusable packaging	2026 – 2028	Logistics contracts & IT tracking tool (€40,000)	Public-private partnerships with distributors	Operational challenges in logistics	Transport companies, distributors	Closed-loop packaging return system
5. Awareness campaign to promote local products with eco-packaging	2026 – 2028	Media & promotional materials (€30,000)	Municipal communication budget / CSR by retailers	Low consumer engagement	Consumer NGOs, supermarkets, media	1,000+ consumers engaged in campaign
6. Monitoring & evaluation of impact	2027 – 2029	Data collection, surveys (€20,000)	URBACT / Municipal Monitoring Unit	Insufficient data or resistance	Universities, monitoring consultants	Annual impact report

Total funds needed: ca. €250,000

2. Action name: Consumer Engagement – “Buy Local, Waste Less” Campaign

List of activities per action	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing, resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
1. Design and launch the annual “Buy Local, Waste Less” campaign, focusing on supermarkets, local markets, and social media. Integrate messages around supporting local farmers and reducing packaging waste.	2025 – 2026	Campaign design, branding, communication experts (€30,000)	Municipal budget (Communication Dept.), CSR contributions from supermarkets	Low visibility of campaign in larger retail chains	Municipality of Tirana, Supermarket chains, Market administrators, NGOs	Campaign identity and materials
2. Develop eco-rewards system in the existing municipal digital platform: consumers earn points for purchasing local/low-packaging items and redeem them for discounts or services.	2025 – 2027	IT integration, app development (€50,000)	URBACT funds, Horizon Europe digital tools	Technical delays in platform integration	Municipal IT unit, Local tech startups, Retailers	Digital eco-rewards platform live
3. Partner with 100 local sellers and supermarkets to provide eco-displays, promotional corners, and information stands inside markets.	2026 – 2027	Display design, print materials (€20,000)	EU Green Deal small grants, Business co-financing	Reluctance of supermarkets to give space	Local farmers, Market associations, Supermarkets	100 eco-displays installed
4. Engage 1,000+ consumers annually through workshops, tasting events, and digital challenges that highlight local products and waste reduction.	2026 – 2028	Event organization & facilitation (€25,000)	Municipal culture/events budget, NGO co-financing	Low consumer participation	Civil society orgs, Consumer NGOs, Universities	1,000+ consumers engaged yearly
5. Monitor campaign impact via surveys, app data, and supermarket sales figures to measure increased purchase of local goods and reduction of packaging waste.	2027 – 2029	Data collection and reporting (€15,000)	Municipal monitoring unit, University partnership	Incomplete or inconsistent data	Universities, Research centers	Annual impact report

Total funds needed: ca. €140,000

3. Action name: Establishment of a Circular Economy Hub for SMEs

List of activities per action	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing, resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
1. Establish a Circular Economy Hub in Tirana, equipped with training spaces, digital tools, and demonstration areas for circular practices.	2025 – 2026	Hub facility, staff, equipment (€150,000)	Municipal budget, URBACT, EU Cohesion Funds	Overlap with existing hubs in region	Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of Economy, Donor programs	CE Hub officially launched
2. Deliver annual training programs for at least 50 businesses covering eco-design, reuse models, waste reduction, green logistics, and sustainable packaging.	2026 – 2030	Trainers, materials, certification schemes (€100,000)	Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Business membership fees	Low participation due to lack of awareness	SMEs, Business chambers, NGOs	50+ businesses trained yearly
3. Facilitate networking and matchmaking events to connect SMEs with universities, eco-packaging innovators, and investors.	2026 – 2030	Event organization, facilitation (€80,000)	Public-private partnerships, CSR sponsorships	Weak collaboration culture among SMEs	Universities, Research centers, Investors, SMEs	100+ partnerships facilitated
4. Provide seed grants/subsidies from €0.5 million public funds to help SMEs pilot circular business models.	2026 – 2029	Grants management team, monitoring (€500,000)	Municipality budget, EU Green Deal funds	Mismanagement or misuse of funds	Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of Finance, Independent auditors	50+ SMEs receiving grants
5. Develop digital knowledge-sharing platform to share case studies, success stories, and guidelines accessible to all SMEs	2027 – 2029	IT development, content production (€50,000)	Horizon digitalization grants, Local ICT companies	Low engagement if not user-friendly	IT providers, NGOs, Municipal IT unit	Online CE knowledge hub

in Tirana.						
6. Monitor and evaluate hub activities, documenting lessons learned and scaling-up opportunities.	2027 – 2030	Monitoring, evaluation reports (€20,000)	Municipality, Universities, URBACT support	Insufficient data from SMEs	Academic institutions, Monitoring experts	Annual CE Hub impact reports

Total funds needed: ca. €900,000

4. Action name: Organize Green Events – Showcasing Innovation & Building Partnerships

List of activities per action	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing, resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
1. Plan and deliver 5 Green Events (workshops, conferences, hackathons) to showcase innovations in circular economy, renewable energy, and sustainable urban solutions.	2025 – 2026	Event organization, venues, facilitation, communication (€40,000)	Municipal budget (Events), Co-funding from private sector sponsors	Low attendance or limited interest from SMEs	Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of Environment, Local business chambers	5 Green Events organized
2. Establish partnerships with 2 universities to integrate R&D presentations and startup showcases in the events.	2025 – 2026	Collaboration agreements, academic facilitation (€10,000)	University co-funding, Horizon Europe projects	Weak alignment between research and business needs	Universities of Tirana & Polis, Research institutes	2 university partnerships formalized
3. Provide networking platforms within events where entrepreneurs meet investors, incubators, and NGOs.	2025 – 2026	Networking spaces, digital matchmaking tool (€20,000)	EU SME programs, CSR sponsorship from corporates	Investors reluctant to commit to early-stage ideas	Startups, Investors, NGOs, Banks	50+ new partnerships facilitated
4. Develop a Green Innovation Fair as a highlight annual event to attract international	2026	Exhibition space, promotional campaigns (€30,000)	EU COSME, Green Transition funds	High organizational costs vs budget	International organizations, Trade chambers	1 annual large-scale fair organized

participation and visibility.						
5. Monitor participation and impact: track number of startups supported, partnerships formed, and investment mobilized.	2026	Data collection, surveys (€10,000)	Municipal monitoring unit, Academic support	Incomplete data collection	Universities, Monitoring consultants	Annual impact report

Total funds needed: ca. €110,000

5. Action name: Develop Certification Programs for Sustainable Businesses

List of activities per action	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing, resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
1. Design a Green Business Certification Scheme, with clear criteria (energy efficiency, waste reduction, eco-packaging, social impact). Benchmark against EU ecolabel standards.	2025 – 2026	Technical experts, legal framework development (€40,000)	Municipal budget, EU LIFE Programme, Ministry of Environment funds	Lack of clarity or too complex criteria discourages businesses	Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of Environment, Chambers of Commerce	Certification scheme approved
2. Pilot the certification with 20 businesses annually, providing audits, coaching, and recognition.	2026 – 2030	Auditors, consultants, training materials (€100,000)	URBACT, EU Horizon, National CE grants	Low participation due to lack of trust or costs	SMEs, Business associations, NGOs	20+ businesses certified annually
3. Introduce fiscal incentives and subsidies (tax reductions, reduced cleaning fees) for certified businesses to make certification attractive.	2026 – 2030	Policy design, fiscal modelling (€30,000)	Municipality budget, National subsidies	Delay in policy approval	Ministry of Finance, Municipal Council	Incentive framework established
4. Develop communication campaign to raise consumer awareness of certified businesses, boosting their market advantage.	2026 – 2030	Marketing & communication (€30,000)	CSR partnerships, EU Communication grants	Low consumer awareness	Media, NGOs, Marketplaces	Consumer trust and demand for certified businesses

5. Create monitoring & compliance framework to track performance and ensure certified businesses meet and maintain criteria.	2027 – 2030	Monitoring system, evaluation team (€20,000)	Municipal Monitoring Unit, Academic partnerships	Insufficient enforcement capacity	Universities, Auditors, Municipality	Annual monitoring reports
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Total funds needed: ca. €220,000

6. Action name: Launch city-wide campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits of the circular economy and sustainable consumption.

List of activities per action	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing, resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
The activity will integrate circular economy awareness into existing municipal events and leverage Tirana Hub (Piramida) as a space for training and knowledge exchange. During annual city fairs, every purchase will include a mandatory flyer made from recycled or second-use materials (e.g., seed paper, reusable info cards) providing simple explanations and practical tips on circular economy principles. Interactive booths will showcase upcycling, composting, and zero-waste living, with demonstrations and challenges to engage the public. Tirana Hub	April 2026 (aligned with Earth Day awareness momentum) End: December 2026 for first cycle, with annual repetition planned through 2030.	Flyer design and eco-friendly printing • ESM for sustainable material sourcing • Booth setup and logistics • Staff, students and volunteer coordination • Partnerships with local vendors and	Municipal Budget Allocation National Government Grants Private Sector Sponsorships Crowd funding Pilot International Donors: EU Green Agenda WB programme, UNDP Green Growth Fund, GIZ Circular Economy Initiative	- Low public engagement or interest - Inadequate funding or delayed disbursement - Resistance to behavioral change - Limited media reach or ineffective messaging - Political or administrative changes affecting	- Tirana Municipality - Ministry of Tourism and Environment - Local NGOs Educational institutions - Media outlets - Community leaders and influencers - Private sector partners (retailers,	- At least 5 annual awareness campaigns sustained city-wide. - Reach at least 5,000 residents per year - Increased participation in recycling and reuse programs - Improved public understanding of circular economy

will be activated during key environmental dates (e.g., Earth Day, World Environment Day) to host workshops, school visits, interest group gatherings, and expert talks focused on sustainable lifestyles, waste reduction, and green entrepreneurship. Activities will be co-organized with local businesses, schools, NGOs, and municipal departments to ensure wide reach and interactivity with other city initiatives.		educators •Venue access (municipal fairs, Tirana Hub),		continuity	recyclers)	concepts
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Action 7: Develop a Digital Knowledge & Innovation Platform

List of activities per action	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing and resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design and launch a digital portal with webinars and workshops (local & international experts, p.sh. Maccaferri, ProGena). - Curate and publish 100+ annual resources (reports, tools, case studies, funding opportunities). - Enable companies to post sustainability challenges and connect with startups, researchers, NGOs for solutions. 	Jan 2026 – Dec 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Platform development & hosting - Staffing (manager, curator, coordinator) - Event organization & speaker fees - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Circular Cities / Green Transition grants - Co-financing: Municipality of Tirana, private sector partners - Contributions from local NGOs and international donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk of duplication with existing hubs (Western Balkans CE Hub, EIT Hub Albania) → mitigated by positioning this as a local interface - Low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipality of Tirana - Universities & research centers - SMEs, startups, NGOs - International partners and corporates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10+ webinars annually - 100+ curated resources per year - 2 Green Growth Conferences biannually - 200+

Enable a feature for companies to post real-world sustainability challenges and invite collaboration.		Marketing & outreach		stakeholder engagement - Technical platform issues		participation certificates issued yearly
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8. Action name: Launch an Annual Circular Design Challenge for Youth

List of activities per action	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing and resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
Organize an annual Circular Design Challenge on sustainable packaging and product design; engage 200+ students from universities and high schools; provide mentorship from experts (ICLEI, universities, green design institutes); support best-performing ideas to evolve into startup projects.	Start: Jan 2026 End: Dec 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €150,000 (2026–2030) • Staffing: coordinator, mentorship team, admin support • Marketing & outreach to schools/universities • Event organization & materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Budget Allocation • National Government Grants • Private Sector Sponsorships • Crowdfunding pilots • International donors (EU Green Agenda WB, UNDP Green Growth Fund, GIZ CE Initiative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low student participation • Limited quality of submissions • Lack of follow-up support for winning ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality of Tirana • Ministry of Tourism & Environment • Educational institutions • NGOs and youth networks • Media outlets & influencers • Private sector partners (retailers, recyclers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Circular Design Challenge with 200+ students engaged • Mentorship and training sessions delivered • Documentation of submissions and learning outcomes • Pipeline of youth-led startups created

9. Action name: Showcase Winning Student Solutions at the Green Growth Conference

List of activities per action	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing and resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
Winning projects from the Circular Design Challenge will be showcased during the biannual Green Growth Conference. Selected student solutions will receive fast-track access to the Green Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Platform, ensuring continuity between the challenge and broader stakeholder engagement. This will provide visibility to local and international stakeholders, mentorship opportunities, and potential investor connections.	Jan 2026 – Dec 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €80,000 (2026–2030) • Certificates and recognition materials • Integration with the Green Innovation & Knowledge Exchange Platform • Event logistics and coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Budget Allocation • National Government Grants • Private Sector Sponsorships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistical challenges in showcasing winners • Limited quality of submissions • Low investor interest in early-stage projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality of Tirana • Ministry of Tourism & Environment • Educational institutions • Local NGOs • Media outlets & influencers • Private sector partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winning solutions showcased at each biannual Green Growth Conference • Fast-track access for winners to the Knowledge Exchange Platform • Increased exposure, networking, and investment opportunities for student-led startups

10. Action name: Organize Biannual Green Growth Conferences & Collaboration Tools

List of activities per action	Start – End date	Funds and other resources needed	Funding, financing, resource allocation programme	Risks	Stakeholders involved	Outputs
Organize biannual Green Growth Conferences led by Future One, Maccaferri, and other innovation-oriented businesses, to showcase best practices, attract foreign green investments, and enable matchmaking between solution-seekers and providers. Include pitch sessions for startups and SMEs to present ideas to potential investors.	2026 – 2030	€250,000 (2026–2030); conference organization (venue, logistics, facilitation); marketing & outreach	EU Green Transition funds; Municipality of Tirana co-financing; corporate sponsorships; international donors	Limited private sector engagement; low international investor participation; logistical/organizational challenges	Municipality of Tirana; Ministry of Economy & Environment; Future One, Maccaferri; Universities & research centers; NGOs, startups, SMEs; international investors	2 Green Growth Conferences annually (2026–2030); 50+ startups/SMEs pitching per cycle; increased foreign green investment interest
Develop an Innovation Needs & Offers Board on the platform, allowing companies to post specific sustainability needs (e.g., waste valorization, smart irrigation, energy optimization) and receive proposals from academia, civil society, and other businesses. Provide structured networking tools and thematic discussion forums to foster	2026 – 2030	Development of board functionality, networking tools, and thematic forums (€50,000)	Corporate partnerships, business chambers, Horizon Europe	Risk of duplication if not integrated with Knowledge Exchange Platform; low uptake by companies	Municipality IT unit; Private sector; Universities; NGOs; civil society organizations	Innovation Needs & Offers Board operational; 20+ collaborations initiated annually

multidisciplinary collaboration.						
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PART IV: Implementation framework

Part III should be 5-7 pages

10 Financial plan

Note:

Make a special reference in case you will raise funds through ESF, ERDF programmes

Take information from action and activity tables

Action	Missing funds	Missing assets	Funds' raising plan
Action 1: Support for Farmers (Reusable Packaging)	~€150,000	Standardized packaging supply chains, farmer adoption capacity	Apply to ERDF for CE pilot schemes; engage packaging producers; co-financing with Ministry of Agriculture
Action 2: Consumer Engagement – “Buy Local, Waste Less”	~€70,000	Stronger digital platform integration, marketing expertise	ESF support for awareness; private sector CSR sponsorships (supermarkets, retailers)
Action 3: Circular Economy Hub for SMEs	~€500,000	Physical infrastructure, expert trainers, long-term management team	ERDF for hub infrastructure; Horizon Europe for training; PPP with local businesses
Action 4: Green Events	~€50,000	International expert participation, event logistics support	Private sponsorships; UNDP Green Growth Fund; ticketing/crowdfunding
Action 5: Certification Program for Businesses	~€120,000	Certification scheme standards, auditors, fiscal policy approval	National subsidies; LIFE Programme for eco-labelling; local tax incentives
Action 6: City-wide Awareness Campaigns	~€300,000 (2026–2030)	Skilled communicators, wide media coverage	ESF for educational campaigns; GIZ CE Initiative; partnerships with influencers/media
Action 7: Digital Knowledge & Innovation Platform	~€250,000	Advanced IT tools, international content providers	Horizon Europe (digitalization), ERDF for ICT, corporate partnerships
Action 8: Circular Design Challenge (Youth)	~€100,000	Mentors from design institutes, student engagement mechanisms	ESF for youth skills; EU Green Agenda WB; co-financing from universities
Action 9: Showcasing Winning Solutions	~€40,000	Integration with conference agenda, investor access	Private sponsorships; EU COSME programme; national innovation grants
Action 10: Biannual Green Growth Conferences	~€150,000	Networking tools, international investor participation	ERDF for events; PPP with corporates (Future One, Maccaferri); donor support

11 Time plan

(Gantt)

Note:

Take information from action and activity tables

12 Risk mitigation plan

Note:

- Type may be related to: financial; operational; institutional; technical; staffing.
- Take information from activity tables

This section identifies the main risks that may affect the implementation of Tirana's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) and outlines the corresponding mitigation measures. Risks are grouped under four key categories: **Institutional/Administrative**, **Financial**, **Technical/Operational**, and **Social/Environmental**. Each risk is assessed according to its *likelihood* (Low / Medium / High) and *impact* (Low / Medium / High), followed by proposed mitigation actions.

1. Institutional and Administrative Risks

Risk Description	Likelihood / Impact	Mitigation Measures	Responsible Entity
Delays in administrative approvals, procurement, or internal coordination among municipal departments.	Medium / High	- Establish an internal coordination task force for IAP implementation.- Use early tender planning and pre-approval templates.- Maintain regular coordination meetings with finance and procurement departments.	Directorate of Environment Directorate of Procurement
Limited human resource capacity to monitor, report, and follow-up on multiple project actions.	High / High	- Assign a dedicated IAP Coordinator within the Directorate of Environment.- Seek support from technical partners (ICLEI, GIZ, Eco Tirana) for monitoring and data verification.- Provide short-term external assistance when needed.	Directorate of Environment; HR Department
Changes in municipal administration or staff turnover affecting project continuity.	Medium / High	- Document all activities and responsibilities in shared digital repositories.- Maintain regular reporting to ensure institutional memory.- Include IAP tasks in job descriptions of key staff.	General Directorate of Strategic Planning

2. Financial Risks

Risk Description	Likelihood / Impact	Mitigation Measures	Responsible Entity
Limited municipal budget for scaling up pilot actions or co-financing future calls.	High / High	- Seek EU and donor funding (e.g., Horizon Europe, LIFE, GIZ).- Integrate IAP actions in annual municipal and national investment plans.- Use Public–Private Partnerships for circular business models.	Directorate of Finance; Directorate of Environment
Delays in grant payments to SMEs under the Green Grants scheme.	Medium / Medium	- Simplify verification and reporting procedures.- Use staged payments tied to deliverables.- Provide administrative coaching for new beneficiaries.	Directorate of Finance; IAP Monitoring Unit
Exchange rate fluctuations or inflation affecting cost estimates.	Medium / Low	- Apply contingency margins (10%) in financial planning.- Revise cost assumptions annually.	Finance Department

3. Technical and Operational Risks

Risk Description	Likelihood / Impact	Mitigation Measures	Responsible Entity
Difficulty in maintaining technical quality and data consistency across projects (e.g., MFA measurements, circular indicators).	Medium / High	- Develop a unified monitoring methodology based on ICLEI MFA 2022 baseline.- Provide training to staff on data management.- Use standardized templates and digital tools for data collection.	Directorate of Environment; Eco Tirana
Technical malfunctions during green events (mobile dishwashers, reusable systems).	Medium / Medium	- Conduct pre-event testing and establish rapid response procedures.- Ensure suppliers provide technical standby support.	Directorate of Events; Eco Tirana
Limited participation of businesses in certification or training programmes.	Medium / Medium	- Combine financial incentives with recognition awards.- Use communication campaigns to showcase success stories.	CE Hub; Directorate of Communication

4. Social and Environmental Risks

Risk Description	Likelihood / Impact	Mitigation Measures	Responsible Entity
Low public participation or limited citizen engagement in awareness activities.	Medium / Medium	- Use participatory communication tools (e.g., school challenges, community events).- Partner with universities and NGOs for outreach.- Involve youth ambassadors as local multipliers.	Directorate of Communication; Education Department
Resistance to behavioural change (e.g., event organizers, vendors).	High / Medium	- Provide clear guidelines and incentives for compliance.- Introduce municipal regulation promoting reuse in public events.	Directorate of Environment; Legal Office
Environmental risks due to poor waste management at events or pilot sites.	Low / High	- Conduct environmental audits before and after events.- Ensure strict waste segregation and reporting.	Eco Tirana; Event Management Unit

The following table summarizes the key risks identified through the ULG workshops, pilot actions and structured by risk category. Each risk reflects real conditions in Tirana's transition toward circularity, along with mitigation measures that are already planned or under implementation.

Risk Category	Main Risks Identified for Tirana	Likelihood / Impact	Mitigation / Adaptive Measures	Responsible Actors
Technical	- Lack of recycling and reuse infrastructure (e.g. textile, packaging).- Limited local expertise on circular data monitoring (MFA, CE indicators).- Gaps in collection logistics for segregated waste streams.	High / High	- Gradual integration of smart waste management tools (Eco Tirana pilot).- Use of online platforms to map waste streams and circular flows.- Collaboration with universities and Eco Tirana for technical guidance.- Capacity building for staff on MFA-based indicators.	Directorate of Environment; Eco Tirana; Polytechnic University
Environmental	- Limited space for waste storage and reuse operations.- Waste leakage into landfills due to lack of alternatives.- Uncontrolled construction waste flows containing lead/asbestos.	Medium / High	- Introduce micro-hubs for collection & storage in municipal markets.- Promote reuse and repair models to reduce landfill dependency.- Conduct environmental audits on demolition and reuse sites.- Enforce separate collection of construction and demolition waste.	Directorate of Environment; Agency of Waste Management
Economic	- Lack of local funding for circular pilots.- High cost of reusable systems for event organizers.- Limited financial capacity of SMEs to scale reuse models.- Market distrust in secondary materials.	High / High	- Expand Green Grants scheme and attract EU/national funds .- Create incentives for businesses adopting reuse/circular certification.- Support crowd funding and brokerage events for green startups.- Promote demand through public procurement and municipal tenders.	Directorate of Finance; Directorate of Economic Development; CE Hub
Social	- Low citizen awareness of circular	High / Medium	- Organize educational campaigns , school	Directorate of Communication;

Risk Category	Main Risks Identified for Tirana	Likelihood / Impact	Mitigation / Adaptive Measures	Responsible Actors
	practices.- Resistance to changing habits (disposables, consumption).- Lack of trust in quality of recycled materials.- Skills gap in circular professions.		programs, and citizen labs.- “Buy Local, Waste Less” campaigns promoting local low-packaging products.- Introduce Circular Design Challenge for youth.- Integrate circularity topics into school and university curricula.	Education Department; NGOs; ICLEI
Political / Governance	- Changes in political priorities or budget allocation.- Weak inter-departmental coordination.- Limited local regulatory framework on reuse.	Medium / High	- Embed IAP objectives in Tirana’s annual budget and 2030 Strategy.- Establish an interdepartmental IAP Task Force for coordination.- Prepare local guidelines for green events and reuse systems .- Maintain communication with national ministries (Environment, Economy).	General Directorate of Strategic Planning; Mayor’s Office; MoTE
Legal / Regulatory	- Lack of standards for secondary materials and green certification.- Absence of municipal regulation enforcing reuse in events.- Ambiguity in national circularity definitions.	High / Medium	- Develop municipal “Green Events Regulation” mandating reuse at public events.- Collaborate with the Ministry of Environment on standards alignment.- Include circularity criteria in municipal tenders and procurement.	Legal Office; Ministry of Environment; Municipality Procurement Unit
Data / Monitoring	- Fragmented data on material flows and business participation.- Lack of standardized CE indicators or data interoperability.- Difficulty linking monitoring results with policy adjustments.	Medium / Medium	- Use ICLEI MFA baseline (2022) as a reference for IAP indicators.- Build a Municipal Circularity Dashboard (digital monitoring tool).- Annual verification of indicators with INSTAT & Eco Tirana.- Report findings in open-data format.	IAP Monitoring Unit; INSTAT; Eco Tirana

13 Monitoring framework

Note: take information from action and activity tables

Specific Objective	Result Indicator	Calculation formula	Baseline value (Year)	Target value (Year)	Data sources	Responsible
Action	Output indicator	Calculation formula	Baseline value (Year)	Target value (Year)	Data sources	Responsible

Note: take information from action and activity tables

Specific Objective	Result Indicator	Calculation Formula	Baseline (Year)	Target (Year)	Data Source	Responsible
1.1 Support reuse-based business models through Green Grants	Number of SMEs funded for reuse innovation	Count of awarded grants	2024: 20 SMEs	2030: ≥ 100 SMEs	Municipal Grant Registry; Eco Tirana	Directorate of Environment
	% of supported SMEs maintaining circular model after 1 year	(Active reuse SMEs / Total funded) $\times 100$	2024: baseline to establish	2030: $\geq 75\%$	Follow-up reports	Directorate of Environment
1.2 Establish a Circular Economy Hub	Number of SMEs trained or incubated	Count	2025: 0	2030: ≥ 250	CE Hub records	Directorate of Economic Development
	Number of partnerships	Count	2025: 0	2030: ≥ 100	CE Hub MoUs	Municipality & Universities

	SME– University					
2.1 Introduce reuse systems in public events	% of municipal events with reuse system	(Events with reuse / Total events) ×100	2024: 0%	2030: 100%	Event reports	Directorate of Events
	Quantity of single-use packaging avoided (kg)	MFA data – baseline vs post-event	2022: 0.7 t/cap EoL waste	2030: ≥1 ton avoided/event	MFA; ICLEI reports	Eco Tirana; ICLEI
2.2 Develop a Green Events guideline	Number of municipal guidelines adopted	Count	2025: 0	2026: 1	Official Gazette	Legal Office
3.1 Raise citizen awareness and participation	Number of residents engaged in CE campaigns	Count	2024: 2,000	2030: ≥10,000	Surveys, event attendance	Directorate of Communication
	% of citizens demonstrating awareness of CE	(Aware respondents / Total) ×100	2025: establish	2030: ≥70%	Survey	Directorate of Communication
3.2 Youth involvement in circular innovation	Number of students participating in Circular Design Challenge	Count	2025: 200	2030: ≥1,000	Education data	Municipality of Tirana
	Number of projects transformed into start-ups	Count	2025: 0	2030: ≥10	Hub records	CE Hub; MoE
4.1 Strengthen circular monitoring	Number of circular indicators tracked annually	Count	2022: 10 MFA indicators	2030: ≥20	ICLEI MFA 2022; Eco Tirana	IAP Monitoring Unit
	Input Socio-Economic Cycling Rate (ISCr)	Recycling / PM ×100	2022: 2%	2030: ≥10%	MFA baseline	Directorate of Environment
	Material Productivity (MP)	GDP _{local} / PM	2022: 1.2 €/kg	2030: 1.8 €/kg	INSTAT, MFA	Directorate of Finance

Conclusions

Self-evaluation of the local process

The preparation of Tirana's Integrated Action Plan followed a participatory and iterative approach through the URBACT Local Group, involving municipal departments, businesses, academia, and NGOs. The process enabled joint prioritization of actions and fostered collaboration between sectors, though it also revealed challenges such as limited data integration and the need for stronger interdepartmental coordination. Overall, it strengthened cooperation, institutional ownership, and the city's capacity to design circular policies based on evidence and participation.

Lessons learnt

The IAP process showed that circular transition depends on early stakeholder engagement, practical pilot testing, and consistent communication. The pilots proved that financial and regulatory support can effectively mobilize both businesses and citizens. Key lessons include the importance of data-driven monitoring, continuous capacity building, and linking local initiatives with national frameworks to ensure long-term sustainability

Picture

Acknowledgement message

Names of local coordinator and political supporter

Logos of all cities

Examples of infographics

Problem analysis

[illegible]