



TechDiversity

Diversity and Inclusion in Knowledge-based Digital and Tech Ecosystems

Integrated Action Plan Trikala

Christina Karamperi: Project Manager
Giannis Nakas: External Consultant

Table of content

1.City's mayor statement.....	3
2.TechDiversity.....	3
3.URBACT Integrated Action Plans.....	4
4.Context, needs and vision.	5
4.1 Overall theme being addressed – Current situation (including Related strategies).....	5
4.2 Problem identification by local stakeholders.....	7
4.2.1 Problem identification.....	7
4.2.2 City's local stakeholders: Inputs & methodology.....	9
4.3 Main integration challenges.....	11
4.4 Testing Action – Stem Education for Teachers.....	13
5. Overall logic and integrated approach.....	15
5.1 Integrated Approach.....	15
5.2 Challenge Areas & Strategic Objectives.	17
5.3 Actions Overview..	17
6. Action planning details.....	19
6.1 Action Prioritization.....	30
7. Implementation framework.	31
7.1 Governance.....	32
7.2 Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement	32
7.3 Overall costings and funding strategy.....	34
7.4 Overall Timeline.....	35
7.5 Risk Assessment.....	37
7.6 Monitoring and Reporting.....	39
8. Conclusions and Next Steps.....	40

1. City's Mayor Statement



“Trikala envisions becoming one of the country's centres of innovation, digital entrepreneurship and inclusive technological development.”

Mr Sakkas, Mayor of the city of Trikala

2. TechDiversity

TechDiversity is an URBACT network of eight partners representing small and medium-sized European cities, that aim to boost and facilitate diverse local communities that are not active in Tech & Digital sector, facing specific challenges in terms of diversity, gender equality and inclusion. Furthermore, the partner cities will mainly focus on an identified pressing aspect and will support at least one diverse local group in each of the participating cities, through the action plans.

The network operated from July 2023 to December 2025.

- e-Trikala S.A
- Amarante
- Municipality of Arezzo
- Bielsko Biala Regional Development Agency
- Bucharest District 6
- Idrija
- Larnaka
- National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (for Psahna)

3.URBACT Integrated Action Plans

An **URBACT Integrated Action Plan (IAP)** is a city-level output that defines actions to be implemented within the city in order to respond to a specific urban policy challenge – reflecting the lessons learned from local stakeholders, transnational partners and the testing of actions at local level.

IAPs thus provide both a focal point and end goal of the action planning journey that cities undertake within their URBACT Action Planning Network (APN). IAPs help to ensure that both local-level discussions (within the URBACT Local Group) and transnational exchange (between the network partners) have a practical focus on planning a coherent set of actions to address the local policy challenge in each participating city, embedding an integrated and participative approach.

IAPs are future oriented – setting out the actions that cities will implement beyond the life cycle of the URBACT network. For this reason, each IAP not only sets out what the city intends to do on its specific topic, but also has a strong implementation focus, for example through the identification of specific funding opportunities, governance structures and timelines for how the actions will be implemented and monitored. The IAP links with the overall URBACT Action Planning Cycle.



Figure 1: URBACT Action Planning Cycle

4. Context, needs and vision

4.1 Overall theme being addressed – Current situation (including Related strategies)

Population statistics and demography

Trikala is situated in the **Thessaly region of central Greece**. It lies at the foothills of the Pindus Mountain range, which is part of the larger Greek mountain system. The city is surrounded by picturesque landscapes, including hills, valleys, and rivers. The river Lithaios runs through the city, adding to its scenic beauty. Trikala is one of the major cities in the Thessaly region, which is known for its agricultural productivity, particularly in the cultivation of grains, fruits, and vegetables. Trikala's economy is diverse, with industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services playing important roles. The city also serves as a commercial hub for the surrounding rural areas, facilitating trade and business activities.

The city of Trikala has a population of **62,064 inhabitants**, while the wider municipality encompasses 78,504 residents as of the 2021 census. This population size positions Trikala as a moderately populated urban area within the region, capable of sustaining a vibrant local economy and community life.

Economic statistics

In terms of labor market dynamics, Trikala's economically active population was recorded at 32,323 individuals in 2022. This figure reflects the segment of the population that is engaged in or available for work, encompassing those who are employed as well as those actively seeking employment.

Employment statistics

Trikala faces a significant unemployment challenge, despite the workforce with an unemployment rate of 19.6% as of 2023. This high unemployment rate underscores the need for targeted economic and social policies to create job opportunities and reduce unemployment within the city.

Challenges and other content around the policy issue

Addressing the lack of diverse communities in small and medium-sized EU cities aiming to grow knowledge-based digital and tech ecosystems is a significant challenge, but also an opportunity for positive change. Trikala facing high unemployment would like to encourage tech and digital diversity and facilitate any related to the issue initiatives, addressing the challenge of job positions that must be created concerning everyone regardless of race, age, nationality, religion, etc

Other related local challenges are equal access to funding, as also Investments in education and workforce development programs that focus on digital and tech skills for diverse community groups. Access to technology, either directly or indirectly by all, is a main concern and same time a challenge of the city in order to be characterized as a sustainable, resilient and inclusive city.

Furthermore, Trikala officers do not keep data in relation to the policy issue. There are plans to address this aspect during the project lifetime by overviewing all available studies – researches regarding demographic representation, inclusive hiring and promotion, education and training access, leadership representation & community engagement.

Starting point – position of the city

The City of Trikala is interested in introducing diversity into digitization and urban planning, which could include a range of activities, including: co-creation activities and education about diversity, temporary and/or pop-up interventions in visible and/or problem areas, integration with the smart city program, and awareness programs for technology diversity.

Relevant existing strategies and policies

Trikala has implemented various strategies which have common elements with the TechDiversity network such as the: Sustainable Urban Development Strategy, the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, the Energy Transition Strategy, and the Smart City Strategic Plan RESTART mAI City! the Smart City Strategic Plan RESTART mAI City! This strategic plan aims to highlight strengths, address weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities and prevent threats through a set of actions that will lead to the upgrade of the Municipality and its services, as well as the daily routine of the citizens. Overall, these strategies are designed to foster sustainable urban development, promote mobility and energy transition, and leverage smart city technologies.

Trikala has also developed action plans which are relevant to the network theme in the framework of URBACT III. Trikala participated to Gendered Landscape and DigiPlace networks. The URBACT action planning network Gendered Landscape sought to create an understanding of the city as a place where gendered power structures are always present and develop locally contextualised tools and approaches to work towards gender equality in urban policies, planning, and services. The mission of the DigiPlace network was to implement systems and networks to better serve the community while optimizing it and making it more resilient and adaptive to change.

Main barrier is the high unemployment rate of the city, also in terms of diversity and inclusion. Labor market changes because of new technologies demands new and high skills of workforce. Another critical barrier is that women in Trikala are left out of digital and tech positions, mostly in C-level positions. Other barriers are considered the Political and Regulatory Changes and mostly the public perception and stereotypes regarding diversity and inclusion in general.

The main threats that the city faces are Brain Drain and Innovation Gap (the lack of diversity that can result in a homogenous tech ecosystem, leading to groupthink and a limited range of perspectives. This can stifle innovation and make the city of Trikala less competitive).

As diversity and inclusion initiatives evolve, there may be resistance from the citizens of Trikala or local entrepreneurs that are not fully harmonized with the objectives. Resistance could stem from traditional mindsets, fear of change, or a lack of understanding of the benefits of diversity.

Also, the sustainability of diversity and inclusion initiatives may become challenging due to limited resources. In more details, securing funding and resources for ongoing programs that foster can be challenging.

In conclusion, to ensure that progress is measured and local organizations are held accountable for diversity and inclusion objectives can be difficult. Without effective tracking and reporting mechanisms, it may be challenging to demonstrate the impact of these initiatives.

4.2 Problem identification by local stakeholders

4.2.1 Problem identification

Trikala confronting a high unemployment rate and would like to encourage tech and digital diversity and facilitate any related to the issue initiatives, addressing the challenge of job opportunities that must be created concerning everyone regardless of gender, age, nationality, religion, etc.

City ambition

The **City of Trikala aims to embed diversity and inclusion at the core of its digital and urban development strategies**. This ambition is aligned with its broader vision to become a resilient, inclusive, and innovation-driven smart city. Within the TechDiversity framework, Trikala seeks to enhance participation of underrepresented groups—such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities—in the local tech and digital ecosystem. The city intends to achieve this through co-creation processes, awareness campaigns, educational programs, and visible urban interventions that reflect its inclusive values. These efforts will be integrated into existing smart city initiatives to maximize visibility and systemic impact.

A key challenge for Trikala is fostering a shift in mindset among citizens and stakeholders to embrace diversity and inclusion as integral components of technological and urban development. The current underrepresentation of certain social groups in digital education, tech entrepreneurship, and decision-making roles limits the city's capacity for innovation and social cohesion. Trikala also faces structural barriers, including high unemployment, limited access to digital infrastructure among vulnerable populations, and ingrained stereotypes regarding gender and diversity in tech.

The city is particularly concerned with ensuring equitable access to technology—both in terms of physical access and digital literacy—as a prerequisite for inclusive and sustainable urban development. Efforts to embed diversity in the tech ecosystem will target the age group 18–33, as this cohort represents both a vulnerable population in terms of unemployment and a key driver of future innovation. The overarching goal is to create a supportive environment where all citizens, regardless of gender, age, ability, or background, can participate in and benefit from Trikala's digital transformation.

Learning needs

- The city has started to address the policy issue at local planning level, but has not implemented a lot of activities yet.
- All project activities and tools of TechDiversity Stage 2 that are expected to add value to the people involved in the network capacity are warmly expected.
- Tech Talent: Explore what the city of Trikala can do to better prepare under-represented communities for employment opportunities and connect them into roles in local tech and digital businesses.
- Tech Entrepreneurship: Explore what the city of Trikala can do to support those communities to build, run and scale tech and digitally enabled companies.
- Understanding the 'what's and whys' of diversity and inclusion in the local context.
- Trikala needs inputs (mostly methods & tools) on how to facilitate all minority groups related with the policy issue & mostly the group that is considered as a pressing issue.
- Joining another URBACT APN will allow the city to benefit once again from a structured & organised process of exchange and learning with peers across Europe. Trikala can benefit from the tried & tested URBACT Method which uses integrated & participatory approaches to develop a city IAP.

4.2.2 City's local stakeholders: Inputs & methodology

Trikala's ULG meetings, in which will participate wider ULG, will be carried out before or mainly after Transnationals Meetings, in order to transfer and share knowledge, inspire its member by good practices and new ideas and finally link transnational and local activities of the Network.

Trikala's ULG meetings, in which will participate the core ULG, will be carried out before and after significant milestones of the Project (Testing Action, IAP Draft, Final IAP) in order to share and discuss ideas, define and plan actions, prioritize and define next steps of the Action Plan and the Testing Action process.

The core ULG stakeholders are presented below:



Figure 2: Core ULG members

In the wider ULG the most common representatives will be members of:

- Institute of Communication and Computer Systems
- Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering of the University of Thessaly
- Technical Chamber of Commerce – Branch of Thessaly
- Institute of Entrepreneurship Development
- Greek Public Deployment Service – DYPA
- DOTSOFT SA
- NOVA ICT S.A.
- NOVA TELECOMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA ΜΟΝΟΠΡΟΣΩΠΗ S.A
- EVOLUTION PROJECTS PLUS
- GNOMON S.A
- Egritos Group – ΣΥΝΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ S.A
- TERRA MAPPING THE GLOBE S.A

Trikala ULG is based on a pre-existing group that participated in previous URBACT APNs. The list above is not restricted but several replacements may occur. In any case, E-Trikala will inform and consequently engage the identified stakeholders by explaining efficiently the project in general, its scope and aims, the potential results and the expected overall outcome.

1st ULG Meeting (19.12.2023) – GiSeMi Hub

Stakeholder mapping exercise and creation of influence/importance matrix to understand the local ecosystem of Trikala in the tech and digital sector.

2nd ULG Meeting (15.04.2024) – GiSeMi Hub

Definition of the city vision and strategic objectives using the "Newspaper of Tomorrow" tool, focusing on Trikala's ambition to become a tech and innovation hub.

3rd ULG Meeting (21.05.2024) – GiSeMi Hub

Revisit and refinement of the city vision and strategic objectives. Definition of intervention areas for the Integrated Action Plan using the ULG Working Canvas.

4th ULG Meeting (16.07.2024) – Chamber of Commerce

Discussion on the IAP strategic objectives and testing actions planning supported by presentations, the Action Table Tool, and the Testing Action Canvas.

5th ULG Meeting (17.10.2024) – GiSeMi Hub

Review and finalization of the strategic objectives and supporting actions of the IAP. Introduction of the Suggested Action Description Template for each Strategic Objective.

6th ULG Meeting (19.02.2025) – GiSeMi Hub

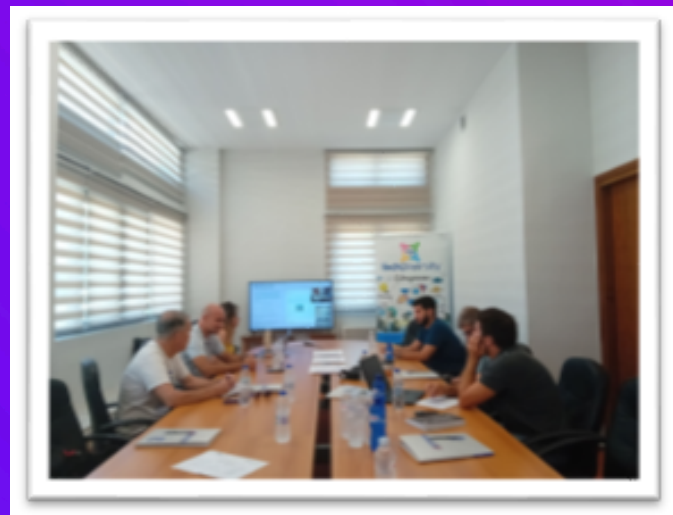
Analysis and further development of the IAP Section 6. Stakeholders filled in specific templates per action and discussed the readiness, risks, resources, and implementation framework.

7th ULG Meeting (17.06.2025) – GiSeMi Hub

Definition of indicators and expected output results for each action of the IAP. Focus on aligning measurement tools with strategic objectives and introducing key elements of the monitoring and evaluation framework.

8th ULG Meeting & Local Dissemination Event (19.11.2025) – GiSeMi Hub

A joined event with the final local dissemination event of the project, bringing together all local stakeholders to celebrate the completion of the project. During the meeting, the city's Final Integrated Action Plan (IAP) was formally presented, outlining the strategic actions, priorities, and long-term vision that emerged from the local co-creation process.



4.3 Main Integration challenge

In the framework of the TechDiversity project and the preparation of Trikala's Integrated Action Plan (IAP), a series of integration challenges have been identified. These challenges highlight the areas where strategic effort is required in order to improve the integrated approach and ensure that the city's vision for a more inclusive, digital, and innovative ecosystem is achieved.

The analysis of the current situation shows that Trikala has developed a dynamic environment in terms of smart city initiatives and digital transformation. However, when it comes to fully integrated urban development, several gaps and areas for improvement have emerged, particularly related to the URBACT cross-cutting themes and multi-level cooperation.

Key Integration Challenges Identified

Strengthening the involvement of a broader range of stakeholders, particularly vulnerable and under-represented groups such as women, youth, and marginalized communities, within the digital and tech sectors.

- Embedding cross-cutting themes in the IAP actions

Gender equality: Ensuring women's participation in entrepreneurship and technology-related actions is still limited and needs reinforcement.

Digital inclusion: Although the city is advanced in smart solutions, additional efforts are needed to enhance digital skills, accessibility, and inclusion for all citizens.

Green transition: The environmental dimension is not yet fully integrated into the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem. Future actions need to connect sustainability goals with business development.

- Strengthening cooperation with academic institutions, particularly the University of Thessaly and its relevant departments at regional level, in order to better connect education, research, and innovation with the local economy and entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- Ensuring coherence and alignment of the IAP with existing local and regional strategies, such as the Sustainable Urban Development Strategy and the Smart City Strategy of Trikala.
- Enhancing multi-level governance by improving collaboration not only at the local level but also with regional stakeholders, facilitating better access to resources, technical support, and funding.
- Increasing financial integration and exploring alternative funding sources beyond EU funds, including private sector engagement, public-private partnerships, and investment attraction mechanisms.
- Strengthening operational mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating, and sustaining the integrated approach over time.

These challenges will guide the implementation phase of the IAP and will be systematically addressed through the proposed actions and governance mechanisms of the TechDiversity project in Trikala.



4.4 Testing Action – Stem Education for Teachers

As part of the TechDiversity Integrated Action Plan (IAP), e-Trikala conducted a Testing Action focusing on STEM education for teachers. This initiative aimed to equip educators with the necessary skills to integrate robotics, digital technologies, and programming into their teaching methods. The goal was to foster digital inclusion, enhance technological literacy, and prepare future generations for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

The program provided structured training for primary and secondary school teachers through a series of online educational webinars. These sessions introduced teachers to educational robotics, programming with Mind+, and hands-on STEM learning activities. The curriculum was designed to be engaging and interactive, covering topics such as building robotic models, smart city applications, and AI-powered solutions. The training focused on practical implementation, allowing teachers to apply what they learned directly in their classrooms.

The Testing Action was implemented through **30 training groups**, each consisting of **10 teachers**, totalling **300 participants**. Educators attended two four-hour webinars, amounting to a total of eight hours of training per teacher. The training materials were tailored to different education levels, ensuring that primary and secondary school teachers received specialized content relevant to their students. The sessions emphasized problem-solving, critical thinking, and real-world applications of digital technologies.

To enhance accessibility and scalability, the training sessions were conducted on the Microsoft Teams platform, with additional support provided through a dedicated educational portal. Teachers had access to on-demand recordings, instructional guides, and a helpdesk service to assist them throughout the process. Upon completion, participants received certifications and were encouraged to integrate STEM methodologies into their daily teaching practices.



The **evaluation** of the program demonstrated high satisfaction rates among participants, with an average rating of **4.5/5** for training quality. Teachers expressed strong interest in future STEM training, and many reported feeling more confident in incorporating robotics and digital tools into their classrooms. The initiative successfully contributed to Trikala's goal of establishing an inclusive and tech-driven education system, supporting the city's vision of becoming a regional hub for digital innovation and smart learning.

Connection with IAP Actions

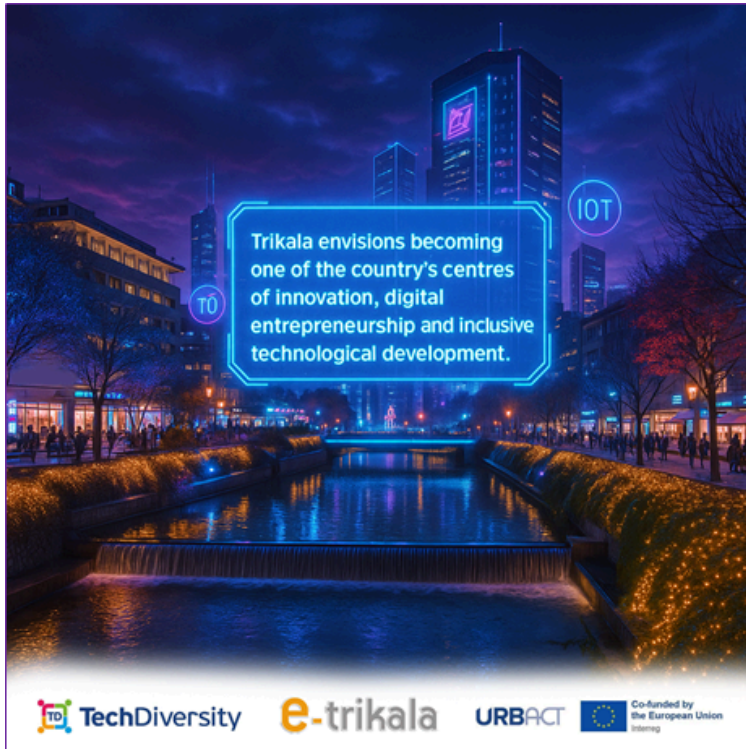
The Testing Action provided valuable insights and laid the foundations for the design of specific Actions within the IAP of Trikala, aiming to further promote inclusion and digital capacity building. In particular:

It inspired the development of Action 1.1 "Entrepreneurship Support Lab" and Action 2.1 "Demo Days," recognizing the importance of embedding digital skills early in the education chain, in order to foster a stronger local ecosystem of future entrepreneurs, innovators, and tech-skilled professionals.

The action highlighted the need for stronger collaboration with academic institutions (reflected in Action 4.1 "Memoranda of Understanding") to support continuous learning, knowledge transfer, and capacity building in digital skills.

The STEM education focus directly supports the long-term objective of creating a more diverse, inclusive, and future-ready local innovation ecosystem, aligned with Trikala's strategic vision to become a diverse center of innovation and technology.

Thus, the Testing Action did not only address an immediate educational need but also provided the strategic learning to inform the design of future interventions, ensuring that the city's Integrated Action Plan will have a solid foundation in fostering digital skills, inclusion, and lifelong learning.



5. Overall logic and integrated approach

Vision: *Trikala envisions becoming one of the country's centres of innovation, digital entrepreneurship and inclusive technological development.*

Figure 3: The Vision of the City of Trikala

5.1 Integrated Approach

Trikala's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) follows a holistic approach that ensures the coordination of multiple dimensions of urban development. The integration of various aspects within the plan fosters a well-balanced and inclusive ecosystem that aligns with the city's strategic vision for technological innovation, entrepreneurship, and social inclusion. A key aspect of this integration is stakeholder involvement at different stages, from planning to implementation. Trikala has ensured the active participation of municipal authorities, academia, business representatives, and civil society to co-develop strategic objectives and actions. This collaborative approach guarantees that initiatives align with local needs, ensuring ownership and accountability among key actors.

To maintain coherence with existing strategies, the IAP aligns with Trikala's Climate Mission, Digital Transformation Strategy (ReStart My City), and Sustainable Development Plan. By embedding its actions within established frameworks, the city prevents duplication and leverages ongoing efforts to amplify impact.

Sustainable urban development is at the heart of Trikala's IAP, balancing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Key initiatives, such as the Entrepreneurship Support Lab, Climate Neutrality Hub, and Energy Center, reflect this balance. The city aims to monitor these actions through predefined KPIs, ensuring that development efforts remain inclusive and impactful. The plan adopts a phased implementation approach, allowing for gradual rollouts and scalability. Trikala ensures that all initiatives are adaptable to future urban challenges, integrating feedback loops that refine strategies over time.

Additionally, the IAP prioritizes sectoral and territorial integration by fostering collaboration between key sectors such as technology, education, and urban planning while also engaging surrounding regions. Actions such as the Climate Neutrality Hub have a regional focus, promoting knowledge-sharing and cooperative development beyond Trikala's borders. A multi-level governance model underpins the implementation of the IAP, ensuring collaboration among municipal, regional, and national stakeholders. Formalized partnerships and structured agreements will support governance efficiency and long-term sustainability.

The plan also embraces cross-cutting themes, integrating principles of diversity, innovation, and inclusion into all actions. Special attention is given to supporting underrepresented groups in the digital economy and promoting a gender-balanced entrepreneurial ecosystem. To maximize its impact, Trikala's IAP mobilizes complementary types of investment and seeks to secure multiple funding sources. While existing resources have been allocated to kickstart initiatives, additional funding from EU grants, private sector partnerships, and public-private collaborations will be pursued to sustain long-term actions.

Through this integrated and participatory approach, Trikala's IAP aims to foster a thriving, diverse, and innovative digital ecosystem, positioning the city as a leader in smart and inclusive urban development.

5.2 Challenge Areas & Strategic Objectives

The following Challenge Areas & Strategic Objectives have been identified as key priorities within the framework of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP).

1st Area of Intervention – Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Diversity



- SO1: Set up the conditions for the city of Trikala to become a Diverse Centre of Innovation and Technology
- SO2: Foster an inclusive culture of collaboration and connectivity for the beneficiaries of the Entrepreneurship Support Lab through continuous networking

2nd Area of Intervention – Inclusive Data and Technology Infrastructure



- SO3: Provide data security services to businesses in Thessaly as well as nationwide.
- SO4: Strengthen collaboration between the Data Center and the academic and entrepreneur sector in the digital and diverse tech ecosystem

3rd Area of Intervention – Driving Inclusive Business Attraction and Equitable Support

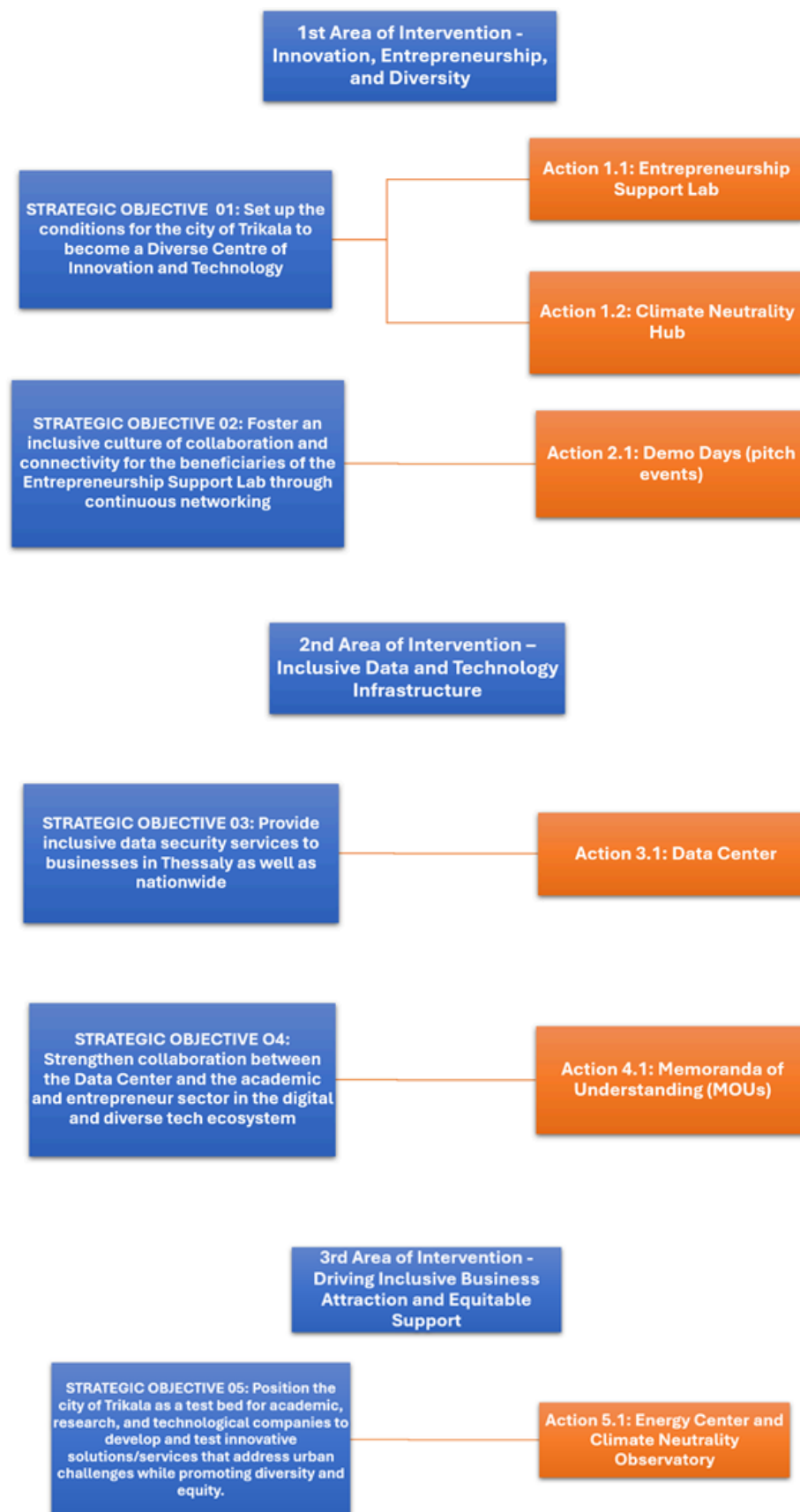


- SO5: Position the city of Trikala as a test bed for academic, research, and technological companies to develop and test innovative solutions/services that address urban challenges while promoting diversity and equity.



5.3 Actions Overview

The following section outlines the key actions designed to implement the Strategic Objectives identified in the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). These actions have been developed based on local needs and stakeholders' input, ensuring an integrated approach to fostering diversity and inclusion in the digital ecosystem.





6. Action Planning details

This section provides a detailed analysis of the proposed actions in Trikala's Integrated Action Plan (IAP), highlighting their strategic significance, implementation framework, and expected outcomes. The action planning phase plays a crucial role in Trikala's transformation into one of the country's leading centers for innovation and digital entrepreneurship. Each action is designed to address key challenges while aligning seamlessly with the city's long-term strategic objectives.

In developing each action, special attention was given to stakeholder engagement, implementation readiness, funding sources, and the identification of potential risks and barriers. This planning process was rooted in a participatory approach, with key input gathered through successive Urban Local Group (ULG) meetings, ensuring that the actions are not only strategically sound but also grounded in local realities and community aspirations. Through tools such as the Action Table and Testing Canvas, each proposal was assessed for feasibility, inclusiveness, and innovation potential.

Furthermore, all actions have been designed to generate tangible outcomes, while also supporting longer-term systemic change. From promoting inclusive entrepreneurship and data-driven urban services to advancing climate neutrality and cross-sector collaboration, the IAP lays the foundation for a resilient and future-ready urban ecosystem. This structured and transparent action planning methodology reflects Trikala's ambition to position itself as a national leader in digital transformation, inclusive growth, and sustainable urban innovation.

Action 1.1	Entrepreneurship Support Lab	Action Owner: Chamber of Commerce of Trikala		
Short Description Establish a diversity-oriented business incubator that nurtures underrepresented entrepreneurs, including women, young people, migrants, and individuals from marginalized communities, by providing mentorship, training, networking, and access to resources.	Stakeholders Chamber of Commerce of Trikala (Lead stakeholder – responsible for the coordination, provision of business expertise, and mobilisation of the local entrepreneurial community) Municipality of Trikala e-Trikala Gisemi Hub	Intervention Area 1st Area of Intervention: Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Diversity	Strategic Objective SO1: Set up the conditions for the city of Trikala to become a Diverse Centre of Innovation and Technology	Links to Strategy Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (2021-2027)
Action Summary The Entrepreneurship Support Lab (SPOROS Business LAB) aims to strengthen inclusivity in entrepreneurship by supporting women-led startups, social enterprises, and businesses focused on digital innovation and sustainability. The initiative will function as both a business incubator and startup accelerator, offering training, mentorship, networking, and legal/financial support. It targets early-stage startups, entrepreneurs, and researchers, particularly in key sectors like tourism, cultural industries, and agritech. The objective is to increase business survival rates, stimulate local employment, and enhance Trikala's innovation ecosystem. The initiative is aligned with the Trikala Smart City Strategic Plan and the RIS3 strategy for Thessaly, aiming to establish a sustainable innovation hub		Risks Limited engagement from underrepresented groups due to a lack of awareness or initial hesitation. Financial sustainability challenges post-initial funding period. Risk of limited local adoption due to resistance to entrepreneurial shifts in the economy.	Barriers Regulatory and bureaucratic barriers in startup registration and operational setup. Limited access to investment capital for startups after incubation.	Action Readiness A governing structure has been defined, with the Chamber of Commerce of Trikala as the lead. Infrastructure is available for implementation through existing innovation hubs (e.g., Gisemi Hub). A network of mentors and business advisors is in place to support participating entrepreneurs. Stakeholder commitment is strong, with support from e-Trikala, the Municipality of Trikala, and academic institutions.
Indicators – Results Number of startups supported: Target of 65+ startups over 3 years Number of individuals trained and mentored Successful company formations Investment raised Number of jobs created		Indicators – Outputs Improved entrepreneurial capacity Strengthened startup ecosystem Increased business inclusivity		
Budget 200.000,00 €		Timescale January 2026 – December 2028		
Financing Funded by Thessaly ROP 2021-2027 (ERDF & ESF)		Monitoring, governance Regular impact assessments, entrepreneur feedback, and tracking new business formations		

Action Title: 1.1 Entrepreneurship Support Lab

DESCRIPTION: Establish a hub to nurture startups and entrepreneurs by offering mentoring, training, and resources

Activity	Activity Owner	Finance & Resources	Links & strategy	Activity Readiness	Implementation Details & Possible Problems or Other Issues	Other IAP Connected Activities	Outputs	Timescale
1.1.1 Training and Capacity Building	Chamber of Commerce of Trikala	70.000,00 € Training materials, expert trainers, venue rental, online learning platforms Thessaly ROP 2021-2027 (ERDF & ESF)	Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (2021-2027)	Training program framework needs to be developed, trainers and participant outreach required	Provide specialized training programs on business development, financial management, and digital innovation. Possible challenges include limited participation from underrepresented groups and availability of expert trainers.			January 2026 – December 2027
1.1.2 Mentorship and Advisory Support	Chamber of Commerce of Trikala	40.000,00 € Mentor fees, networking events, digital advisory tools Thessaly ROP 2021-2027 (ERDF & ESF)	Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (2021-2027)	Mentor network yet to be established, engagement strategy needed	Establish a structured mentorship program with experienced business leaders. Key challenges include ensuring consistent mentor availability and matching suitable mentors to startups.			March 2026 – December 2027
1.1.3 Startup Incubation & Acceleration	Chamber of Commerce of Trikala	60.000,00 € Co-working spaces, startup grants, business development tools Thessaly ROP 2021-2027 (ERDF & ESF)	Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (2021-2027)	Long-term funding sources need to be secured	Provide co-working spaces, business development tools, and seed funding guidance. Potential issue: securing ongoing funding for long-term sustainability.			June 2026 – December 2028
1.1.4 Legal and Financial Advisory Services	Chamber of Commerce of Trikala	30.000,00 € Legal consultants, financial advisors, accounting software Thessaly ROP 2021-2027 (ERDF & ESF)	Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (2021-2027)	Advisory team has not been fully identified	Provide legal, accounting, and financial consulting support to new businesses. A barrier may be limited accessibility of financial support post-incubation.			September 2026 – December 2028

Action 1.2	Climate Neutrality Hub	Action Owner: Municipality of Trikala		
Short Description Develop a center for climate innovation that promotes inclusive energy transition, sustainability entrepreneurship, and citizen engagement in renewable energy solutions. The hub will focus on public participation, business-led green innovation, and digital energy solutions, ensuring that Trikala leads in climate-neutral urban transformation.	Stakeholders Municipality of Trikala (Lead stakeholder – responsible for overall coordination, regulatory alignment, and citizen engagement in the implementation of the Climate Neutrality Hub) e-Trikala Chamber of Commerce of Trikala ENORA University of Western Macedonia	Intervention Area 1st Area of Intervention: Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Diversity	Strategic Objective SO1: Set up the conditions for the city of Trikala to become a Diverse Centre of Innovation and Technology	Links to Strategy Trikala Energy Transition Strategy 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030
Action Summary The Climate Neutrality Hub is a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at accelerating Trikala’s green transformation by integrating technology, entrepreneurship, and community-driven energy solutions. The hub will serve as a platform for public engagement, business innovation, and research collaboration, ensuring an inclusive approach to sustainability and energy transition. Key interventions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Formation of 3 energy communities that allow collective investments in renewable energy projects.Public awareness campaigns on sustainable energy and climate actions. By integrating diversity and inclusion into the city’s energy transition strategy, the Climate Neutrality Hub will ensure that women, youth, and marginalized groups have access to opportunities in the sustainable energy economy.		Risks Regulatory and financial constraints Public resistance to energy transitions due to lack of awareness Challenges in forming and sustaining energy communities	Barriers Regulatory and bureaucratic barriers in startup registration and operational setup. Limited access to investment capital for startups after incubation.	Action Readiness Municipal and stakeholder commitment secured through Trikala’s Climate Neutrality Commitments and Climate City Contract. Policy alignment with European and national sustainability goals, ensuring regulatory support. Existing municipal initiatives (e.g., Smart City Strategic Plan and Energy Transition Strategy) Stakeholder engagement framework developed through participatory governance models and community forums.
Indicators – Results Number of energy communities formed Total renewable energy investment Number of citizens reached		Indicators – Outputs Enhanced climate awareness Stronger community engagement Growth in green entrepreneurship		
Budget 300.000,00 €		Timescale June 2026 – December 2028		
Financing Funded by Energy4ALL EU project (NetZeroCities Pilot Cities		Monitoring, governance Regular emissions monitoring and public engagement assessments		

Action Title: 1.2 Climate Neutrality Hub

DESCRIPTION: Develop a center to drive Trikala's transition to climate neutrality by supporting energy-saving initiatives

Activity	Activity Owner	Finance & Resources	Links & strategy	Activity Readiness	Implementation Details & Possible Problems or Other Issues	Other IAP Connected Activities	Outputs	Timescale
1.2.1 Formation of 3 Energy Communities for Collective Renewable Energy Investments	Municipality of Trikala	260.000,00 € – Legal structuring, administrative setup, community investment model Energy4ALL EU project (NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme)	Trikala Energy Transition Strategy 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030	Training program framework needs to be developed, trainers and participant outreach required	Establish 3 community-led energy cooperatives that enable citizens and businesses to co-invest in renewable energy projects. Challenges include legal compliance, governance structure, and sustained participation.			June 2026 – December 2027
1.2.2 Public Awareness Campaigns on Sustainable Energy and Climate Actions	Municipality of Trikala	40.000,00 € – Outreach programs, educational materials, media campaigns Energy4ALL EU project (NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme)	Trikala Energy Transition Strategy 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030	Mentor network yet to be established, engagement strategy needed	Organize public awareness campaigns to educate citizens on energy efficiency, climate action, and renewable energy adoption. Challenges include maintaining public engagement and behavioral change.			March 2028 – December 2028

Action 2.1	Demo Days	Action Owner: Chamber of Commerce		
Short Description Organize inclusive startup pitch events that connect entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds with investors, mentors, and business leaders. These events will increase startup visibility, improve access to capital, and foster an inclusive, tech-driven startup ecosystem in Trikala.	Stakeholders Chamber of Commerce of Trikala(Lead stakeholder – in charge of event planning, stakeholder mobilisation, and matchmaking between startups and the business ecosystem) Municipality of Trikala e-Trikala Gisemi Hub Sporos Business Lab	Intervention Area 1st Area of Intervention: Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Diversity	Strategic Objective SO2: Foster an inclusive culture of collaboration and connectivity for the beneficiaries of the Entrepreneurship Support Lab through continuous networking	Links to Strategy Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (2021-2027)
Action Summary The Startup Demo Days initiative in Trikala will act as a catalyst for startup investment and collaboration, helping diverse entrepreneurs—especially women, youth, and underrepresented groups—gain access to funding and mentorship. Key features include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Regular pitch events (12 over 4 years) allowing startups to present their business models.Networking sessions to connect entrepreneurs with potential investors and mentors.Workshops and mentorship programs facilitated by experienced business leaders.Integration with the SPOROS Business LAB, ensuring continued support for incubated startups		Risks Limited investor interest due to the regional nature of the event. Lack of startup maturity, making it harder to attract funding. Lack of diversity in participating startups	Barriers Sustaining long-term engagement from investors and mentors. Challenges in securing ongoing funding for organizing events beyond the initial period. Need for high-quality pitches, requiring strong pre-event coaching	Action Readiness Support from local authorities and business chambers, including the Municipality of Trikala, Chamber of Commerce, and e-Trikala. SPOROS Business LAB incubator is operational, providing a pipeline of investment-ready startups. Partnerships with venture capitalists and accelerator programs are in development. Digital platforms for event promotion and investor connections are being established
Indicators – Results Number of pitch events, Number of startups participated, Capital raised, Startup survival rates & investor participation		Indicators – Outputs Broadened access to investment Increased visibility for underrepresented entrepreneurs Enhanced startup networks		
Budget 200.000,00 €		Timescale November 2025 – November 2029 (4-year duration)		
Financing Thessaly ROP 2021-2027 (ERDF & ESF)		Monitoring, governance Investment tracking, startup growth assessments, and event evaluations		

Action Title: 2.1 Demo Days

DESCRIPTION: Host pitch events to connect startups with investors, providing platforms for entrepreneurial visibility with an emphasis on inclusivity.

Activity	Activity Owner	Finance & Resources	Links & strategy	Activity Readiness	Implementation Details & Possible Problems or Other Issues	Other IAP Connected Activities	Outputs	Timescale
2.1.1 Regular Pitch Events (12 over 4 years)	Chamber of Commerce of Trikala	120.000,00 € – Event logistics, venue rental, marketing, investor outreach Thessaly ROP 2021-2027 (ERDF & ESF)	Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (2021-2027)	Requires event planning, partner coordination, and investor engagement strategy	Organize 12 pitch events over four years to provide visibility for startups and connect them with investors. Challenges include ensuring investor participation and maintaining startup quality.			November 2025 – November 2029
2.1.2 Networking Sessions	Chamber of Commerce of Trikala	50.000,00 € – Networking platform development, guest speaker fees, digital engagement tools Thessaly ROP 2021-2027 (ERDF & ESF)	Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (2021-2027)	Requires development of a structured networking model and participant engagement strategy	Facilitate networking sessions between entrepreneurs, investors, and mentors. Key challenges include ensuring valuable connections and sustaining engagement beyond the events.			November 2025 – November 2029
2.1.3 Workshops & Mentorship Programs	Chamber of Commerce of Trikala	30.000,00 € – Workshop materials, expert fees, mentorship platforms Thessaly ROP 2021-2027 (ERDF & ESF)	Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (2021-2027)	Requires selection of experienced mentors and structured mentorship framework	Provide workshops and mentoring programs led by business leaders. Challenges include recruiting top industry experts and ensuring quality mentorship engagement.			November 2025 – November 2029

Action 3.1	Data Center	Action Owner: Municipality of Trikala, e-trikala S.A		
Short Description Develop a state-of-the-art, inclusive data center that provides secure cloud hosting, data analytics, and AI-driven services to local businesses, research institutions, and startups, ensuring equitable access to digital infrastructure.	Stakeholders Municipality of Trikala (Co-lead stakeholder – responsible for regulatory oversight, infrastructure integration, and public governance of the data center) e-Trikala (Co-lead stakeholder – in charge of technical implementation, service management, and digital innovation integration) Ministry of Digital Governance University of Thessaly Chamber of Commerce of Trikala	Intervention Area 2nd Area of Intervention – Inclusive Data and Technology Infrastructure	Strategic Objective SO3: Provide inclusive data security services to businesses in Thessaly as well as nationwide	Links to Strategy Trikala Smart City Strategic Plan RESTART mAI City!
Action Summary The Municipality of Trikala, in collaboration with e-Trikala and the Ministry of Digital Governance, plans to establish a centralized data center to enhance the city's digital infrastructure. This facility aims to support secure data storage, cloud computing services, and smart city applications, aligning with Greece's recent regulatory framework for data centers. Key components include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishment of a state-of-the-art data center with high energy efficiency standards.Provision of cloud services to local businesses and municipal departments.Support for smart city initiatives, such as IoT applications and AI-driven services.Collaboration with educational institutions to offer training and research opportunities.		Risks Ensuring data security and compliance with national and EU regulations. Potential environmental concerns related to energy consumption.	Barriers High initial investment costs for infrastructure development. Attracting and retaining skilled IT professionals in a competitive market.	Action Readiness Regulatory support: Greece has recently established a comprehensive licensing framework for data centers, facilitating smoother implementation. Strategic partnerships with government bodies and tech companies. Feasibility studies and site selection processes are underway. Access to funding through national and EU digital transformation programs.
Indicators – Results Infrastructure completion milestones Number of businesses served Volume of data processed		Indicators – Outputs Enhanced digital infrastructure Improved data-driven services Boosted digital transformation capacity		
Budget 2.700.000,00 €		Timescale July 2026 – December 2030		
Financing Government funding – Ministry of Digital Governance		Monitoring, governance Regular cybersecurity audits and service performance evaluations		

Action Title: 4.1 Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

DESCRIPTION: Forge partnerships between the Data Center, academia, and entrepreneurial hubs to foster innovation, provide startup support, and develop

Activity	Activity Owner	Finance & Resources	Links & strategy	Activity Readiness	Implementation Details & Possible Problems or Other Issues	Other IAP Connected Activities	Outputs	Timescale
4.1.1 Signing of Strategic MOUs	e-trikala		Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (2021-2027) Trikala Smart City Strategic Plan RESTART mAI City!	Commitment from key stakeholders, but final agreements require negotiation	Formalize partnership agreements between the Data Center, University of Thessaly, Sporos Lab, and the Chamber of Commerce. Potential issues include administrative delays and legal compliance challenges			January 2028 – December 2028

Action 5.1		Center and Climate Neutrality Observatory	Action Owner: Municipality of Trikala		
Short Description Establish a hub for climate and energy innovation, integrating real-time pollutant monitoring, climate research, and inclusive policy development to drive Trikala's transition to climate neutrality. The initiative will position the city as a testbed for sustainable solutions, attracting academic institutions, technology firms, and diverse community stakeholders.	Stakeholders Municipality of Trikala (Lead stakeholder – responsible for establishing and managing the observatory, coordinating stakeholders, and integrating results into local policy) University of Western Macedonia e-Trikala ENORA		Intervention Area 3rd Area of Intervention – Driving Inclusive Business Attraction and Equitable Support	Strategic Objective SO5: Position the city of Trikala as a test bed for academic, research, and technological companies to develop and test innovative solutions/services that address urban challenges while promoting diversity and equity.	Links to Strategy Trikala Energy Transition Strategy 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030
Action Summary The Energy Center and Climate Neutrality Observatory will serve as a research and policy hub, enabling data-driven climate action and innovation in energy transition. By integrating advanced digital monitoring systems, research partnerships, and public engagement initiatives, the center will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support energy transition projects by advising stakeholders on energy efficiency, renewables, and emission reduction strategies.• Act as a policy innovation lab, developing climate neutrality strategies with input from municipal, academic, and private sector partners.• Provide educational and training programs to engage citizens, businesses, and public institutions in sustainable energy practices.• This initiative will position Trikala as a national and European leader in climate action, offering a model for integrating real-time data monitoring with strategic policy-making.			Risks Public engagement challenges, as adoption of sustainable practices requires behavioral shifts and strong awareness campaigns.	Barriers High implementation costs and long-term sustainability challenges if external funding sources are not secured beyond the initial phase. Technological and infrastructure limitations for real-time data collection, requiring advanced monitoring equipment and skilled personnel. Regulatory barriers in energy policy and data-sharing agreements	Action Readiness Municipal and academic backing from the University of Western Macedonia, e-Trikala, and the Municipality of Trikala. Climate neutrality commitments under the CCC and alignment with the EU's 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities initiative.
Indicators – Results Number of citizens served Pollutants monitored Number of energy projects initiated			Indicators – Outputs Advanced environmental monitoring Improved municipal policy integration Stronger citizen engagement in sustainability		
Budget 300.000,00 €			Timescale January 2026 – May 2028		
Financing Funded by Energy4ALL EU project (NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Program)			Monitoring, governance Regular emissions tracking, energy transition assessments, and policy recommendations		

ACTION TITLE: 5.1 Energy Center and Climate Neutrality Observatory

DESCRIPTION: Launch a center to monitor pollutants, promote energy-saving practices, support energy transitions, and develop a climate neutrality observatory for advancing Trikala's environmental goals

Activity	Activity Owner	Finance & Resources	Links & strategy	Activity Readiness	Implementation Details & Possible Problems or Other Issues	Other IAP Connected Activities	Outputs	Timescale
5.1.1 Energy Service Center for Citizens	Chamber of Commerce of Trikala	70.000,00 € Training materials, expert trainers, venue rental, online learning platforms Thessaly ROP 2021-2027 (ERDF & ESF)	Trikala Energy Transition Strategy 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030	Requires physical location, staffing, and training	Establishment of an Energy Service Center where citizens can receive guidance on home energy upgrades and renewable energy projects. Key challenges include ensuring long-term operational funding and citizen engagement.			January 2026 – December 2027
5.1.2 Air Pollutant Measurement & Digital Platform	Municipality of Trikala	100.000,00 € – Office setup, staffing, digital advisory platform, citizen outreach Energy4ALL EU project (NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme)	Trikala Energy Transition Strategy 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030	Needs development of digital infrastructure and IoT network	Create a real-time digital platform for air quality and pollutant measurement, allowing data transparency and community engagement. Challenges include data integration and maintenance costs.			January 2028 – May 2028
5.1.3 Development of Digital Twin Infrastructure and ABB Optimax	Municipality of Trikala	100.000,00 € – AI-driven digital twin modelling, ABB Optimax integration, data visualization tools Energy4ALL EU project (NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme)	Trikala Energy Transition Strategy 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030	Requires AI model development, data integration, and ABB system setup	Develop Digital Twin models and integrate ABB Optimax for energy system optimization, providing real-time energy insights and predictive analytics. Challenges include data accuracy, interoperability, and model refinement.			January 2028 – May 2028

6.1 Action Prioritization

To ensure an effective and strategic implementation of Trikala's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) within the TechDiversity network, a structured prioritization process was undertaken. This process aimed to assess and position the proposed actions according to their anticipated impact and the level of effort required for their implementation. The result is a visual Action Priority Matrix that categorizes each action into one of four quadrants: Quick Wins, Major Projects, Fill-Ins, and Thankless Tasks.

The matrix enables the city and its stakeholders to allocate resources efficiently and focus on high-value initiatives. The prioritization followed a consultative approach with inputs from municipal authorities, stakeholders, and technical staff, reflecting both the strategic vision and operational realities of the city.

The most critical initiative identified is **Action 3.1 – Data Center**, positioned at the top of the “Major Projects” quadrant due to its transformative potential for the region's digital infrastructure and inclusive technology ecosystem. Despite its high implementation effort, the impact is deemed substantial, making it the top strategic priority.

Following closely are:

Action 1.1 – Entrepreneurship Support Lab, which promotes inclusive entrepreneurship and is expected to foster long-term socio-economic development.

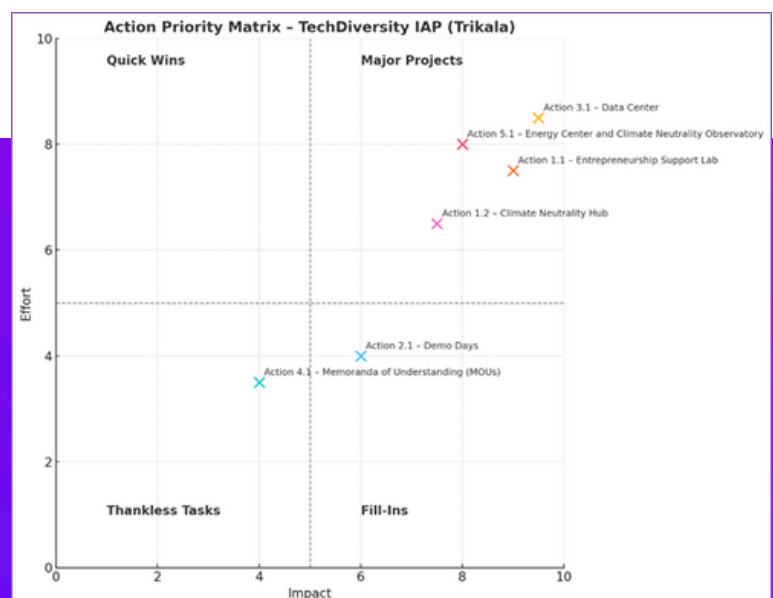
Action 5.1 – Energy Center and Climate Neutrality Observatory, addressing Trikala's commitment to sustainability through data-driven, inclusive innovation in climate and energy.

Action 1.2 – Climate Neutrality Hub, focused on public participation and green innovation.

Action 2.1 – Demo Days and **Action 4.1 – Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)** are categorized under the “Fill-Ins” quadrant. While they require relatively lower effort, their impact is moderate and complements the core actions. These are valuable for sustaining momentum and building supportive ecosystems, although they do not carry the same strategic weight as the major projects.

This prioritization supports a phased, balanced rollout of the IAP, allowing Trikala to focus its efforts on high-impact transformations while maintaining engagement across all dimensions of the plan.

Figure 4: Action Priority Matrix



7. Implementation framework

The Implementation Framework section outlines the key structures and mechanisms that will support the delivery of Trikala's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for TechDiversity. It defines how the governance, funding, stakeholder engagement, timeline, risk management, and monitoring activities will be organized to ensure the successful implementation of the IAP actions.

In particular, it presents:

- **Governance arrangements**, detailing the body responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation process, ensuring that both new and existing structures are mobilized.
- **Ongoing stakeholder engagement mechanisms**, highlighting how the participatory approach developed during the URBACT project will be maintained through the continuation or adaptation of the URBACT Local Group (ULG).
- **Overall costings and funding strategy**, clarifying how the actions will be resourced and financed throughout the implementation period.
- **Implementation timeline**, providing a comprehensive view of key milestones and deadlines through a Gantt chart, allowing for the identification of potential bottlenecks and the effective management of workloads.
- **Risk assessment**, offering an overall analysis of the potential risks to implementation and the strategies to prevent or mitigate them, complementing the action-specific risk analyses already presented.
- **Monitoring and reporting strategy**, defining how progress will be tracked, reported, and evaluated, using specific indicators linked to the IAP's strategic objectives.

This structured framework will ensure that the City of Trikala can transition smoothly from planning to action, delivering impactful and sustainable results that promote diversity, digital innovation, and social inclusion at the local level.

7.1 Governance

The governance structure for the implementation of Trikala's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) builds on the collaborative model developed during the TechDiversity URBACT network and is designed to ensure continuity, accountability, and effectiveness throughout the delivery phase.

Lead Coordination Body

The Municipality of Trikala, in close collaboration with e-Trikala S.A., will act as the overall coordinating body responsible for overseeing the implementation of the IAP. The governance framework will include the following:

- Monitor progress on action delivery.
- Ensure that activities remain aligned with the strategic objectives of the IAP.
- Facilitate inter-agency cooperation among municipal departments, local businesses, academia, and innovation hubs
- Identify any challenges or delays and propose solutions.
- Coordinate reporting obligations and ensure transparency.

7.2 Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

The IAP Implementation Committee will bring together representatives from:

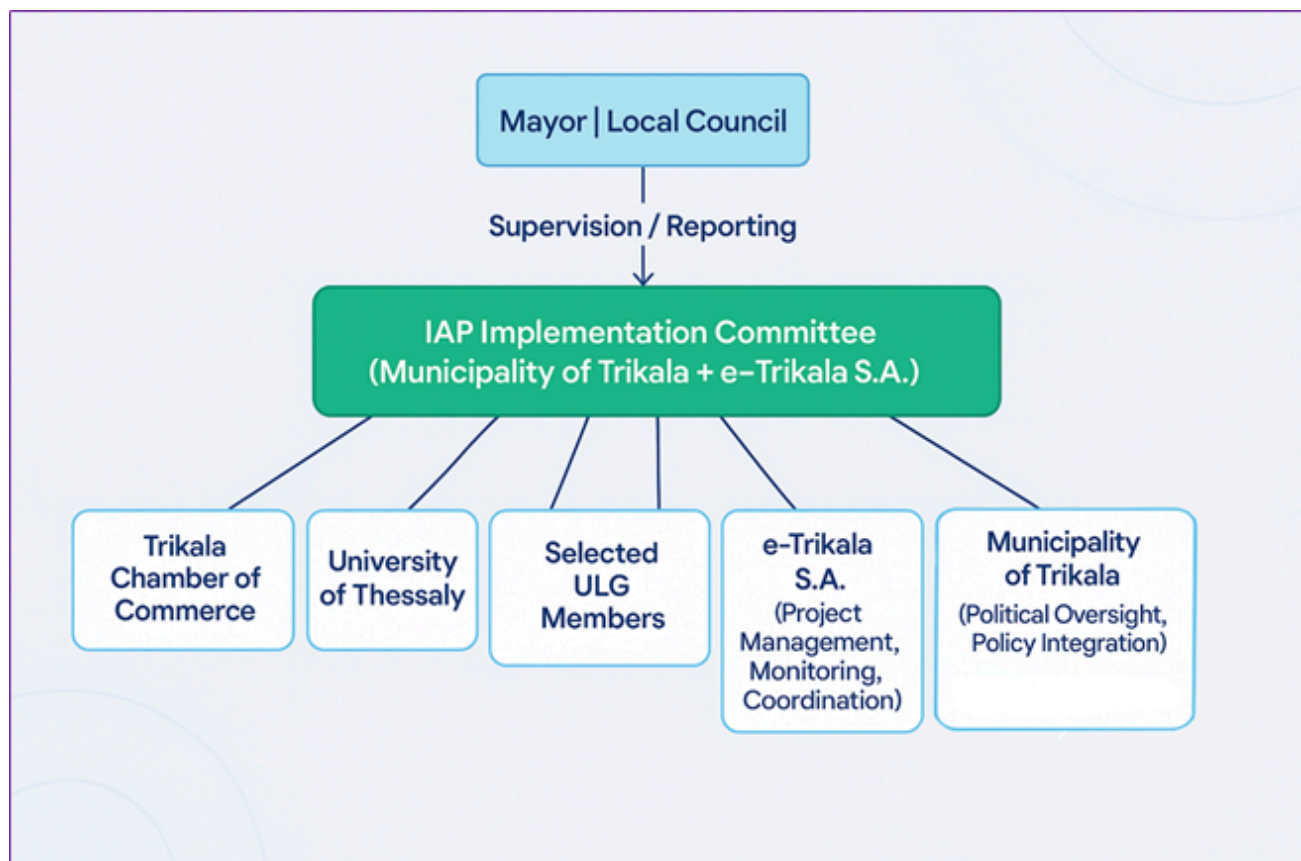
- **Municipality of Trikala** (lead governance and public policy integration)
- **e-Trikala S.A.** (project management, smart city services, innovation expertise)
- **Trikala Chamber of Commerce** (entrepreneurship support, startup engagement)
- **University of Thessaly** (academic expertise, research collaboration)
- **Gisemi Hub and Sporos Business Lab** (incubation and acceleration support)
- **Selected members of the ULG** who wish to continue supporting the transition from planning to implementation.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Municipality of Trikala:** Political leadership, overall supervision, integration into city strategies.
- **e-Trikala S.A.:** Operational management, coordination with partners, monitoring and reporting.
- **Chamber of Commerce:** Implementation of entrepreneurship support actions.
- **University of Thessaly:** Research and knowledge exchange, support for educational and innovation-related actions.
- **Innovation Hubs:** Direct implementation support for startup-related and business development initiatives.

The governance model ensures that the participatory approach promoted by URBACT continues during implementation, combining strong political commitment, technical expertise, and community engagement to maximize the IAP's success.

Figure 5: Trikala IAP Governance Model



7.3 Overall costings and funding strategy

The implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Trikala requires a carefully structured and sustainable funding approach to support the delivery of each proposed action. The overall budget foreseen for the IAP implementation is approximately €3.7 million, covering a broad spectrum of activities across innovation, entrepreneurship, digital infrastructure, climate action, and inclusive education.

Action	Title	Estimated Budget
1.1	Entrepreneurship Support Lab	200.000,00 €
1.2	Climate Neutrality Hub	300.000,00 €
2.1	Demo Days	200.000,00 €
3.1	Data Center	2.700.000,00 €
4.1	Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)	-
5.1	Energy Center and Climate Neutrality Observatory	300.000,00 €
Total		3.700.000,00 €

Figure 6: Estimated Total Budget Allocation by Action Area

Main Sources of Funding

The funding strategy is diversified and relies on the mobilization of multiple financing instruments, including:

Regional Operational Programme (ROP) Thessaly 2021–2027

Covers the actions related to entrepreneurship (Action 1.1), Demo Days (Action 2.1), and parts of advisory, training, and acceleration services

Energy4ALL EU project – NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme

Supports actions related to climate and energy transition such as the Climate Neutrality Hub (Action 1.2) and the Energy Center and Observatory (Action 5.1).

Ministry of Digital Governance

Covers the implementation of the Trikala Data Center (Action 3.1) as part of the national digital transformation agenda.



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Digital Governance



Municipal and Private Co-financing

In-kind contributions and co-investment from local institutions (e-Trikala, Municipality of Trikala, Chamber of Commerce, Sporos Lab) will support ongoing actions and ensure long-term sustainability.

Future EU Funding Opportunities

Additional applications will be explored through Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, and other innovation and research programs

7.4 Overall Timeline

The present section outlines the overall implementation timeline of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for the city of Trikala.

The Gantt chart below presents a consolidated visual overview of the entire planning period, indicating the anticipated start and end dates for each activity included in the IAP. It serves as a management tool that supports scheduling, coordination, and progress monitoring throughout the implementation phase.

This timeline allows stakeholders to identify key milestones, anticipate overlaps between actions, and better allocate resources over time. It also reflects the long-term planning approach adopted by the city, ensuring that all actions are aligned with strategic objectives and follow a realistic and structured delivery pathway.

[illegible]



7.5 Risk Assessment

Effective implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) requires proactive identification and management of potential risks that may hinder progress. Risk assessment is an essential component of strategic planning, helping to anticipate obstacles, define realistic mitigation measures, and ensure continuity and resilience throughout the process.

The city of Trikala has conducted a structured risk analysis to assess possible administrative, financial, operational, and external risks that may emerge during the implementation phase. These risks were evaluated based on their likelihood of occurrence and potential impact on the delivery of results, and were accompanied by corresponding prevention and mitigation strategies. The aim is to minimize disruptions and maintain a stable implementation environment, while allowing room for adaptive management and continuous improvement.

Among the key risks identified are regulatory delays, limited participation from targeted stakeholder groups (especially underrepresented communities), and financial uncertainties due to dependency on regional or European funds. In response, the municipality and stakeholders have built strong governance structures, diversified funding sources where possible, and designed inclusive engagement mechanisms to ensure wide participation and ownership.

In addition, technological risks, such as cybersecurity threats to digital infrastructure or delays in smart systems deployment, were flagged. These are being addressed through early-stage feasibility studies, alignment with national digital frameworks, and the engagement of specialised partners with proven expertise in data security and innovation management.

The IAP also acknowledges that unexpected socio-political or macroeconomic developments, such as shifts in energy costs, political transitions, or crises may impact implementation. Thus, a culture of flexibility, scenario-based planning, and real-time monitoring has been embedded in the project management approach, ensuring that Trikala can adjust quickly and effectively when facing unforeseen circumstances.

The Risk Analysis Table below outlines the key risks identified, along with their respective assessments and planned response measures.

Risk Analysis Table	Description of the Risks	Likelihood (high, medium, low)	Impact (high, moderate, low)	Prevention	Mitigation
Administrative Risks	1. Ineffective coordination between key stakeholders (Municipality of Trikala, e-Trikala, Trikala Chamber, University of Thessaly).	Medium	Moderate	Regular coordination meetings, clear division of roles and responsibilities.	Assign central coordination to a dedicated staff and apply conflict-resolution protocols.
	2. Delays in decision-making due to unclear responsibilities.	Medium	Moderate	Establish a governance structure with predefined decision channels.	Implement a timeline tracking system with escalation rules.
	3. Limited administrative capacity to manage multi-stakeholder implementation.	High	High	Capacity-building and resource allocation from the beginning.	External support by URBACT experts or hiring additional support staff.
Financial Risks	1. Inability to secure full funding for actions (e.g., Demo Days, Data Center support).	High	High	Pre-identification of funding sources and funding alignment.	Adapt scope to funding reality; additional fundraising activities.
	2. Delays in fund disbursement or approval.	Medium	High	Early submission of documentation and continuous communication with managing authorities.	Adjust timelines; frontload pre-financed components if possible.
	3. Overdependence on external funding for sustainability of flagship actions.	Medium	High	Include sustainability planning in IAP; explore blended financing schemes.	Reduce scale of activities or secure public-private partnerships.
Operational Risks	1. Lack of human or technical capacity to implement digital/tech-based actions.	Medium	High	Early engagement of skilled staff; partnerships with tech-oriented institutions.	Outsourcing or subcontracting where appropriate.
	2. Delays due to procurement/legal complexity.	Medium	Moderate	Schedule procurement phases realistically; support from municipal legal teams.	Create a procurement roadmap and monitor implementation timelines.
	3. Limited experience with managing innovation hubs (e.g., SPOROS Business Lab).	Medium	Moderate	Learning from peer cities, mentoring, and training by Lead Expert.	Use URBACT learning resources; include trial periods and evaluations.
Other Risks	1. Low participation from underrepresented groups despite inclusive aims.	High	Moderate	Tailored communication strategy, awareness campaigns, stakeholder co-design.	Revise outreach methods; collaborate with NGOs or local champions.
	2. Difficulty defining and applying measurable indicators.	Medium	High	Indicator selection with Lead Expert and inclusion in IAP final version.	Use adaptive indicators and conduct regular evaluations.
	3. Weak involvement of academic institutions despite planned partnerships.	Medium	Moderate	Formal MoUs and involvement of academia in early-stage IAP actions.	Invite academia to ULG meetings and define tangible roles.
	4. Declining stakeholder interest and fatigue over time.	Medium	Moderate	Maintain engagement through value-driven collaboration and consistent communication.	Host regular feedback sessions and recognize stakeholder contributions.

Table 1: Risk Analysis Table

7.6 Monitoring and Reporting

Effective monitoring and reporting are essential to ensure the successful implementation, sustainability, and impact of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). The city of Trikala will adopt a structured and participatory monitoring framework that supports transparency, accountability, and continuous learning throughout the implementation phase.

The monitoring process will be coordinated by the core project team at e-Trikala, in collaboration with the Municipality of Trikala and other key local stakeholders, including representatives from the ULG. A set of qualitative and quantitative indicators will be developed and refined based on the final design of each action within the IAP. These indicators will reflect progress in areas such as participation of underrepresented groups, uptake of digital services, and level of stakeholder engagement.

Key elements of the monitoring framework include:

- **Biannual progress reviews**, led by the coordination team, to assess milestones and address implementation challenges.
- **Stakeholder reporting**, where local actors involved in specific actions will be invited to provide updates on their activities, outcomes, and encountered obstacles.
- **Feedback loops**, ensuring that learnings from the ground inform the adaptation and evolution of the plan over time.

In addition to the above, we foresee annual ULG meetings to monitor the progress of the IAP or to discuss possible updates and refinements of the Actions, based on emerging needs, policy changes, or implementation realities. These meetings will serve as an inclusive space for review, dialogue, and alignment across all involved stakeholders.

A reporting template will be used to collect data and feedback from involved stakeholders in a consistent manner. In addition, results will be communicated during regular ULG meetings to foster ongoing commitment and visibility at the local level. Monitoring findings will also feed into the dissemination strategy and support efforts to attract additional resources, scale successful actions, and strengthen the legacy of TechDiversity in Trikala.

TechDiversity			e-trikala		
Action Title	Area of Intervention	Strategic objective	Timeline (planned vs. actual)	Indicators	Comments from ULG Members

Figure 8: Monitoring Template



8. Conclusions and Next Steps

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) of Trikala presents a strategic roadmap for positioning the city as a national leader in inclusive innovation, digital entrepreneurship, and sustainable urban development. The proposed actions address key local and regional challenges by promoting diversity, technological advancement, and climate neutrality through an integrated, place-based approach.

A core strength of the IAP lies in its alignment with broader territorial strategies, particularly the Regional Operational Program (ROP) of Thessaly 2021–2027. Several of the proposed actions are designed to leverage financial support and thematic priorities set out in the ROP, such as entrepreneurship, digital transformation, green energy, and social inclusion. This alignment ensures not only coherence with regional development goals but also increases the feasibility and funding potential of the IAP's implementation phase.

Looking ahead, the Municipality of Trikala, in collaboration with its key stakeholders, will initiate the operationalisation of the IAP. This will involve finalising technical plans, mobilising financial resources, and activating coordination structures to oversee progress and monitor results.

Simultaneously, a targeted dissemination and communication plan will be launched to promote awareness of the IAP among citizens, businesses, academic institutions, and national and European partners. This will include digital campaigns, local engagement events, visibility through URBACT and TechDiversity channels, and the strategic use of storytelling to highlight successful initiatives. These activities will support both public ownership and external visibility of Trikala's inclusive digital transition, while fostering knowledge exchange and opportunities for replication across other cities in the region and beyond.

The Integrated Action Plan of Trikala reflects the city's commitment to shaping a more inclusive, innovative, and digitally advanced urban environment. Through the collaborative efforts of the URBACT Local Group, this plan identifies strategic priorities and concrete actions that respond to local needs while aligning with European goals for social inclusion, digital transition, and sustainable urban development.

By promoting equal access to technology, fostering digital entrepreneurship, and embedding diversity in every stage of planning and implementation, Trikala aims to become a national reference point for inclusive innovation. The IAP also introduces monitoring tools and risk management mechanisms to ensure effective delivery and adaptability.

As the city moves forward to the implementation phase, the momentum built during the TechDiversity journey will serve as a strong foundation for long-term transformation — one that is community-driven, resilient, and future-oriented.

e-trikala



TechDiversity

URBACT



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg