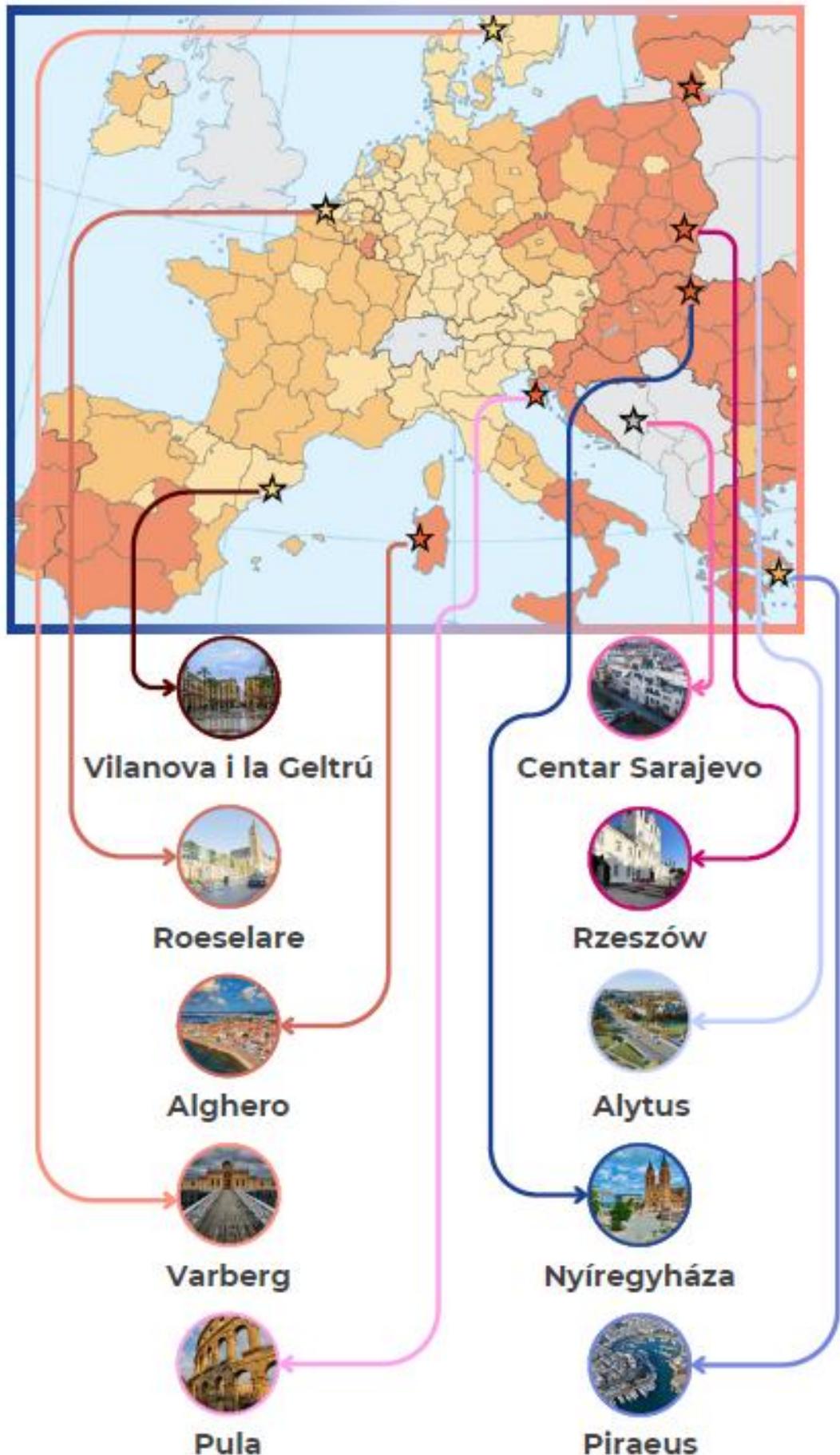




# Integrated Action Plan

“C4TALENT-Creating a better environment for start-ups and businesses to attract and retain talent”

**City of Rzeszów**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

### 1.1. *Introduction to the document*

The premise of the project "**C4TALENT – Creating a better environment for start-ups and businesses to attract and retain talent**", co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and IPA under the URBACT IV 2021-2027 Program, is to create a business- and start-up-friendly environment in cities that will attract and retain young, talented professionals in urban areas, while minimizing the effects of the so-called "brain drain."

Business incubators, subsidies, offering physical infrastructure in the form of coworking space or the possibility of using the urban fabric to test solutions are all effective methods- but there is no single solution that can be implemented anywhere with identical results. **Each city must therefore find its own and unique combination of key aspects to support the local startup ecosystem.**

This 'combination' is to be expressed in an **Integrated Action Plan**, outlining the City's directions for supporting the development of wider entrepreneurship in relation to the challenge. It includes, *inter alia*, planned activities, implementation responsibilities, costs, funding sources, monitoring indicators and a risk assessment of the activities. It also includes a description of the testing actions carried out as part of the project implementation, also known as small-scale actions to address the challenge using a participatory approach.

**The Integrated Action Plan is prepared in collaboration with members of the URBACT Local Group**, who represent groups related to the business and start-up community in the city.

### 1.2. *Background*

#### **Background**

C4TALENT – *Cities for Talent* – is an **Action Planning Network (APN)** co-funded by the **URBACT IV Programme of the European Union**. It brings together ten small and medium-sized towns from across Europe that face a shared challenge: the steady loss of skilled and creative people, often referred to as *brain drain*.

The network's central question is simple but critical: **How can smaller cities attract and retain talent by creating thriving local conditions for entrepreneurship, innovation, and quality of life?**

Between **June 2023 and December 2025**, C4TALENT supported its partner cities in developing their **Integrated Action Plans (IAPs)** to tackle this challenge at local level. Each plan is based on the URBACT method – a structured, participatory process that helps cities design concrete actions through learning, exchange, and collaboration.

## **The network**

C4TALENT is coordinated by **Nyíregyháza (Hungary)** as Lead Partner.

The partner cities are: **·Alghero (Italy) ·Alytus (Lithuania) ·Centar Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) ·Nyíregyháza (Hungary) ·Piraeus (Greece) ·Pula (Croatia) ·Roeselare (Belgium) ·Rzeszów (Poland) ·Varberg (Sweden) ·Vilanova i la Geltrú (Spain)**.

Together they represent a diverse mix of local contexts – from Northern to Southern Europe, EU Member States and IPA countries – but all share similar demographic and economic pressures linked to youth outmigration and limited local opportunities.

## **The thematic focus**

C4TALENT addresses **talent attraction and retention** as its overarching theme, with a specific focus on **entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem development** as one of the main levers to make smaller cities more attractive for talent.

The network has explored three closely interlinked policy areas:

- **entrepreneurial ecosystems** – how cities can create favourable conditions for starting and growing local businesses;
- **talent attraction and retention** – how they can better understand and respond to the factors that influence people's decision to stay, return, or move;
- **place branding for talent** – how cities can communicate their authentic identity and strengths to attract residents, investors, and professionals.

Rather than treating these topics in isolation, **C4TALENT** connects them into one integrated approach: a vibrant startup environment supports local talent to thrive; an attractive, inclusive city encourages people to stay; and a strong, authentic place identity provides a strong strategic framework for local development and communication efforts.

## **The URBACT approach**

URBACT is the **European Territorial Cooperation Programme** that helps cities work together and develop integrated, sustainable solutions to urban challenges. It is built on the understanding that cities are on the front line of Europe's most pressing issues – from climate change and demographic shifts to digital transformation – but also hold the key to many opportunities through their diversity, creativity, and innovation potential.

URBACT promotes **integrated development** by supporting cities to connect policies across sectors and governance levels. This means ensuring **horizontal integration** – tackling economic, social, and environmental dimensions together – and **vertical integration**, through collaboration between local, regional, national, and EU actors.

At the same time, URBACT encourages cities to rethink traditional governance models and move towards more **inclusive and participatory planning**. Its **action-oriented, co-creation approach** builds ownership by involving stakeholders directly in defining problems, shaping solutions, and implementing change. Each partner city in C4TALENT has set up a **URBACT Local Group (ULG)** bringing together local government, businesses, education institutions, NGOs, and citizens to co-design their Integrated Action Plan.

Finally, **transnational exchange and peer learning** are central to the **URBACT method**. By sharing experiences and learning from other European cities, partners can adapt good practices to their own context and build stronger, more resilient local solutions.

Through this process, URBACT helps cities **move from ideas to action** – creating locally grounded strategies that are **integrated, participatory, and ready for implementation**.

### **1.3. Focus of the document**

Rzeszów, as the capital of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, is attracting more and more interest from year to year from companies providing modern business services. This fact is confirmed not only by more companies deciding to invest in the capital of Podkarpackie (e.g. The Boeing Company, Jit Team, Sherwin-Williams, Grant Thornton Poland), but also by the numerous awards Rzeszów has received in recent years. These include those received by the city at the 11th and 12th CEE Business Services Summit & Awards in the “Emerging City of the Year” category, which recognize the city's investment potential and its business offerings for companies in the

business services sector. This, in turn, confirms that the direction chosen and consistently pursued over the past 2.5 years is the right one.

In order for Rzeszów **to remain an attractive city both for young people and for business**, it is necessary to take further actions supporting the development of local entrepreneurship, especially in the area of small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups, which drive urban innovation. The city aims to achieve these goals by developing existing potential and creating favorable conditions for the growth of entrepreneurship and the creation of new jobs, particularly for individuals starting their professional careers.

To create even better conditions for the development of the local business and startup ecosystem, the City's activities should focus on, among other things:

- **strengthening cooperation** between institutions supporting entrepreneurship development by identifying institutions supporting entrepreneurship in Rzeszów, organizing cyclic networking meetings between institutions and entrepreneurs in order to exchange experience and build joint initiatives, and conducting information campaigns on joint initiatives,
- **developing the concept** for the functioning of an urban coworking space that will promote development and work in the open environment characteristic of the creative sector;
- defining the structure and **developing a “map” of local business support institutions** in collaboration with the city's environment and based on the experiences gained.

## **1.4. City context**

### **1.4.1 General information**

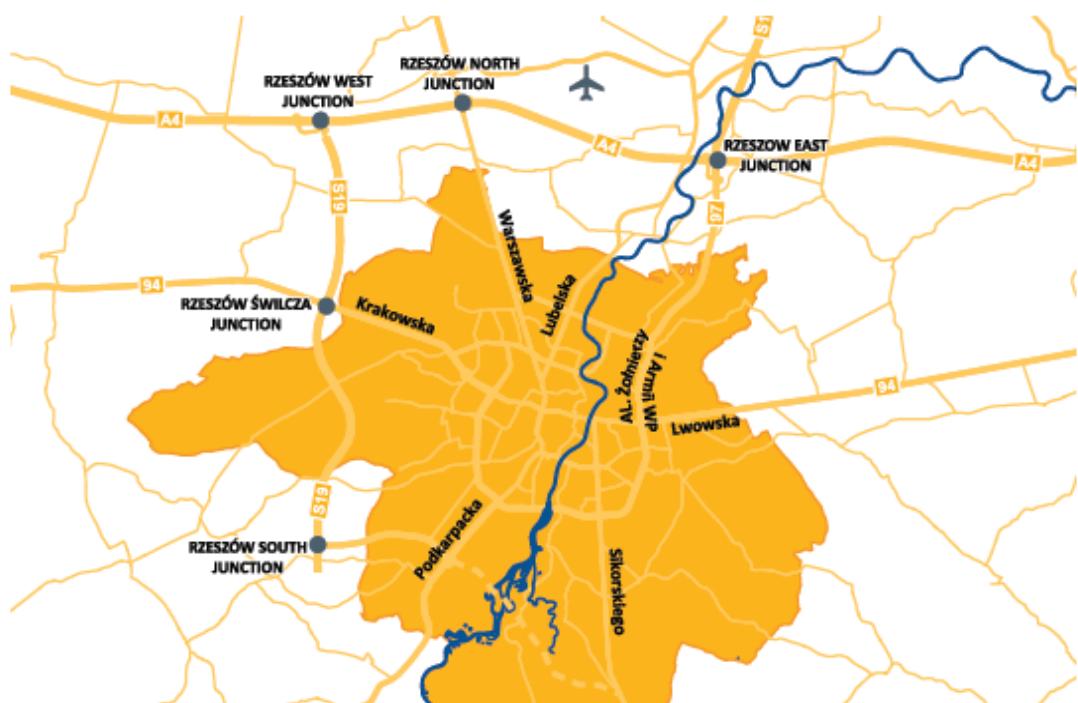
Rzeszów is **the capital of the Subcarpathian region**, located in southeastern Poland, with an official population of 196,636 residents (as of the end of 2024). The city is one of the leading industrial, business, academic, and cultural centers in this part of the country, and it is also an important hub for innovation, research and development, and modern technologies..

It is also worth mentioning that the capital of Podkarpacie is also one of the cleanest, safest and greenest Polish provincial cities.

In addition, Rzeszow is an active member of the EUROCITIES Association, the Union of Polish Metropolises and the Association of Polish Cities.

## Geography, location

Rzeszow, as the **capital of the Subcarpathian Voivodeship**, is also the eastern border of the European Union, with border crossings with Ukraine and Slovakia about 90 km from the city. The A4 highway, which connects Western Europe with Ukraine, also runs through Rzeszow, as does the S19 expressway, which is the national section of the Via Carpatia international north-south route. Along the northern border of the city stretches the E30 international rail trunk line, while the **Rzeszow-Jasionka International Airport** is located 6 km from the regional capital. Within its network of connections, the Port offers, among other things, passenger flights to major European metropolises and the United States, as well as attractive holiday destinations during the tourist season. It also provides comprehensive air cargo services. Thanks to the Phytosanitary Checkpoint, international air transport of plant products is also possible.



Graphic 1: Road map, source: Destination Rzeszów - Colliers Report EN (Spring 2022)

Describing the current situation of Rzeszow, it is impossible to ignore the impact of **the ongoing conflict in Ukraine** across the eastern border, which has significantly **changed the perception and role of the city both domestically and internationally**. Rzeszow, from the first days of the war, became a key center of humanitarian and military support. At the time, the **city took in around 100,000 refugees from Ukraine**, which required the immediate mobilization of residents, businesses and local institutions.

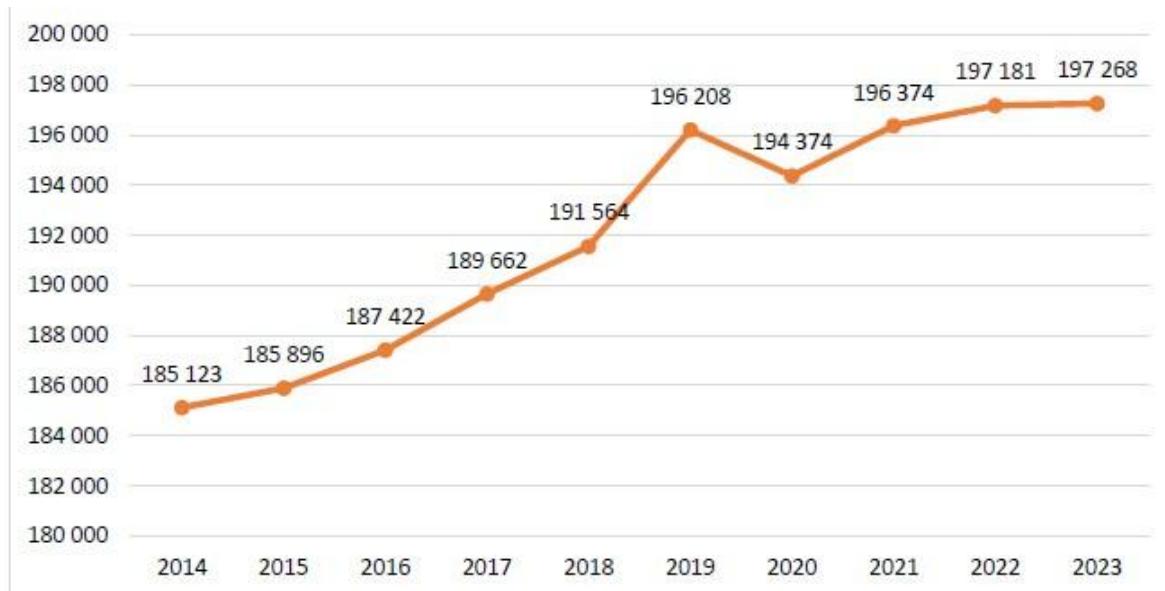
Despite its proximity to the armed conflict, Rzeszow is proving its adaptability and gaining international recognition, as evidenced by the

**honorary title of “City Rescuer”** bestowed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky **in May 2024**. The award underscores the city's unique role in helping Ukraine and its citizens.

Rzeszow stands out not only as a city committed to helping refugees and adapting to the challenges of the conflict in Ukraine, but also as a leader in the pursuit of innovation and sustainable development. The **city was among the prestigious participants in the EU's Horizon Europe Mission of 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities**. This engagement confirms Rzeszow's vision of itself as a city of the future, where smart management, advanced technologies and active participation of residents contribute to improving the quality of life and building a more sustainable urban environment. Rzeszow's role as a center of change and international cooperation is particularly important, both in the context of humanitarian aid and in shaping the European climate strategy.

#### 1.4.2 Demographics

At the end of 2023, Rzeszów had a population of 197,268, of which 103,655 (approx. 52.5%) were women and 93,613 men (approx. 47.5%). Thus, the feminisation rate was 111 women per 100 men<sup>1</sup>. Between 2014 and 2023, the city's population increased by more than 12,000, i.e. almost 7% of the population. The city owes its dynamic growth, among other things, to changes in administrative boundaries.



**Chart 1. Change in the population of Rzeszów between 2014 and 2023**; source: 'Diagnosis for the preparation of the Development Strategy of the city of Rzeszów until 2035'. (p. 15), compiled on the basis of CSO-BDL, [bdl.stat.gov.pl](http://bdl.stat.gov.pl)

<sup>1</sup> GUS – BDL, [bdl.stat.gov.pl](http://bdl.stat.gov.pl)

However, the increase in the population of Rzeszów was due not only to changes in administrative boundaries, but also to migrations to the city.

An important phenomenon that has also affected the population numbers is the migration of Ukrainians. The outbreak of war across the eastern border has significantly changed the demographic situation of the city. Rzeszów, as a 'Rescuer City', took in a very large number of immigrants and refugees from across the eastern border in a very short period of time. According to government data, on 11.06.2023 in the territory of Rzeszów in the Register of citizens of Ukraine and members of their families there were 7,513 registered persons who were granted the status of a foreigner on the basis of the Act of 12.03.2022 on assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country<sup>2</sup>.

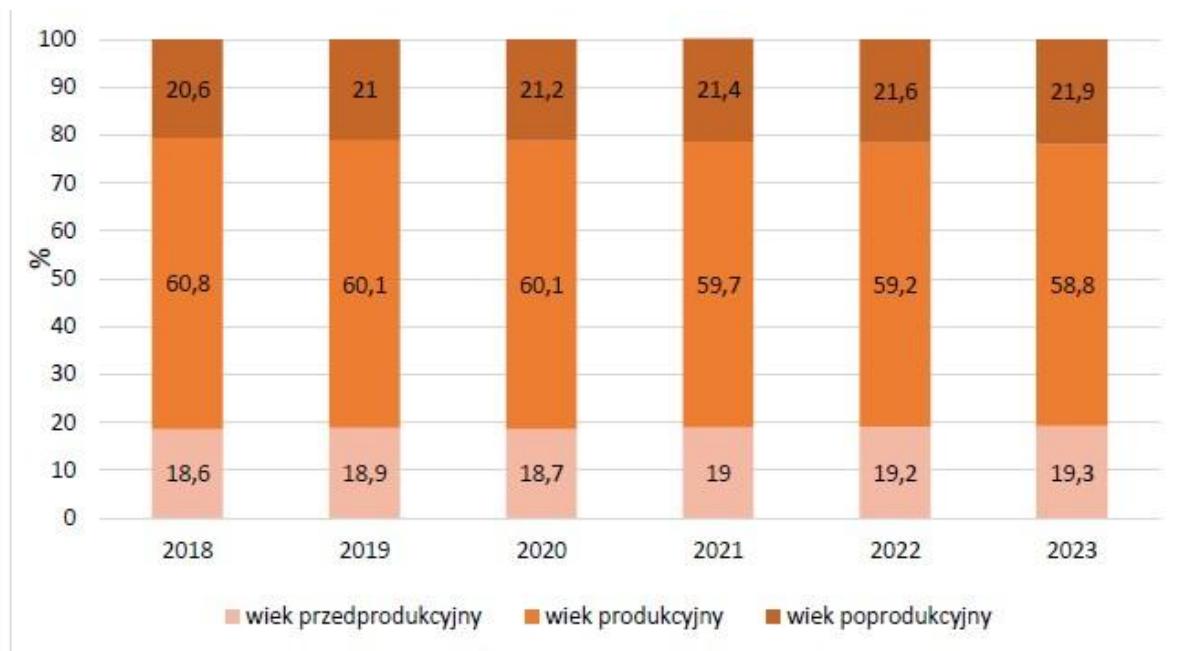
With migration movements, the age structure of residents within city neighborhoods changes. The age structure of Rzeszów's inhabitants is rather ambiguous, resembling a stationary type that is tending towards a regressive one. This means that in Rzeszów, the number of births and deaths in recent years has been similar, with the city having a slightly higher number of births than deaths.

There is a greater year-on-year increase in the post-working age population, relative to the increase in the pre-working age population. In 2023, the population of pre-working age (i.e. 0-17 years) accounted for 19.3% of the total population and increased by 0.7 percentage points compared to 2018, while the population of post-working age (i.e. 60/65+) accounted for 21.9% and

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<sup>2</sup> Source: 'Diagnosis for the preparation of the Development Strategy of the City of Rzeszów until 2035'. (p. 16), [www.dane.gov.pl](http://www.dane.gov.pl) (as of 11.06.2023)

increased by 1.3 percentage points. Therefore, over time, if this trend continues, Rzeszów will face problems related to the ageing population.



**Chart 2. Age structure of the population of Rzeszów between 2018 and 2023;** source: 'Diagnosis for the preparation of the Development Strategy of the city of Rzeszów until 2035'. (p. 22), compiled on the basis of CSO-BDL, [bdl.stat.gov.pl](http://bdl.stat.gov.pl)

## Quality of life

In rankings and social surveys of residents' opinions conducted **in recent years, Rzeszow was generally rated highly in terms of quality of life conditions.** The sense of satisfaction of Rzeszow residents with the quality of life in the city is high. As part of the "Rzeszow Social Diagnosis 2017" survey, more than 75% of the city's residents agreed with the statement that "life is good in Rzeszow," and as many as 87% agreed that "it is safe in Rzeszow." Nine out of ten respondents viewed Rzeszow as a "well-kept city."

On the other hand, as part of the "Rzeszow Social Diagnosis 2021" survey, more than 81% of respondents agreed with the statement that "Rzeszow is a friendly city," and as many as 79% thought that "Rzeszow is safe." Nine out of 10 respondents perceived Rzeszow as a "clean city."

In 2022, the PAP Local Government Bureau conducted a quality of life ranking in Polish municipalities, "A Municipality Good to Live in 2022." Rzeszów was ranked 10th among cities with county rights, scoring a total of 64.52 points out of a possible 100.

## Culture

The city of Rzeszow has a well-developed network of cultural infrastructure. Units run by the city are: **Art Exhibition Office, "Maska" Theater, Zorza Cinema, Gallery of Photography of the City of Rzeszow, Estrada Rzeszowska, Museum of Bedtime Cartoons from the collection of Wojciech Jama, Rzeszowski Dom Kultury, Provincial and Municipal Public Library** in Rzeszow (run jointly with the Self-Government of Podkarpackie Voivodeship).

The Podkarpackie Philharmonic named after Artur Malawski is located in the city. It is the only philharmonic in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. There are two institutional theaters - the Wanda Siemaszkowa Theater, which is a regional institution, and the "Maska" Theater, which is the only professional puppet theater in the Subcarpathian province.

There are numerous museum institutions run by the city, the provincial government and other entities. These are: Rzeszow District Museum and its branches: the Museum of History of the City of Rzeszow and the Franciszek Kotula Ethnographic Museum. Some of Rzeszow's more recognizable and frequently visited cultural facilities are the city-run Museum of Bedtime Cartoons and the Underground Tourist Route.

Similarly, in the city, the number of institutions for high culture as well as commercial venues adapted for organizing pop and rock concerts for several hundred spectators remains moderate, which creates opportunities for further development of the cultural offer and initiatives aimed at residents, including young people.

In surveys conducted as part of the "Rzeszow Social Diagnosis," residents indicated the need for a musical theater or opera (40.9% of respondents), discos, nightclubs (19.5%)<sup>3</sup>.

## Rzeszów Smart City

The capital of the Subcarpathian Voivodeship is also an example of a city that for many years **has been implementing smart solutions** to improve the quality of life of its residents.

It was Rzeszów, as one of two Polish cities, that in 2019 was the one where a pioneering nationwide model of cooperation between residents, experts and representatives of urban structures – **Urban Lab**- was tested.

Urban Lab Rzeszow is a **creative space** where **innovative solutions** to improve the quality of life of residents **are developed, tested and implemented**, in line with the idea of Smart City. Among other things, the Urban Lab hosts hackathons and thematic meetings with representatives of social organizations, Rzeszow universities, business and startups.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: 'Diagnosis for the development of the Rzeszów City Development Strategy until 2035'. (p. 60, 62)

In addition, Rzeszow is the first city in the country to install **smart bus shelters, which operate on the basis of photovoltaic cells** and have many useful functions, including: cooling in summer, heating in winter, controlling smart lighting, displaying variable content on the windshields integrated with the shelters, or charging mobile devices both traditionally and through induction.

Another example of a “smart” solution implemented in the Subcarpathian capital is **the innovative complex of the Local Station**, serving international connections. This smart and fully ecological facility has been equipped with an air conditioning system that automatically adjusts to the conditions outside. Bus shelters, equipped with photovoltaic systems, have been installed next to the station building, as well as driveways and parking for buses. Electric-powered heat pumps, produced by modules with NoFrost technology placed on the canopies, were used to heat and cool the building, illuminate the station and operate all electronic and IT systems. For the first time in Poland, an innovative façade in the form of a ventilated facade that generates electricity was used here.

#### **1.4.3 Economy and business environment**

As we read in Destination Rzeszow-Colliers Report from 2022, Rzeszów is one of the strongest economic centres in Eastern Poland. At the end of 2021, there were 32,466 businesses in the city, 992 of which were companies with foreign capital, the average monthly gross salary in the enterprise sector was 5,777 PLN and the unemployment rate was 4,9 %.

In the area of aviation the Rzeszów agglomeration is the most rapidly developing advanced technology centre for the aviation industry in Central Europe. The city is home to one of the largest clusters in Poland- **The Key National Cluster Aviation Valley**.

One of the leading branches of the local economy is also information technology. The capital of Podkarpackie region is home to the headquarters of well known and internationally recognised companies from the IT sector: **Asseco Poland**- one of the largest and most dynamically developing companies in this sector in Europe, which has recently opened the Asseco Innovation Hub, an ultramodern research and development centre; Soft System- an enterprise engaged in the creation and maintenance of laboratory information systems and integration services for US and Canadian medical centres.

Also, one of the developing sectors in Rzeszów are modern business services. The sector in 2021 employs around 6,000 people. The most important companies in the BSS sector in Rzeszów include **Deloitte Business Services Centre for Central Europe, Pratt & Whitney Financial Services Centre**, Aluteam-Alumeco Shared Services Centre, Unicall Communication Group Poland, PKO BP Customer Service, as well as numerous research and development centres.

According to data from the Central Statistical Office **at the end of December 2023** on national economy entities in the REGON register (excluding individuals operating only individual farms), **there were a total of more than 35,000 national economy entities in the city of Rzeszow, of which about 97% were entities of up to 9 people**. The second largest group of entities, in the number of slightly more than 780, are entities in the group of 10-49, while the third, in the number of almost 200, are entities in the group of 50-249. For comparison, at the end of December 2022 "we had" slightly more than 34 thousand entities. Here, too, the largest group, at over 33 thousand, were entities in the first group (0-9). This clearly shows that from year to year the number of entities established and run in the city of Rzeszow is increasing.

### **Innovation and smart specializations**

**Four so-called regional smart specializations**, i.e. : areas of economic life or science that each Polish region **has identified and is developing**, first in the EU financial perspective 2014-2020 and now 2021-2027, have been identified in the Podkarpackie region. They are:

- aviation and aerospace,
- information and telecommunications,
- automotive,
- quality of life.

Regionally, Rzeszow is the center with the highest concentration of enterprises included in all four smart specializations, which translates into the potential for their further development.

### **Academic centers and the economy**

„Innovation and Creativity of Urban Centers” **study of the educational, academic and scientific potential** presents a typology of academic centers, analyzing a set of specific characteristics and indicators to determine the advantages and weaknesses of individual cities. The first group included urban centers with the greatest educational, academic and scientific potential. They included Warsaw, Krakow, Wroclaw and Poznan. **The second group included** Katowice, Lodz, Gdansk, Lublin, Kielce and **Rzeszow**. These are **cities that, due to their smaller university base, cannot compete directly with the leading academic centers**. However, they are able to **compensate for some of their shortcomings with certain features**. In the case of Rzeszow, these are signs of specialization in engineering and technology fields.

From the point of view of the city's development as an academic center, **it is not only the scientific and didactic base of individual universities that is important, but also social infrastructure** used by students. For the most

part, this is publicly accessible infrastructure related to, among other things, health, culture, sports, recreation or entertainment, which is also used by other residents of the city.

## **Business environment institutions**

An important element of the city's and region's economy are **the business environment institutions** located in Rzeszow. These are entities of various legal forms, both public and non-public, conducting activities for the development of entrepreneurship and innovation, not operating for profit or allocating their profit to statutory purposes in accordance with the provisions of their statutes or other equivalent founding document. Among them are the **Rzeszow Regional Development Agency S.A.**(RARR) and the Investor Service Center operating within it, the Center for Technology Transfer and Innovation, or the Rzeszow Social Economy Support Center. RARR is the managing entity of the Podkarpackie Science and Technology Park Aeropolis, part of which includes the Aeropolis Research and Development Center and the Materials Science and Prototyping Laboratory operating within it in Jasionka, the Research Laboratory at the Rzeszów University of Technology campus on Poznańska Street, and the Biotechnology Laboratory at the University of Rzeszów campus on Zelwerowicza Street in Zalesie. The **city is home to one of two field branches of the Polish Space Agency**, whose mission is to support the Polish space industry and the scientific community by bringing together the worlds of business and science. It also works to develop satellite techniques. The basis for its location in Rzeszow was, among other things, a developed aerospace industry.

For the development of entrepreneurship, innovation centers - institutions and other scientific and research units operating at universities (including the aforementioned laboratories operating as part of the Aeropolis Research and Development Center) or within companies (including the Asseco Innovation Hub)- are important. Young entrepreneurs are supported, among others, by the Podkarpackie Information Technology Incubator.

**The network of business environment institutions is supplemented by**, among others, **universities, local government and government administration units, training and consulting centers**, and other entities providing business services of a commercial nature directed to entrepreneurs.

Pro-innovation ventures focused on entrepreneurial development are also implemented by the Urban Innovation Center- Urban Lab, which acts as a collaborative space between residents, entrepreneurs and experts, enabling the creation and testing of innovative solutions to urban challenges.

## 1.5 Key policies and strategies

Title of the Strategy / Policy Document	Summary description	Relevance to the focus area of the IAP (if any)
<b>Development Strategy of the City of Rzeszow until 2025</b>	<p>Rzeszow's policies to date follow directly from the Strategy for the Development of the City of Rzeszow until 2025. This document defines the main and specific strategic objectives of the city's development and indicates the instruments of cohesion policy for stimulating development processes in the regional capital.</p>	<p>The strategic goal of the National Urban Policy is to strengthen the ability of cities and urbanized areas to create sustainable growth and jobs, and to improve the quality of life of residents.</p> <p>The Rzeszów Development Strategy identifies sectoral strategic objectives relating to the city's environment, including:</p> <p>C.1. Smart City - Creating favorable conditions for the development of Rzeszow as an attractive place for business and the development of education, higher education, science and culture;</p> <p>C.2 A socially cohesive and integrated city - Improving the living conditions of residents and the state of public safety Due to the nature and structure of businesses, Rzeszow should be an attractive place to live for young professionals (the so-called creative class).</p> <p>The Development Strategy of the City of Rzeszów until 2025 also includes horizontal strategic objectives that relate to the subsystem of city management, among which are:</p> <p>CH 3. City of Cooperation- Ensure efficient social communication and cooperation of the City with public, economic, social entities and residents;</p> <p>CH 4.- Brand "Rzeszów- Developing a nationally and internationally recognized image of Rzeszów as a center of</p>

		economic and social innovation, a hospitable and visitor-friendly city.
<b>Regional Innovation Strategy of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship 2021-2030</b>	Is the main document defining the directions of regional policy.	<p>Among strategic aims it is worth to emphasize a few:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activation of networking cooperation between all the entities that make up the regional innovation system,</li> <li>• support for the establishment and development of pre-incubators, business incubators and other forms of assistance in starting a business (including a virtual office) and the development of the potential of these institutions creation and development of start-up projects,</li> <li>• support for the development of institutions providing basic services to enterprises,</li> <li>• support for increasing the capacity of scientific and research sector entities to create and commercialize knowledge, in particular in the areas of regional smart specializations,</li> <li>• creating conditions for the development of interregional cooperation,</li> <li>• intensify the use of “green technologies” in the region's enterprises, especially in areas of smart specialization.</li> </ul>
<b>City Brand Strategy (Updating the Strategy) Rzeszów Brand and the Promotion Program of the City of Rzeszów</b>	The document includes a diagnosis of the current and desired situation of the Rzeszow brand until 2025.	The document is a set of guidelines, justified by the results of research, for promotional activities carried out as part of further development of the Rzeszów brand until 2025. Among the conducted research were quantitative surveys on a sample of 1002 people (city residents, tourists visiting Rzeszów, students studying at Rzeszów universities and those studying in selected large cities, Rzeszów entrepreneurs and companies from cities considered competitive), qualitative research, individual in-depth interviews (IDI) with ten experts in the field of promotion,

<p><b>for 2020-2025)</b></p>		<p>marketing, advertising, public relations, and representatives of business, cultural institutions and tourism. Qualitative research for this document also included two focus group interviews (FGIs) with local opinion leaders, entrepreneurs and representatives of the business environment, as well as NGOs and students.</p>
<p><b>Development Strategy for the City of Rzeszów until 2035</b></p>	<p>The document sets out the main and detailed strategic objectives for the further development of the city and identifies the cohesion policy instruments used to stimulate the development processes of the regional capital.</p>	<p>The city's development policy outlines five strategic objectives, among which the third, concerning a modern economy that leverages scientific and research potential as well as its international image, deserves particular attention. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring space for further economic development of the city,</li> <li>• supporting the development of entrepreneurship, including among residents,</li> <li>• strengthening the city's position as an academic centre and a centre for innovation, research and development,</li> <li>• developing cooperation between public administration, business and higher education in order to increase the economic potential of the city and the region.</li> </ul>

## **1.6 Summary of interventions in the policy area so far**

Among the activities that have so far been undertaken by the City of Rzeszów regarding the development of local entrepreneurship are the Rzeszów StartUP MIX (2022), cyclical meetings entitled “Doing business with...”, Technology HUB and participation in the “Tech Revolution 2.0” project (URBACT III).

### **Rzeszow StartUP MIX (2022)**

Rzeszow StartUP MIX is a **series of events** organized by the Urban Innovation Centre- **Urban Lab** (a department of the Rzeszow City Hall), dedicated primarily to startups at the beginning of their business path, during which founders presented their ideas to a specially appointed Jury, which included representatives of both public administration and local business.

Each time, the event was divided into three parts:

- a) presentation of business initiatives,
- b) panel discussion with the participation of invited guests,
- c) networking, during which it is possible to establish direct contacts between experienced and budding entrepreneurs and experts, business support institutions, as well as students.

**The aim of the project was to shape a space for startups/businesses to develop and gain experience** so that they can later function independently in the market.

In total, more than 350 people participated in the events organized under the common banner of “StartUP MIX”. During the events, **a total of 9 business ideas were presented, two of which received awards** from the jury, one - the best - received awards.

Among the effects of the activities are opportunities for commercialization of business ideas, creation of business relationships, the possibility of testing projects directly in the urban environment, exchange of knowledge and experience, and strengthening the image of Rzeszów as a city open to innovation and modern technologies.

### **Doing business with...**

A **series of meetings** organized by the Rzeszów City Hall, **in cooperation** with interested entities, (agencies, embassies, business umbrella organizations) **aimed at facilitating the entry of regional companies to foreign markets**. The subject of the conference touches on the specificity of various markets in comparison with our home country, legal and financial

traps that should be avoided, as well as reliefs and opportunities that can be used when trying to develop services beyond the borders of our country.

However, **the meetings are primarily an opportunity to share experience, establish contacts and ask questions** about specific problems faced by entrepreneurs.

To date, several “Doing Business with...” conferences have been held, with topics focused on countries such as Canada, South Korea, Spain, Austria, Italy, Hungary and the United Kingdom.

## **Technology HUB**

**The premise of TECHNOLOGY HUB is to create an effective platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience.** Regular meetings are aimed not only at networking, but also at creating opportunities for cooperation between participants. The meetings are a place where **entrepreneurs, specialists and innovators share their ideas**, learn **new skills** and establish valuable **business relationships**.

TECHNOLOGY HUB in Rzeszow is a series of events that **responds to key questions and needs of entrepreneurs** facing formal, legal and technological challenges. Regularly organized thematic meetings are designed not only to give direction to discussions, but also to provide substantive support and a space to exchange knowledge and experience. An important aspect of TECHNOLOGY HUB's activities is also to support the local SME sector in building contacts, gaining access to knowledge.

An additional outcome of the activities of the TECHNOLOGY HUB platform was the implementation of an **educational project** carried out in collaboration between schools and local businesses, **aimed at sustainable development**. As part of the initiative, the first ecological bike garden in Rzeszów was created at Primary School No. 11 in Rzeszów, designed by students and realized with the support of local businesses. The project serves as an example of business involvement in education and social responsibility, promoting environmentally friendly solutions and supporting the local community.

## **TechRevolution 2.0**

The essence of the project “Tech Revolution 2.0”, in which the City of Rzeszow participated with four other cities, Alytus (Lithuania), Roeselare (Belgium), Novska (Croatia) and Barnsley (UK, Project Leader) from 2021 to 2022, was to **learn about the good practice of the City of Barnsley**, which includes two elements of an award-winning business support program (**Enterprising Barnsley**) and a creative and digital business center aimed at developing Barnsley's digital economy and creating more high-value jobs, particularly in the creative, technology and digital sectors (**Digital Media Center**).

In turn, **the aim of the project was to implement good practices and exchange experiences** between project partners in supporting entrepreneurship and the local economy of European cities.

The effects of the Tech Revolution 2.0 project include the implementation of a key account management system in the city structures.

### **Other events (external)**

The city of Rzeszow is not only the seat of local and regional government, it is also a place where business or industry events take place, the organization and logistics of which require the cooperation of many independent entities managed by various institutions. Such events include the **590 Congress** (a cyclical event gathering representatives of Polish business, science, politics, legislation and guests from abroad), **the IT Congress**, **the PR Congress** or **the Internet Beta conference**, which is already well-known in the community.

### **Carpathian Startup Fest**

An event organized by **Rzeszow Regional Development Agency S.A.** and **Podkarpackie Science and Technology Park "Aeropolis"** dedicated to entrepreneurship and technology, which brings together startups, investors, corporations, media and company founders. The agenda of the two-day event is filled with speeches, lectures and panel discussions to provide substantive knowledge and new perspectives. For 2023, 2024 and 2025 **the ecosystem partner was** the Center for Urban Innovation- **Urban Lab** of the City of Rzeszow.

Thanks to this, the City gets its "representation" during the event, learns about new trends, and also establishes contacts that in the future may result in further interesting initiatives for the residents of Rzeszow **in the area of startup activity support.**

Some of the startups can get the feedback about their businesses as well as expanding their contact network, including network of potential investors.

### **InternetBeta**

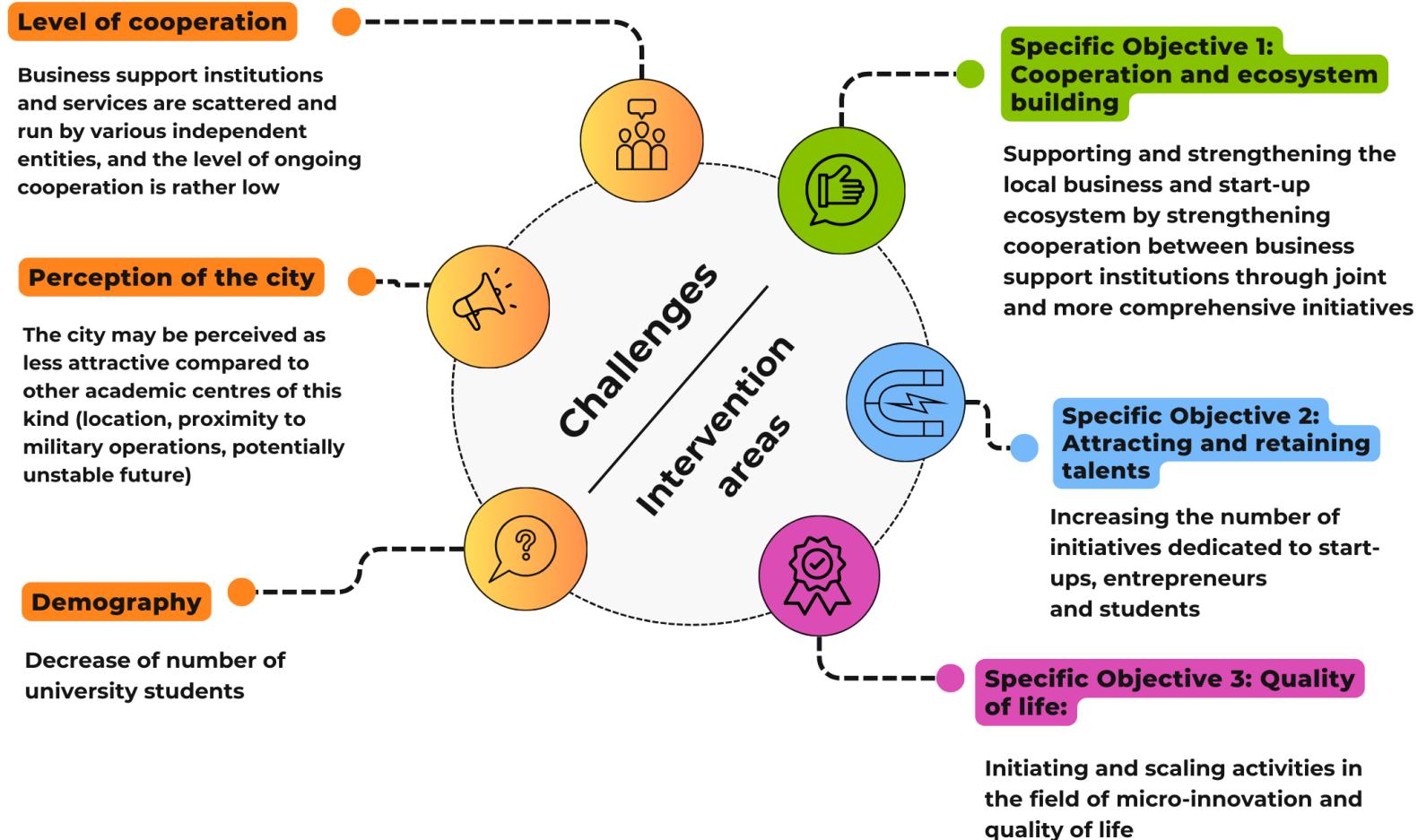
InternetBeta is a **conference that brings together various circles related to the Internet and new technologies**. Among its participants are managers of Poland's largest websites, representatives of the country's largest eCommerce players, digital agencies, representatives of NGOs, local governments, youtubers, influencers and bloggers.

As in the case of the "Carpathian Startup Fest" event, the City's participation in such initiatives not only broadens the network of contacts for potential cooperation, but also strengthens its position as a City open to interesting, external initiatives that can have a positive impact on the development of its

residents in the area of innovative entrepreneurship and current trends in environments related to new technologies and the Internet.

## 2 INTERVENTION LOGIC AND INTEGRATED APPROACH

The graphic below illustrates the so-called intervention logic (or logical model), which is a key element of the project and provides a framework for its further course, including planning and financing. The graphic explains and visualises the overall concept of the project and describes the challenge facing the city, its causes and the proposed actions to change the existing situation. It provides a rationale for why the project should be implemented and what objectives it aims to achieve.



Graphic 2: Intervention logic, original work

## 2.1 *Summary of key problems / challenges*

Despite the fact that the City of Rzeszow is developing rapidly, and its role in the national and international arena is steadily increasing, activities in the area of **further support for the development of local entrepreneurship** should not be discontinued.

Hence the will on the part of the city of Rzeszow to undertake further actions and cooperation that will retention local potential, as well as support the development of entrepreneurship.

As we read in the „Diagnosis prepared for the development of the Development Strategy of the City of Rzeszów until 2035”, **a permanent phenomenon is the decrease in the number of students**. In the period between 2013 and 2022, according to the Central Statistical Office, the number of students in Poland successively decreased (from 1,548,748 people in 2013 to 1,221,938 in 2022). In 2013, the number of tertiary graduates at master's level nationally was 198,956; in subsequent years, it decreased, reaching 132,893. The **nationwide trend** also **translates to all universities regionally**, including the universities of Rzeszów. In 2013, there were 47,995 students in Rzeszów, and in 2022 - 36,074. This means that the number of students in the city has decreased by more than 26.6% over the decade. Nationally, the number of students decreased by 21.1 per cent over the same period. The decline in the number of students is mainly due to demographic changes and a declining youth population, as well as less interest among young people in studying after high school.

This results in the phenomenon of competition, or even vying for students between individual academic centres and universities, which is visible during the recruitment period. Those studying in 2022 in Rzeszów accounted for 49.3% of students in the region and just under 2.9% of students nationwide.

Rising labor costs, rising housing prices, declining student numbers, the armed conflict in Ukraine and “low competitiveness” relative to the country's larger academic centers also, albeit indirectly, affect interest in or consideration of the city of Rzeszow as a place to develop one's business, whether as a startup or a standard company.

It is therefore suggested that **the level of cooperation between both business support institutions in the city should be strengthened** in order to ‘tidy up’ the dispersed offer of support and eliminate possible duplications which may lead to a reduction in the quality of services offered. It is also suggested that **the City should be positioned as an ‘intermediary/bridge’** between local businesses and higher education institutions in order to

utilise the potential of students and to enable **the transfer of knowledge and modern technology to the business community**.

A group that, according to ULG members, should not be overlooked when planning actions to attract and retain talent includes **experienced professionals** and so-called digital nomads, for whom the city can be attractive in terms of quality of life: work opportunities (quality of internet infrastructure, coworking spaces), career development (especially in fields such as IT, cybersecurity, smart specializations, aviation, etc.), a wide and diverse range of leisure activities, access to public services (nurseries, kindergartens, schools, healthcare centers), and green areas.. Here, it is advisable **to emphasise the strengths of Rzeszów** as a provincial city with the character of a 'compact' city striving for climate neutrality and continuous development, in line with the promotional slogan 'capital of innovation'.

## **2.2 Our vision**

In 2030, Rzeszów is a city that **attracts new residents**, including **creative** people – both young and experienced – who are eager to develop their business ideas here, and **business support institutions** operating in the city cooperate with each other **to create a thriving local ecosystem**. The city's strengths include its developed infrastructure, clean environment, network of social services, and modern and innovative economy linked to scientific and research facilities. Rzeszów is a **good place to live**, green, orderly, modern and well-kept, which is systematically strengthening its position as **an academic city and a centre of innovation**, research and development. Together with its functional area, it forms a dynamically developing metropolitan area, taking advantage of its location and the potential and responsiveness of its residents. This helps to retain talent and attract new people who see Rzeszów as their 'opportunity' for development.

In order for the envisaged vision to become a reality, several factors must be in place and actions must be taken to achieve specific objectives, such as:

- 1) **supporting and strengthening the local business and start-up ecosystem** by strengthening cooperation between business support institutions through joint and more comprehensive initiatives,
- 2) **increasing the number of initiatives** dedicated to start-ups, entrepreneurs and students,
- 3) **initiating and scaling activities** in the field of micro-innovation and quality of life.

## 2.3 Our objectives

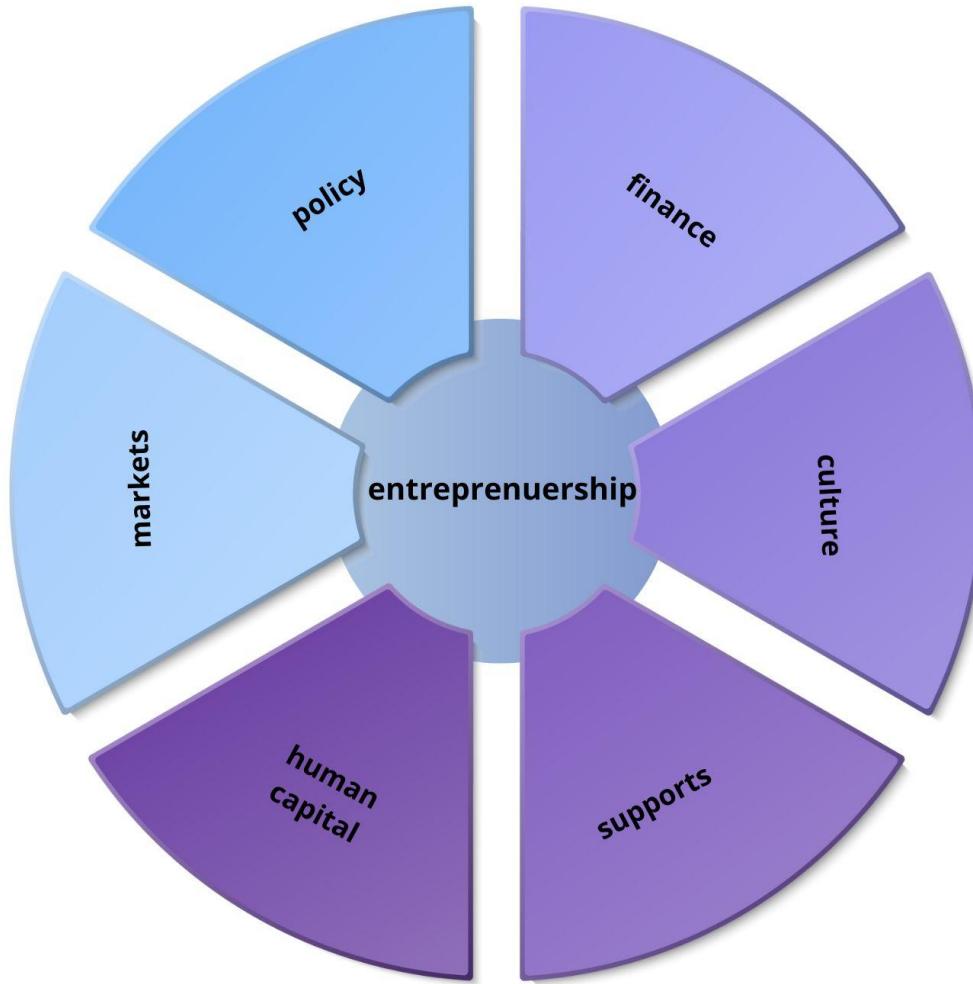
**Retaining talented and highly qualified people in the urban space**, in cooperation with residents, as well as entities and representatives of various sectors and groups of local stakeholders, is the primary goal that the City of Rzeszow, has set for itself under the “C4TALENT” project.

This goal can be achieved by supporting the local business and start-up ecosystem and **strengthening cooperation between institutions that support entrepreneurship**. Joint initiatives respond to the needs of people starting a business, supporting the development of innovative specialisations and the further progress of the city and region. Improving cooperation with universities and businesses can contribute to the transfer of knowledge and technology, and thus to the further economic development of the city and region, making them more competitive nationally.

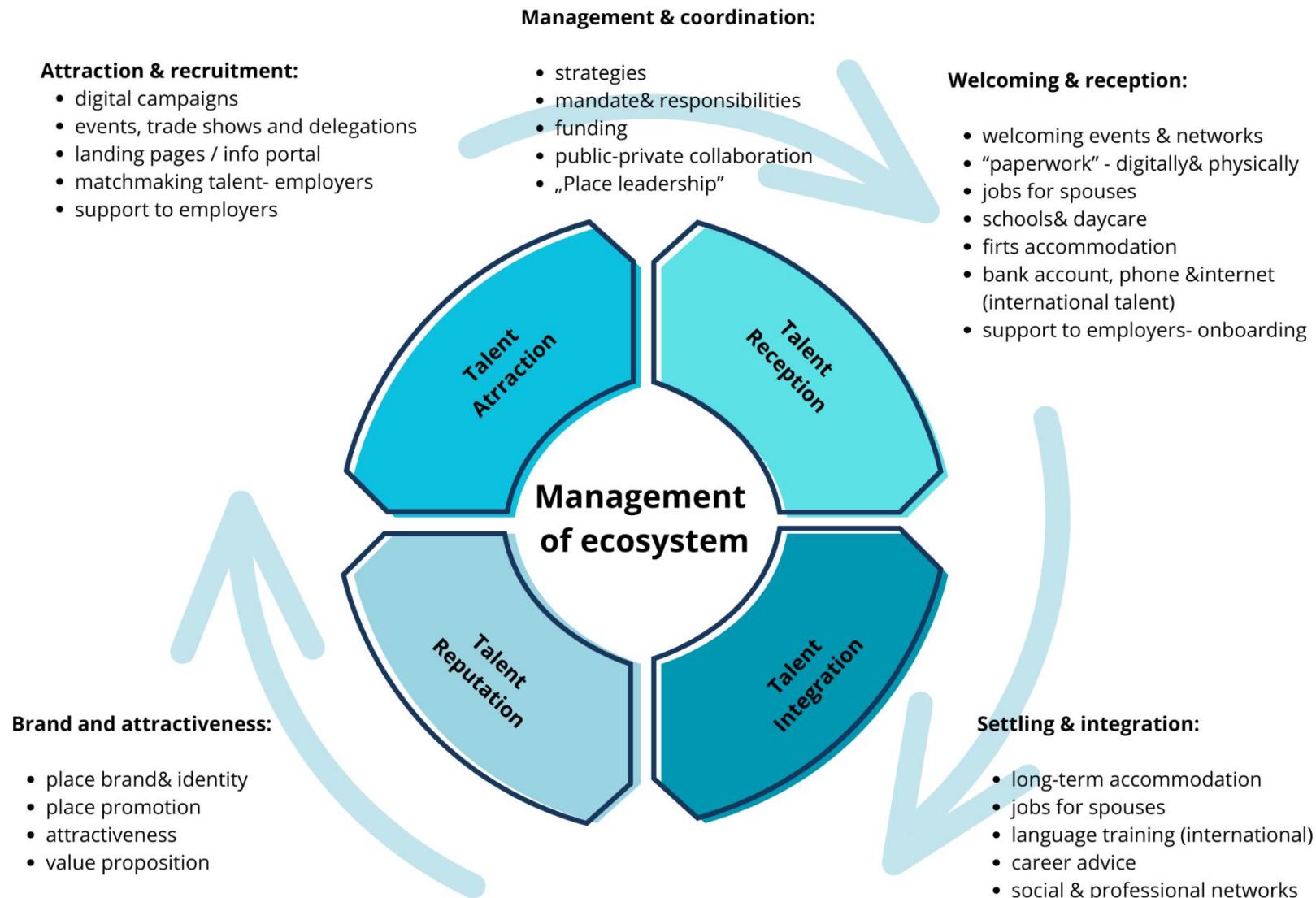
A specific objective that supports the overarching goal of contributing to the creation of a more startup- and entrepreneurship-friendly local ecosystem is **to increase the number of initiatives dedicated to entrepreneurs**. These include events dedicated to traditional businesses, start-ups or young people just entering the market, organised by institutions supporting the development of entrepreneurship individually, as well as joint initiatives.

**Graphic 3** illustrates **the key elements of local entrepreneurial ecosystems**, which work together to create an environment conducive to business and start-up development. In the context of the ‘C4TALENT - creating a better environment for start-ups and companies to attract and retain talent’ project, the graphic helps to illustrate how the activities of the city and institutions supporting entrepreneurship can be coordinated to create a coherent and friendly ecosystem for start-ups and local entrepreneurs in order to retain talented people in the city.

**Graphic 4** shows **the areas that**, according to experts, **belong to the ‘talent management’ strategy**, indicating the tasks that the city can undertake in each of the areas indicated in order to ‘take care of talent’ and prevent the outflow of highly qualified people from the city.



Graphic 3: Elements of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, source: presentation at the 'C4TALENT' inter-national meeting in Vilanova i la Geltru, Spain (May 2024)



Graphic 4: Possible actions within the framework of 'talent management'. Based on a presentation by M. Andersson during an international meeting in Alghero, Sardinia (October 2024)

## 2.4 Intervention areas and list of actions

<b>Specific objective / intervention area 1</b>	<b>Supporting and strengthening the local business and start-up ecosystem by strengthening cooperation between business support institutions through joint and more comprehensive initiatives/</b> <i>Cooperation and ecosystem building</i>			
<b>Result indicator:</b> number of events and partnership activities	<b>Definition</b>		<b>Baseline value</b>	<b>Target value</b>
	Strengthening cooperation between business environment institutions located in the city		Action 1.1: <b>0</b>	Action 1.1: <b>1</b>
			Action 1.2: <b>7</b>	Action 1.2: <b>15</b>
			Action 1.3: <b>0</b>	Action 1.3: <b>4</b>
			Action 1.4: <b>0</b>	Action 1.4: <b>4</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Intended result</b>	<b>Responsible organisation</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>1.1 A joint 'map' of business support institutions</b>	A graphic map presenting business support institutions in the city, their competences and available resources.	Clear information about the institution's competences and resources, better use of available support services.	Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab/coordinating department)	2026

<b>1.2 Establishing cooperation with institutions promoting entrepreneurship</b>	Number of institutions co-organising programmes, training courses and activities supporting young entrepreneurs	Increasing the number of young people participating in programmes and training, increasing entrepreneurial skills	Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab/coordinating department)	2026
<b>1.3 Supporting cooperation between universities, businesses and cities (knowledge transfer)</b>	The number of events, seminars and workshops that bring together the academic, business and urban communities	Development of cooperation networks between universities, businesses and cities (knowledge and technology transfer)	Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab/coordinating department)	2026
<b>1.4 A series of events in cooperation with business environment institutions presenting their current offerings („one day one-stop shop”)</b>	Number of regular events presenting the current support offered by business environment institutions to entrepreneurs	Updating the current range of support offered by various business environment institutions to entrepreneurs, raising awareness of available services	Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab/coordinating department)	2026

<b>Specific objective / intervention area 2</b>		<b>Increasing the number of initiatives dedicated to start-ups, entrepreneurs and students/ Attracting and retaining talents</b>		
<b>Result indicator:</b> The concept of municipal support for young entrepreneurs	<b>Definition</b>		<b>Baseline value</b>	<b>Target value</b>
<b>Result indicator:</b> number of networking events	Actions that will increase the number of talented individuals in the city, particularly among students at local universities.		Action 2.1: <b>0</b> Action 2.2: <b>2</b> Action 2.3: <b>0</b>	Action 2.1: <b>1</b> Action 2.2: <b>10</b> Action 2.3: <b>3</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Intended result</b>	<b>Responsible organisation</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>2.1 Developing a concept for municipal support for start-up entrepreneurs (e.g. co-working space with the possibility of organising events)</b>	Number of documents developed describing support models for start-up entrepreneurs that can be implemented by the city	1 program	Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab/coordinating department)	2027
<b>s2.2 A series of networking events</b>	Number of networking events organised for start-ups, entrepreneurs and students, enabling them to establish business	10 events	Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban	2027

	contacts and exchange experiences		Lab/coordinating department)	
<b>2.3. Municipal mentoring programme supporting young businesses (final years of secondary school, students)</b>	Number of participants in the mentoring programme dedicated to young entrepreneurs	3 programme participants	Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab/coordinating department)	2027-2028

<b>Specific objective / intervention area 3</b>	<b>Initiating and scaling activities in the field of micro-innovation and quality of life/ Quality of life</b>			
<b>Result indicator: number of initiatives/ projects</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Baseline value</b>	<b>Target value</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Intended result</b>	<b>Responsible organisation</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>3.1 Initiating and scaling activities in the field of</b>	The number of new municipal projects or	2 projects/initiatives	Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre	2029-2030

<b>micro-innovation and quality of life</b>	initiatives aimed at improving quality of life, supporting creativity and developing micro-innovations. The indicator measures the real increase in activities and projects involving students.		for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab/coordinating department)	
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### 3 ACTIVITY PLAN

#### 3.1 Intervention Area 1

Action title	1.1 Joint “map” of local business support institutions in the city	Action owner:	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)
<b>Description</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Links to objectives:</b>	Supporting and strengthening the local business and start-up ecosystem by strengthening cooperation between business support institutions through joint and more comprehensive initiatives.
<b>The ‘Joint map of business support institutions’ aims to create an interactive tool presenting entities offering support to entrepreneurs, start-ups and innovators in the city. The map will facilitate access to information, strengthen cooperation between institutions and improve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of local business support institutions,</li> <li>• The environment supporting young talent in this sector, both public and private.</li> </ul>	<b>Estimated costs (average exchange rate of the National Bank of Poland as of 8 October 2025):</b>	<b>14 106,70 EUR</b>

<b>the use of available forms of business support.</b>					
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<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timing</b>		<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Estimated cost</b>	<b>Source of funding</b>
	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>			
<b>1.1.1 Diagnosis and needs analysis</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	List of institution categories, project scope	1 175,56 EUR	<b>External sources</b>
<b>1.1.2 Inventory of institutions and data collection</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2026	Database of institutions	1 880,89 EUR	
<b>1.1.3 Developing the concept of the map and information structure /form</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2026	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	Conceptual design, categories, functionalities	1 410,67 EUR	
<b>1.1.4 Graphic design</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	Graphic mock-up of the map	2 351,12 EUR	
<b>1.1.5 Development and implementation of a map (online tool)</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	Interactive map – available online	5 877,79 EUR	
<b>1.1.6 Publication and promotion</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2026	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2026	A graphic map presenting business support institutions in the city, their competencies,	1 410,67 EUR	

and available resources;  
promotional campaign

Action title	<b>1.2 Establishing cooperation with institutions and organisations promoting entrepreneurship</b>	Action owner:	<b>Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)</b>
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<b>Description</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Links to objectives:</b>	Supporting and strengthening the local business and start-up ecosystem by strengthening cooperation between business support institutions through joint and more comprehensive initiatives.					
<b>Establishing cooperation with institutions promoting entrepreneurship in order to increase the number of young people participating in programmes and training courses and to improve their entrepreneurial skills.</b>	City, business support institutions, start-ups	<b>Estimated costs (average exchange rate of the National Bank of Poland as of 8 October 2025):</b>	<b>18 103,59 EUR</b>					
		<b>Readiness:</b>	0%					100%

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timing</b>		<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Estimated cost</b>	<b>Source of funding</b>
	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>			
<b>1.2.1 Analysis of the ecosystem and identification of institutions</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	A list of institutions and partners has been drawn up, and the scope of cooperation has been defined.	235,11 EUR	

supporting entrepreneurship					
<b>1.2.2 Establishing contact and consulting with institutions (meetings, interviews, surveys)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	Establishing a cooperation network, confirming institutional commitment	8228,90 EUR	<b>External sources</b>
<b>1.2.3 Developing a concept for a shared map and rules for cooperation</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2026	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2026	Conceptual map design, cooperation agreement, promotional action plan	1 410,67 EUR	
<b>1.2.4 Creation and implementation of an interactive online map with information about support institutions</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2026	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	A publicly available map of institutions, a tool for promoting cooperation and programme offerings	5 877,79 EUR	
<b>1.2.5 Promotion of the map and the institution's offer (information campaign, activities in schools and universities, social media)</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2026	Increasing the number of young participants in programmes and training courses, raising awareness and entrepreneurial skills	2 351,12 EUR	

Action title	1.3 Supporting cooperation between universities, businesses and cities (transfer of knowledge)	Action owner:	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)
<b>Description</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Links to objectives:</b>	Supporting and strengthening the local business and start-up ecosystem by strengthening cooperation between business support institutions through joint and more comprehensive initiatives.
<b>The city as a 'bridge' between universities and business, support in establishing cooperation</b>	Universities, business, city, Economic Council to the President	<b>Estimated costs (average exchange rate of the National Bank of Poland as of 8 October 2025):</b> <b>Readiness:</b>	<b>14 341,81 EUR</b>

Activity	Timing		Deliverables	Estimated cost	Source of funding
	Start	End			

<b>1.3.1 Identification of potential cooperation partners (universities, institutes, companies, clusters, start-ups)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	Database of partners and potential participants in cooperation	705,34 EUR	
<b>1.3.2 Diagnosis of needs and areas of possible knowledge transfer (surveys, meetings, consultations)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2026	Report on thematic areas of cooperation, identification of joint projects	3 526,67 EUR	
<b>1.3.3 Organisation of a series of events combining science and business (hackathons, innovation forums, panels, seminars)</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2026	At least three networking events, increasing the number of joint initiatives between universities and businesses	5 877,79 EUR	<b>External sources</b>
<b>1.3.4 Establishment of a 'platform' for cooperation and communication in the area of joint initiatives (online/offline) for the exchange of</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2026	Launch of a 'platform' supporting knowledge transfer and cooperation	2 351,12 EUR	

<b>knowledge and information about projects</b>				
<b>1.3.5 Promotion of cooperation results (publications, media, summary conference)</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2026	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2026	Increased visibility of the initiative, consolidation of partnerships and good practices	1880,89 EUR

<b>Action Title</b>	<b>1.4 A series of events organised in cooperation with business environment institutions, presenting their current offer ('one day one-stop-shop')</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)</b>
<b>Description</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Links to objectives:</b>	Supporting and strengthening the local business and start-up ecosystem by strengthening cooperation between business support institutions through joint and more comprehensive initiatives.
<b>The task involves organising a series of 'One Day – One Stop Shop' events, which will provide a space for direct contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business environment institutions (RARR, PARP,</li> </ul>	<b>Estimated costs (average exchange rate of the National Bank of Poland</b>	<b>12 225,80 EUR</b>

<p><b>between entrepreneurs, students, start-ups and residents with institutions offering business support. Each event is designed to enable participants to learn about current offers, programmes, advisory and grant services, building awareness and facilitating access to the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Rzeszów.</b></p>	<p>ZUS, PUP, ARP, clusters, chambers of commerce)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities and technology transfer centres</li> <li>• Young entrepreneurs, start-ups, students, secondary school pupils</li> <li>• Municipality of Rzeszów (Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations and local partnerships for the development of entrepreneurship</li> </ul>	<p><b>as of 8 October 2025):</b></p>					
		<b>Readiness:</b>	0%			100%	

Activity	Timing	Deliverable	Estimated cost	Source of funding
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	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>			
<b>1.4.1 Identification and invitation of business environment institutions to cooperate (determining cycle partners, schedule and topics)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	List of partners and confirmed institutions participating in the cycle	1175,56 EUR	
<b>1.4.2 Preparation of the concept for the 'One Day – One Stop Shop' events (format of meetings, space, schedule, logistics)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2026	Scenario for a series of events, promotional activities plan	1410,67 EUR	
<b>1.4.3 Organisation of a series of events (e.g. 4 editions – each in a different location or for a different audience: school pupils, students, start-ups, entrepreneurs)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	An organised series of events presenting the offer of business environment institutions, increased number of participants using the services of institutions	7 053,35 EUR	<b>External sources</b>
<b>1.4.4 Promotional and informational activities (social</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2026	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	Increased awareness among residents about available forms of support,	1 880,89 EUR	

<b>media campaign, posters, reports, live broadcasts)</b>			recognition of the initiative		
<b>1.4.5 Evaluation and preparation of a summary report (participant surveys, attendance analysis, recommendations for future editions)</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2026	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2026	Evaluation report, recommendations, plan for continuing events	705,33 EUR	

### 3.2 Intervention Area 2

Action Title	2.1 Developing a concept for municipal support for start-up entrepreneurs (e.g. co-working space with the possibility of organising events)	Action Owner	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)				
Description	Stakeholders	Links to objectives:	Supporting and strengthening the local entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem/ Collaboration and ecosystem building				
The task involves preparing a comprehensive concept for municipal support for young entrepreneurs, including the design of a co-working space and the definition of its operating model. This space will become a place for work, exchange of experiences, organisation of workshops and development events. The result will be an implementation plan and a concept for managing the co-working space, which will contribute to the development of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab),</li> <li>Beginning entrepreneurs, start-ups, freelancers</li> <li>Universities, business incubators, RARR, PARP,</li> <li>Business support organisations, chambers of</li> </ul>	Estimated costs:	<b>8 699,13 EUR</b>				
		Readiness:	20%				

<b>entrepreneurship in Rzeszów and increase the availability of professional space for start-ups and freelancers.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commerce, technology clusters</li> <li>• Private partners (e.g. co-working operators, developers)</li> </ul>				
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Activity	Timing		Deliverable	Estimated cost	Source of funding
	Start	End			
<b>2.1.1 Analysis of the needs of start-up entrepreneurs and review of good practices (surveys, workshops, national and international benchmarking)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2027	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2027	Report with needs assessment and recommendations regarding space functionality	1 880,89 EUR	
<b>2.1.2 Developing a functional and spatial concept for co-working (work areas, meeting</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2027	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	Preliminary concept of a co-working space tailored to local needs	2 351,12 EUR	

areas, event areas, technical facilities)						
<b>2.1.3 Developing a model for managing and operating the space (regulations, rules of use, service offering, partners)</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	Management model and operational plan for coworking	1 880,89 EUR		<b>External sources</b>
<b>2.1.4 Public and expert consultations (workshops with entrepreneurs, business environment institutions, experts)</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	Taking stakeholders' opinions into account, final version of the concept	1 410,67 EUR		
<b>2.1.5 Preparation of the final document – municipal support concept (including model, recommendations, implementation and financing schedule)</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027	Finalised concept document – plan for implementing a co-working space	1 175,56 EUR		

Action title: 2.2 Series of networking events		Action owner:	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)				
Description	Stakeholders	Links to objectives:	Supporting and strengthening the local entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem/ Collaboration and ecosystem building				
<b>The task is to organise a series of networking events aimed at integrating innovative communities, exchanging knowledge and experience, establishing business contacts and supporting cross-sector partnerships. The events will be an opportunity to present local initiatives, start-ups, offers from universities and business environment institutions. The meetings will be held in a format conducive to relationship building (networking, open mic, discussion panels, workshops), and will result in the strengthening of the local innovation and</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab)</li> <li>• Local entrepreneurs, start-ups, young innovators</li> <li>• Universities, research units, scientific circles</li> <li>• Business environment institutions (RARR, PARP, chambers of commerce)</li> <li>• Industry organisations</li> </ul>	<b>Estimated costs (average exchange rate of the National Bank of Poland as of 8 October 2025):</b> <b>10 344,91 EUR</b>					
		<b>Readiness:</b>	0%				100%

<b>entrepreneurship ecosystem.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• Investors</li> <li>• Mentors</li> <li>• Technology partners</li> </ul>				
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Activity	Timing		Deliverables	Estimated cost	Source of funding
	Start	End			
<b>2.2.1 Preparation of a concept for a series of networking events (themes, target groups, format, partners)</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2027	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	Catalogue/list of events and annual schedule	940,45 EUR	
<b>2.2.2 Recruitment of partners and speakers, and promotion of events (online campaign, social media, mailing, cooperation with universities and business environment institutions)</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027	List of partners, communication plan, promotional materials	1880,89 EUR	

<b>2.2.3 Organisation of networking events (series of meetings) at least 4 editions per year, with elements of pitching, workshops and Q&amp;A sessions</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027	Organised events with a specific number of participants and an evaluation survey	5 877,79 EUR	<b>External sources</b>
<b>2.2.4 Monitoring and evaluation of events (satisfaction surveys, attendance reports, analysis of results)</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027	Report on participant satisfaction levels and participation rates	705,33 EUR	
<b>2.2.5 Summary and final report with recommendations for future editions</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027	Final report with results, recommendations and proposal to continue the cycle	940,45 EUR	

<b>Action Title</b>	<b>2.3 Municipal mentoring programme supporting young businesses (final year secondary school pupils, students)</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)</b>
<b>Description</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Links to objectives:</b>	Increasing the number of initiatives dedicated to start-ups, entrepreneurs and students

<p><b>The programme aims to create a local mentoring ecosystem for young people who plan to start a business, develop start-ups or implement innovative projects. Participants will receive substantive and networking support as well as practical guidance from experienced mentors from business, science and organisations supporting entrepreneurship. The initiative involves recruiting participants, matching them with mentors, a series of meetings and a presentation of the programme's results. The result will be an increase in the number of new initiatives and start-ups and the development of participants' competences in the field of entrepreneurship and innovation.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final-year secondary school pupils and university students,</li> <li>Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab),</li> <li>Mentors from the business sector, start-ups, universities and public institutions,</li> <li>Universities and secondary schools (recruitment partners),</li> <li>Business environment institutions (RARR, incubators, chambers of commerce)</li> <li>Non-governmental</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated costs (average exchange rate of the National Bank of Poland as of 8 October 2025):</b></p>	<p><b>13 871,58 EUR</b></p>						
		<p><b>Readiness:</b></p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>0%</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </table>	0%					100%
0%					100%				

	organisations operating in the field of entrepreneurship and innovation				
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Activity	Timing		Deliverable	Estimated cost	Source of funding
	Start	End			
<b>2.3.1 Developing a mentoring programme concept – objectives, methodology, topics, participant and mentor profiles, rules and regulations</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2027	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	Finalised concept document and action plan.	940,45 EUR	
<b>2.3.2 Recruitment of participants and mentors (information campaign, online recruitment, information meetings at schools and universities)</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	List of participants and mentors selected for the programme	1880,89 EUR	

<b>2.3.3 Implementation of a mentoring cycle – one-on-one meetings, group workshops, consultations with experts, networking sessions</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2027	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027	Completed mentoring programme (minimum 5 sessions), attendance report	6 583,12 EUR	<b>External sources</b>
<b>2.3.4 Demo Day / Final Gala – presentation of projects, pitching before the jury, awards for the best initiatives</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2028	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2028	Summing up event, promotion of participants and start-ups	3 526,67 EUR	
<b>2.3.5 Evaluation and final report – analysis of satisfaction levels, number of projects created, recommendations for the future</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2028	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2028	Final report with conclusions and recommendations	940,45 EUR	

### 3.3 Intervention area 3

Action Title	3.1 Initiating and scaling activities in the field of micro-innovation and quality of life.	Action Owner	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)				
Description	Stakeholders	Links to objectives:	The need to develop the offer in the area of student culture				
<b>The task aims to develop and implement urban pilot projects in the field of micro-innovation – small, flexible initiatives testing new solutions to improve the quality of life, public space, mobility, culture and social integration. The initiatives will be co-created by students, universities and local institutions in the form of workshops, hackathons and pilot programmes. The result of these activities will be the implementation of new test solutions in urban spaces and increased involvement of young people in the</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Rzeszów (Centre for Urban Innovation – Urban Lab),</li> <li>• Students and the academic community,</li> <li>• Higher education institutions (UR, PRz, WSLiZ, WSPiA),</li> <li>• Business and innovation support institutions (RARR,</li> </ul>	<b>Estimated costs (average exchange rate of the National Bank of Poland as of 8 October 2025):</b> <b>26 567,61 EUR</b>					
		<b>Readiness:</b>	0%				100%

<p><b>process of co-creating the city.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incubators, clusters),</li> <li>• Youth organisations and NGOs active in the field of urban innovation,</li> <li>• Municipal units implementing pilot solutions (e.g. Department of Roads, Department of Culture, City Strategy Office)</li> </ul>			
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Activity	Timing		Deliverables	Estimated cost	Source of funding
	Start	End			
<b>3.1.1 Developing a micro-innovation programme concept – defining</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2029	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2029	Programme document and implementation schedule	1 645,78 EUR	

objectives, thematic areas, recruitment rules and pilot implementations					
<b>3.1.2 Creative workshops / urban hackathons – generating and developing ideas in the area of quality of life and micro-innovation</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2029	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2029	List of participants and submitted project ideas	1 410,67 EUR	<b>External sources</b>
<b>3.1.3 Verification and evaluation of the proposals submitted</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2029	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2029	At least 5 micro-innovation concepts developed	5 877,79 EUR	
<b>3.1.4 Piloting selected micro-innovations – implementation in urban space / trial launch of activities</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2030	3 <sup>rd</sup> q. 2030	At least two pilot projects implemented in urban areas	16 457,81 EUR	
<b>3.1.5 Evaluation and presentation of results (e.g. Demo Day, report, recommendations for the city)</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2030	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2030	Final report and presentation of programme results	1 175,56 EUR	

## 4 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

### 4.1 Gantt chart

INTERVENTION AREAS	2026				2027				2028				2029				2030			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
I. COOPERATION AND ECOSSYSTEM BUILDING	1.1 A "joint" map of local institutions supporting business in the city																			
	1.2 Establishing cooperation with institutions and organisations promoting entrepreneurship																			
	1.3 Supporting cooperation between universities, businesses and administration to enable the transfer of knowledge from academia to business																			
	1.4 A series of events in cooperation with institutions supporting entrepreneurship presenting their current offer (one day one-stop-shop)																			
II. ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TALENT					2.1 Developing a concept for municipal support for start-up entrepreneurs (e.g. co-working space with the possibility of organising events)															
					2.2 Series of networking events															
					2.3 Municipal mentoring programme supporting young businesses (final year secondary school students, university students)															
III. QUALITY OF LIFE													3.1. Initiating and scaling activities in the field of micro-innovation and quality of life							

## 4.2 Governance of implementation

The **Integrated Action Plan** will be submitted to the **Mayor of Rzeszów** for recommendation regarding its implementation by the **department coordinating the task, the Urban Innovation Center – Urban Lab**. The document constitutes a set of proposed actions developed with the support of members of the **URBACT Local Group** and inspired by the best practices of the project partners, aimed at creating a more startup- and business-friendly environment, with particular emphasis on actions dedicated to **students**. They are precisely the ones who are first recognized as individuals with high business potential, both due to their openness to new solutions and their eligibility for funding and incentives to which they are entitled under applicable national regulations.

As we read in the “Diagnosis for the Development Strategy of the City of Rzeszów until 2035” (section ‘Higher education’): *According to the survey ‘The image of Rzeszów as a city and a place brand’, respondents, when assessing the influence of institutions, organisations and activities undertaken by the city on the state and design of the city, indicating up to three of them, most often chose universities (61.1%). This compares with the airport (56.85%), shopping malls and centres (38.3%) and businesses (32.3%). According to the respondents, universities will also be the most important institutions determining the position of Rzeszów in the future (47.8%). According to the respondents, students are the social group with the greatest influence on the city's development (57.6%, followed by investors - 54.8% and entrepreneurs - 53.6%). These results show how important Rzeszów's universities and their students are to the city's image).*

Most of the elements proposed in **the Integrated Action Plan** have been designated as **urban actions**, the **coordination** of which will be managed by the **Urban Innovation Center – Urban Lab**. Relevant departments and substantive units of the Rzeszów City Office will be involved in the implementation of individual tasks, invited to cooperate as **expert partners** supporting actions in areas corresponding to their competencies. This approach will ensure a **participatory nature** in the implementation of the Plan and will enable the utilization of specialists' knowledge and experience in carrying out specific actions and projects.

The implementation of the Plan, and thus the execution of some of the planned activities, will require **the involvement of the city's community** due to their scope and complexity. **Maintaining existing partnerships** with representatives of entities and institutions from the academic community,

as well as **the business and science sectors**, which form the foundation for further cooperation, is of key importance in this process. It is equally important **to build a sustainable, expert ecosystem** in the form of a **cooperation ‘platform’** that enables **systematic evaluation of the Plan’s implementation** and the exchange of knowledge and experience between partners. Many representatives of institutions involved in the implementation of the ‘**C4TALENT**’ project are already supporting the city in this process and declare their intention **to continue cooperation after its completion** in order to jointly **build a local ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation**.

### **4.3 Resourcing and Funding**

**The implementation of the tasks** included in the Integrated Action Plan assumes the acquisition of external financing to enable the effective implementation of the planned activities and initiatives. Given the long-term nature of the project and its importance for the development of the local innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, it is reasonable to use external sources of funding available under regional, national and European programmes.

**It is advisable to develop and implement a strategy for obtaining external funds**, including:

- 1) **European funds**, including European Funds for Eastern Poland 2021–2027, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan,
- 2) **national and regional funds** supporting the development of entrepreneurship, innovation and digital competences,
- 3) **Norwegian and EEA funds**,
- 4) **grant competitions, public-private partnerships** based on cooperation, as well as sponsorship initiatives and private investments.

In the process of implementing individual activities, the Urban Innovation Center – Urban Lab will play a key role, serving as the coordinator in the preparation of projects, identification of funding sources, and collaboration with institutional and expert partners.

*Summary Financial Table*

Action Title	Output targets	Responsible organisation	Cost (EUR)	Timing	
				Start	End
<b>Cooperation and ecosystem creation/ Supporting and strengthening the local business and start-up ecosystem by strengthening cooperation between business support institutions through joint and more comprehensive initiatives.</b>					
<b>Action 1.1 A joint 'map' of local institutions supporting business in the city</b>	1 map	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)	14 106,70 EUR	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	4 <sup>th</sup> 2026
<b>Action 1.2 Establishing cooperation with institutions and organisations promoting entrepreneurship</b>	15 institutions	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)	18 103,59 EUR	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	4 <sup>th</sup> 2026
<b>Action 1.3 Supporting cooperation between universities and businesses to enable the transfer of knowledge from academia to business</b>	4 events	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)	14 341,81 EUR	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	4 <sup>th</sup> 2026
<b>Action 1.4 A series of events in cooperation with business</b>	4 events	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban	12 225,80 EUR	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2026	4 <sup>th</sup> 2026

<b>environment institutions presenting their current offer (‘one day one-stop shop’)</b>		Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)			
<b>Attracting and retaining talent/ Increasing the number of initiatives dedicated to start-ups, entrepreneurs and students</b>					
<b>Action 2.1 Developing a concept for municipal support for start-up entrepreneurs (e.g. co-working space with the possibility of organising events)</b>	1 concept	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)	8 699,13 EUR	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2027	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027
<b>Action 2.2 Series of networking events</b>	10 events	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)	13 871,58 EUR	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2027	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027
<b>Action 2.3 Municipal mentoring programme supporting young businesses (final year secondary school students, university students)</b>	3 startups/ projects	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)	10 344,91 EUR	2 <sup>nd</sup> q. 2027	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2027
<b>Quality of life / Initiating and scaling activities in the field of micro-innovation and quality of life.</b>					

<b>Action 3.1 Initiating and scaling activities in the field of micro-innovation and quality of life</b>	2 projects	Municipality of Rzeszów (Department of Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab)	26 567,61 EUR	1 <sup>st</sup> q. 2029	4 <sup>th</sup> q. 2030
<b>Total for IAP</b>		<b>118 261,13 EUR</b>			

#### **4.4 Monitoring Framework and Process**

The monitoring and evaluation system is designed to track progress in the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) on an ongoing basis, assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the actions undertaken, and identify potential deviations while recommending corrective measures. This mechanism will ensure alignment with strategic objectives, increase transparency of actions, and enable decision-making based on up-to-date data and indicators. **The overall coordination of the monitoring process is the responsibility of the Urban Innovation Center – Urban Lab, which serves as the main entity responsible for data collection, results analysis, report preparation, and recommending corrective actions.** The Urban Innovation Center – Urban Lab will collaborate with the substantive units of the Rzeszów City Office and external partners who are responsible for specific tasks outlined in the Plan. Each unit involved in implementing the IAP activities will be obligated to provide the necessary information and interim reports to enable a comprehensive assessment of progress in achieving the planned objectives.

Monitoring will cover both the quantitative aspect: measured by achieving the set indicators, and the qualitative aspect: relating to the assessment of the impact of actions on the local community, the effectiveness of implementation, and compliance with strategic objectives.

The monitoring process will be based on cyclical annotation reporting, within which the Urban Innovation Center – Urban Lab will document completed activities, the degree of task completion, and recommendations for further actions, and the monitoring tool will be adjusted during implementation to meet current needs.

**Progress in implementing the Integrated Action Plan will be measured using a set of indicators**, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. These indicators will relate, among other things, to the number of actions carried out, the level of participation of residents and stakeholders, the number of partnerships established within the framework of cooperation, the number of micro-innovations implemented, and the level of satisfaction of initiative participants.

Within the monitoring system, **key stakeholders** have been identified along with their roles and scope of responsibilities:

- 1) **Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab** (Centre): It serves as the Coordinator of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP), responsible for

coordinating the entire monitoring process, analyzing data, preparing reports, and recommending corrective actions. The Center also provides expert support in the assessment of reports, recommending remedial measures, and overseeing the alignment of implemented actions with the city's strategic objectives.

- 2) **Departments and specialist units** of the Rzeszów City Council: substantive and expert support.
- 3) **External partners** (universities, social organizations, businesses): support in the implementation of activities, data provision, participation in evaluation, expert consultancy.

The designed system for monitoring and controlling the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan ensures transparency, effectiveness, and continuity of the implementation process. **It is primarily based on cooperation between departments and substantive units of the Rzeszów City Hall.**

## *Result indicators*

Specific objective	Result indicator		
	Definition	Expected result	Source of Information
<b>SO1 Supporting and strengthening the local business and start-up ecosystem by strengthening cooperation between business support institutions through joint and more comprehensive initiatives.</b>	Strengthening cooperation between business environment institutions located in the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased sense of the existence of a cohesive ecosystem;</li> <li>Positive assessment of the usefulness of joint initiatives;</li> <li>Positive feedback from entrepreneurs and startups about the functioning of the ecosystem.</li> </ul>	Internal reports of the Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab, project documentation, minutes of partner meetings, reports of institutions participating in activities, evaluation surveys. Including reports on participation in training courses and programmes, evaluation surveys of participants.
<b>SO2 Increasing the number of initiatives dedicated to start-ups, entrepreneurs and students</b>	Measures that will increase the number of talented individuals in the city, particularly among students at local universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher assessment of the substantive value and attractiveness of support offerings for entrepreneurs, startups, and students (including workshops, training, etc.);</li> <li>Increased diversity of the offered activities;</li> </ul>	Reports from the Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab, co-working documentation, event reports, evaluation surveys of mentoring programme participants. Including reports on participation in training courses and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced perception of the city as friendly to innovation and entrepreneurs</li> </ul>	programmes, participant evaluation surveys.
<b>SO3 Initiating and scaling activities in the field of micro-innovation and quality of life</b>	<p>Actions that will help develop initiatives to improve quality of life by increasing the number of engaging projects and the participation of young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing the attractiveness of Rzeszów as a place appealing to live and work for students, specialists, and scientists</li> <li>A coherent city image based on innovation and academia</li> </ul>	<p>The data comes from project documentation and reports by the Urban Innovation Centre – Urban Lab, including research and consultation reports, project documentation and reports on the implementation of urban initiatives dedicated to students, as well as evaluation surveys completed by participants in the activities.</p>

*Output indicators*

Action	Output indicator			
	Definition	Baseline value	Target value	Source of Information
<b>Intervention area 1:</b> Supporting and strengthening the local business and start-up ecosystem by enhancing cooperation between business support institutions through joint and more comprehensive initiatives./ Cooperation and ecosystem creation				
<b>Action 1.1</b>	A joint map of institutions supporting business	0	1	Map documentation, internal UL report, information from cooperating institutions
<b>Action 1.2</b>	Establishing cooperation with institutions supporting entrepreneurship	7	15	Reports on participation in training courses and programmes, documentation from partner institutions, participant evaluation questionnaires
<b>Action 1.3</b>	Supporting cooperation between universities, businesses and cities (knowledge transfer)	0	4	Event reports, academic and business partner reports, project documentation
<b>Action 1.4</b>	A series of events, in cooperation with business environment institutions,	0	4	Event reports, participant surveys, documentation from institutions presenting

	presenting their current offer (one day 'one-stop-shop')			their offerings, evaluation reports
<b>Intervention area 2:</b> Increasing the number of initiatives dedicated to start-ups, entrepreneurs and students/ Attracting and retaining talent				
<b>Action 2.1</b>	Developing a concept for municipal support for start-up entrepreneurs (e.g. co-working space with the possibility of organising events)	0	1	Documentation of developed concepts, internal UL reports, minutes from workshops and consultations
<b>Action 2.2</b>	A series of networking events	2	10	Event reports, participant attendance lists, evaluation surveys
<b>Action 2.3</b>	Municipal mentoring programme supporting young businesses (final years of secondary school, students)	0	3	Participant reports, project documentation, mentor reports, programme evaluation
<b>Area of intervention 3:</b> Initiating and scaling activities in the field of micro-innovation and quality of life				
<b>Action 3.1</b>	Development of urban projects in the field of micro-innovation and quality of life	0	2	UL reports, project documentation, participant lists, evaluation surveys

## 4.5 Overview and Analysis of Risks

Risk Analysis Table	Description of the Risks	Likelihood (high, medium, low)	Impact (high, moderate, low)	Prevention	Mitigation
<b>Administrative Risks</b>	Delays in approvals and official decisions, and potential incompatibility of actions with the city's strategic objectives	Medium	Heigh	Early schedule planning, consultations with departments, units and partners, regular monitoring of activities by CIM – Urban Lab	Prioritisation of critical activities, possibility of postponing deadlines, adjustments to activities on a quarterly or half-yearly basis
<b>Financial Risks</b>	Shortage of funds, delays in transferring funds, or misuse of funds	Medium	Heigh	Ensuring multi-source financing, financial control procedures, training for project teams	Review of the scope of activities, budget transfers, reduction of non-critical costs, internal audits, adjustments in settlements
<b>Operational Risks</b>	Delays in the implementation of project activities (maps, concepts,	Medium	Heigh	Detailed schedule, CIM– Urban Lab supervision, milestone control, good event	Postponements, resource reorganisation, external support,

	workshops), low attendance at events, technical problems in organising events or developing the concept of an 'environment-cooperation platform'.			promotion, testing of 'research-consultation' systems prior to implementation	additional information campaigns, rapid technical intervention, system and data backups
<b>Other Risks</b>	Dissatisfaction among participants or lack of community engagement, sudden changes in regulations or crisis situations (e.g. pandemic, economic crisis)	Medium/ Low	Moderate	Public consultations, surveys, stakeholder participation in planning, external risk analysis, preparation of alternative scenarios	Modification of activities in line with participants' feedback, additional engagement initiatives, transfer of activities online, schedule changes, cost reduction

## 5 THE PLANNING PROCESS

### 5.1 *Summary Description of the Planning Process*

The development of **the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)** for the city of Rzeszów was a response to the need to strengthen the local innovation ecosystem, entrepreneurship, and the quality of life of residents, particularly young people and students. **The goal was to create a comprehensive document that not only defines the city's strategic objectives in supporting startups, entrepreneurs, and students, but also outlines specific actions, success metrics, and implementation timelines, as well as specifying sources of funding.**

The planning process began with an analysis of existing resources and activities, including a review of current urban initiatives, coworking spaces, mentoring programs, and cultural offerings dedicated to students. The analysis of experiences from other cities and best practices, identified, among other things, through the URBACT program, which provided expert knowledge and tools for creating effective action plans in the development of local innovation ecosystems, was also highly significant. The C4TALENT project, on the other hand, enabled the exchange of experiences with European partners, which significantly influenced the shape of the proposed solutions and the methodology of their planning.

The **key stages** of the planning process included:

- 1) **Identification of the needs and potential of the local ecosystem.** This stage was largely devoted to analyzing institutions that support entrepreneurship, examining the collaboration between universities and businesses, and identifying the needs of students and young entrepreneurs.
- 2) **Developing specific objectives and indicators** was the next step, which was taken to define measurable results in the areas of institutional cooperation, attracting talent, developing cultural offerings, and quality of life.
- 3) **Defining actions and milestones** in the plan is a strategic element of planning specific initiatives, timetables and sources of funding, including external funds for the implementation of individual projects.
- 4) **The involvement of stakeholders, including members of the URBACT Local Group**, included an analysis of the business environment, defining the role of universities and identifying the role of start-ups, while taking into account the contribution of city representatives and young residents, which allowed for the development of actions that correspond to the real needs of the local community.

The role of stakeholders was crucial at every stage of planning, both in the diagnosis process and in developing recommendations and verifying proposed actions. Their participation ensured that the plan not only responds to the current needs of the city, but is also feasible to implement and socially acceptable.

The designated planning milestones included, among others: making decisions on the directions of activities in the area of support for startups and entrepreneurship, identifying available funding sources, developing a detailed action schedule, as well as creating a system for monitoring and evaluating the results of implementing the Integrated Action Plan. However, the action schedule remains flexible and can be modified depending on the current situation while maintaining consistency with the IAP and other strategic city documents.

The **entire IAP planning process** was systematic and participatory, carried out in cooperation with the **Local URBACT Group** and the wider community, and based on data, which made it possible to develop a coherent document serving as a reference point for further city activities in the areas of urban innovation, entrepreneurship and quality of life for residents.

## **5.2 Presentation of the ULG - its members and roles**

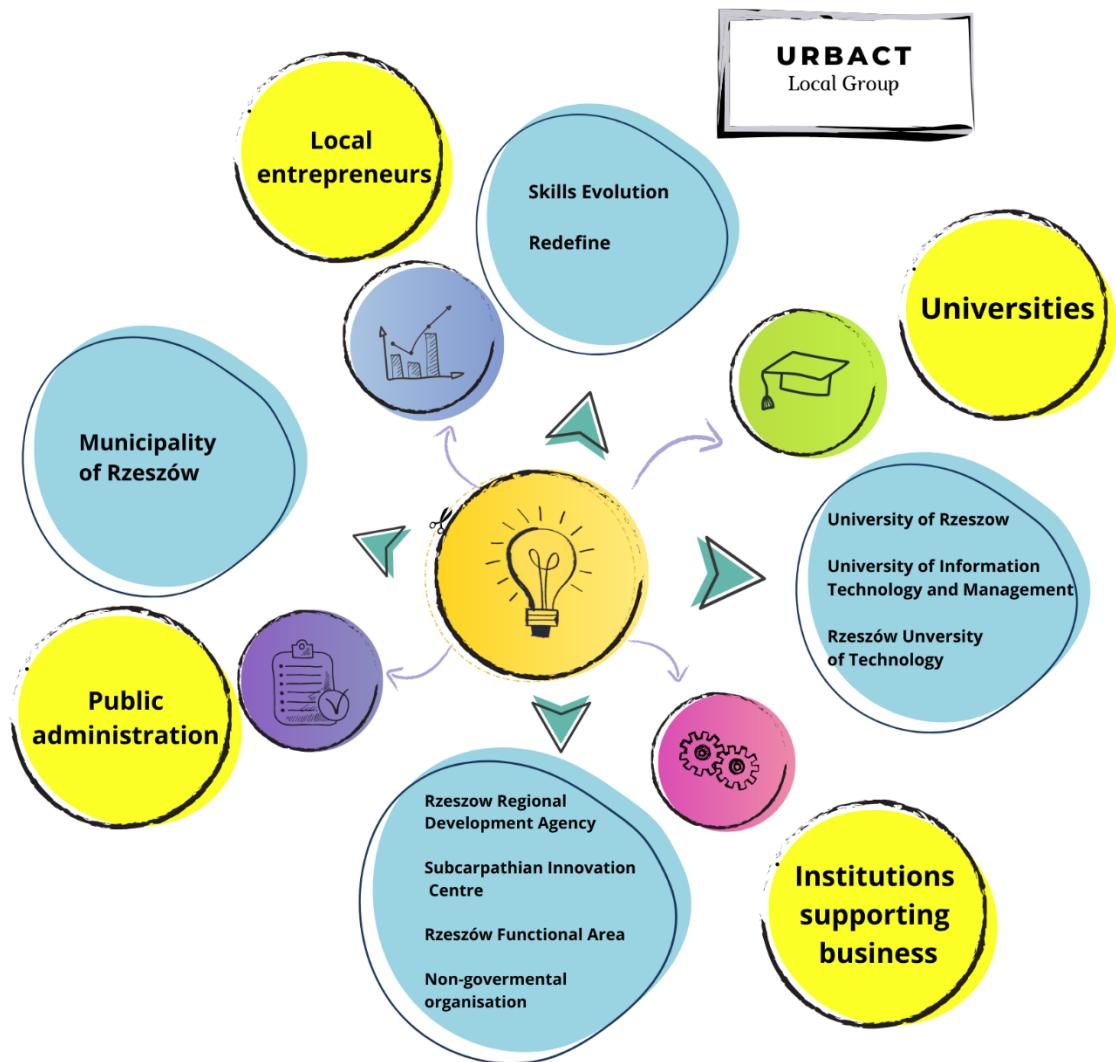
The idea behind the URBACT Local Group was **to bring together a group of specialists and experts** representing various circles related to entrepreneurship in the city in its broadest sense. Representatives of local universities were also invited to join the group, due to the academic potential of the city as the capital of the Podkarpackie region.

The added value of working with the Local URBACT Group is not only the engagement of its members in activities for the City, but also gaining a broader perspective as well as practical advice and suggestions useful in developing plans for the further growth of the local entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Although the composition of the **Local URBACT Group** has evolved since the project's inception (several members resigned due to professional changes), the number of members fluctuates around 15 on average, with the majority wishing to work towards building the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, supporting the city in initiatives aimed at this goal.

To support the implementation of the **Integrated Action Plan**, cooperation with expert or working groups operating at the Urban Innovation Center – Urban Lab is planned. These groups will provide substantive support for the Plan. Experts will assist in monitoring the implementation of actions, data

analysis, report preparation, and recommending possible corrective measures, ensuring that actions are aligned with the city's strategic goals and supporting stakeholder engagement in individual initiatives. This flexible solution allows for the effective use of expert knowledge without the need to create a permanent, formally established team.



Graphic 6: Composition of the Local URBACT Group, original work.

### 5.3 Role and Impact of Transnational Learning – the URBACT added value

#### Sharing experiences and learning lessons

Participation in international meetings and workshops is primarily an opportunity to acquire **new knowledge**, which can be implemented in one's

city as far as possible and within the available resources. It also provides a 'fresh perspective' on existing activities and better planning of future initiatives in the context of achieving specific goals. It is also worth emphasising **the inspiration provided by the initiatives undertaken by the Partners** in the field of the project (e.g. the idea of organising workshops with entrepreneurs, mentioned during his presentation by the representative of the Swedish city of Varberg). It is also important to mention **the establishment of international contacts** with project partners representing various European Union countries, which provides an opportunity to initiate joint ventures in the future. Such activities within the project also provide an opportunity to promote the city and share its own 'good practices' among project partners.

## **Study visits**

When talking about 'good practices', it is also worth mentioning **the study visits** organised as part of regular international meetings. These include, for example, a visit to **Hangar K in Kortrijk, Belgium**, whose mission is to support young entrepreneurs, or a visit to the inspiring **Norrsken House Barcelona** hub.

The former is an innovative, multi-sector space for cooperation and development for start-ups, scale-ups and mature companies, with a particular focus on digital areas, including GameTech and MedTech. On a little over 2,000 square metres of space, converted from a **railway hangar**, entrepreneurs, students, academic partners and public institutions can use offices, workshop rooms and conference rooms, among other facilities.

**Norrsken House Barcelona** is another European **innovation hub**, following Stockholm, created by the Norrsken Foundation – a non-profit organisation supporting entrepreneurs who are changing the world for the better. It is a modern collaboration centre that brings together tech start-ups, investors and experts in one place, focusing on **projects with a positive social and environmental impact**.

Its main areas of activity include:

- support for technology companies operating in areas such as health and medicine, biotechnology and food, climate technologies, sustainable development and the circular economy,
- access to international investment funds, accelerators and support programmes, as well as networking with mentors, industry experts and investors.

**Norrsken House Barcelona** also offers over 10,000 square metres of space, including offices, creative spaces, meeting rooms, an auditorium, networking areas and a range of regular events, workshops and pitching sessions. It is impossible not to mention the hub's unique location in the heart of the Port Vell district. In the immediate vicinity, there are numerous

offices of international technology companies and start-ups, museums and cultural centres, the seaside district of Barceloneta and a modern marina.

Thus, **Norrskens House Barcelona** can serve as inspiration for creating similar places in partner cities, but on a smaller scale and in relation to local conditions.

### **ULG participation in international meetings**

The participation of members of the **URBACT Local Group** in international project meetings is a **valuable source of inspiration and exchange of experiences**. Thanks to direct contact with partners from other European cities, the project leader and the Lead Expert, participants have the **opportunity to learn about innovative solutions supporting the development of start-ups and attracting talent**. This type of cooperation promotes the transfer of good practices that can be adapted and implemented at the local level. International learning also strengthens the competences of **ULG members** in the areas of public policy design, building entrepreneurial ecosystems and implementing integrated urban actions. Furthermore, participation in the project builds lasting network relationships that can result in future partnerships and joint initiatives.

Participation in thematic workshops organised as part of the meetings allows for an **in-depth analysis of specific challenges and the joint development of practical solutions**, taking into account local contexts and needs. These workshops **promote active learning through action** ('learning by doing'), integrate theoretical knowledge with practical experience, and allow participants to develop soft skills such as cooperation, intercultural communication, and creative problem solving.

### **Masterclass**

Masterclasses led by renowned experts were also an important part of international learning in the **C4TALENT** project. Project partners had the opportunity to participate in inspiring sessions that brought expert knowledge in the field of **Talent Attraction Management** to the project work, led by Marcus Andersson from Future Place Leadership, as well as **place branding**, discussed by Martin Boisen from For the Love of Place.

By participating in these types of activities, participants had the opportunity to look at the city in a **more strategic way** – as a **place that actively competes or wants to compete for talent, investment and the attention of external audiences**. This was no different in the case of Rzeszów, which gained a fresh perspective on its own potential as a developing centre of innovation, science and business, which talented, qualified people could consider as a place to live and develop their careers.

The knowledge gained can also support the process of strengthening the city's identity and its positive image on the national and international arena, which in turn could translate into an increase in its attractiveness and ability to attract valuable human capital in the long term.



Graphic 7: Partners of the C4TALENT project, original work

#### 5.4 Testing Actions and Key Learnings

As part of the implementation of the project '**C4TALENT- Creating a better environment for startups and businesses to attract and retain talent**', the City of Rzeszów conducted two test events.

**„Not so rosy, not so easy, but still worth it”**

The first event, organized with the future of entrepreneurs in mind as part of a pilot initiative in October 2024, was a so-called "case study" entitled "Not so rosy, not so easy, but still worth it...", during which representatives of local businesses, who are also members of the **URBACT Local Group**, shared their "business stories" with young people.

**The speakers told** the young people **not only about their successes, but also about their experiences and 'lessons'** related to setting up and running their own business, which was positively received by the students. The subsequent **networking** session, during which participants were able to ask questions of the speakers in a casual conversation, also proved fruitful.

As part of the campaign, we wanted to test first and foremost whether this type of event would find interest among young people, while at the same time demonstrating that running your own business **requires commitment and consistency of purpose if you want to succeed.**

Impressions after the meeting were collected in the form of sticky notes to questions prepared on 3 flipcharts.

The project's proposed event was met with **positive feedback** from the students, who expressed a desire to take part in further meetings of this kind.

However, when organising further meetings of this type, it is worth considering the option of **adding a workshop** part that will help young people "compete" with individual aspects of running their own business, as well as confront their ideas, thoughts or doubts in a smaller group, not necessarily in front of the audience of the entire meeting.

It is also worth noting here that among the conclusions and findings that we reached together with the members of the **URBACT Local Group**, is the statement that young people currently perceive running a business slightly differently than their older colleagues, namely "**work smarter, not hard**".

### **"BusinessUP! Green actions" Seminar**

The aim of the seminar 'BusinessUP! Green actions' was, among other things, to **educate them in the area of entrepreneurship in the presentation of a business idea**, as well as to stimulate and develop their potential business activity, not forgetting to include **pro-environmental initiatives** in the activities of future companies.

During the Seminar, five **students** of the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów presented their speech proposals, and their ideas were evaluated by a Jury consisting of representatives of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, gathered within the **Local URBACT Group**, which operates under the 'C4TALENT' project.

The seminar also provided an opportunity to attend **two lectures on public speaking**. The first focused primarily on practical tips for presentations, such as how to make a good first impression and how to move confidently on stage. The second addressed the content of the speech itself, specifically **how to prepare a pitch in a way that captures the interest and favor of investors**.

The seminar was co-organised by the **University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów**, whose representative talked about the business workshops for students conducted at the university as an example of so-called good practice.

The event showed that there is business potential in students: according to a study of more than 1,500 students conducted by the University of Information Technology and Management in 2023, entrepreneurial potential was examined in four areas: a sense of control, creativity, motivation and willingness to take risks, with English-speaking students showing greater potential than Polish-speaking students, and the greatest entrepreneurial potential was found in nursing students rather than in fields of study such as management. Entrepreneurial potential increases with the stage of education.

**Networking** after the official part of the seminar also showed that students from Rzeszów universities are keen to take part in this kind of event and are open to gaining knowledge from experts.

The seminar, as part of the test campaign, was conducted mainly among a group of students of the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów, however, it is possible to scale this activity to other universities located in Rzeszów. Each of them can take steps to organize similar business workshops, as at WSiIiZ, which will equip students with basic knowledge on setting up and running their own business, select ideas with the greatest chance of success and prepare their representatives (e.g. 2 people from each university) to present an idea as part of a competition for the best pitch. The ideas, similarly to the test campaign, will be assessed by a jury consisting of representatives of the local business and startup ecosystem. The audience will be representatives of universities and business representatives who are interested in investing in startups and innovative ideas. The city's task in this case will be to organize the event itself (location, hosting, catering, supporting prizes, etc.), invite universities and the business community to participate in the event and conduct it. An interesting element could be to establish a theme for a given competition, so that the business ideas proposed by students could help solve urban problems.

It is worth considering introducing an educational element, thanks to which each participant will leave with a resource of additional knowledge in the area of broadly understood entrepreneurship.

**Benefits** of organizing the event:

- integration of the local academic and business community,
- innovative ideas,
- promotion of the city,
- openness to innovative ideas,
- showing the potential of Rzeszów students,
- strengthening cooperation between the city and universities,
- strengthening cooperation with business support institutions,

- increasing the number of joint initiatives,
- City as a "bridge" between business and universities,
- chance to transfer academic knowledge to business.

## #RzeClimat(On)

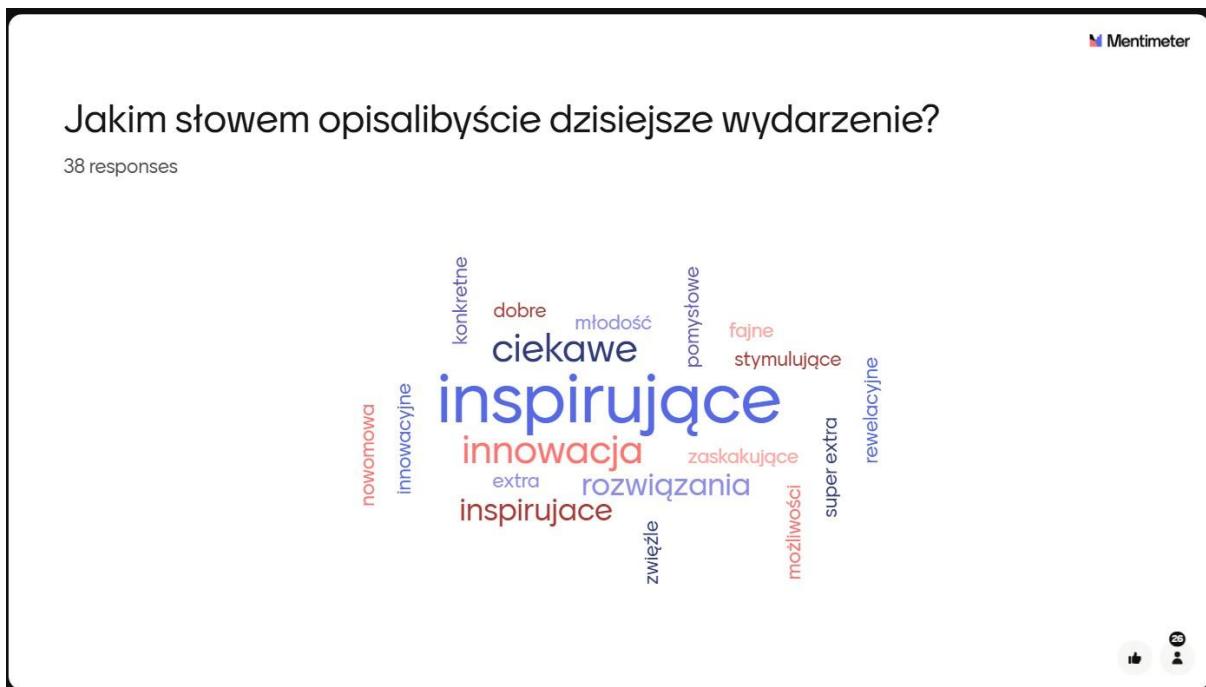
Each partner in the C4TALENT project was required to organize an event that would draw the attention of city residents to issues related to **ecology and the environment**. In the case of Rzeszów, we decided on an event called **"#RzeClimat(On)"**, which focused primarily on issues such as **urban mobility, climate change, biodiversity, social participation, and business**. Its aim was to **raise awareness** among the target group about ecology and climate change and the related challenges for the city and the local community.

The task of the students of Urban Studies at the University of Rzeszów, to whom the workshops were addressed, was to present proposals for solutions to case studies prepared by the lecturers.

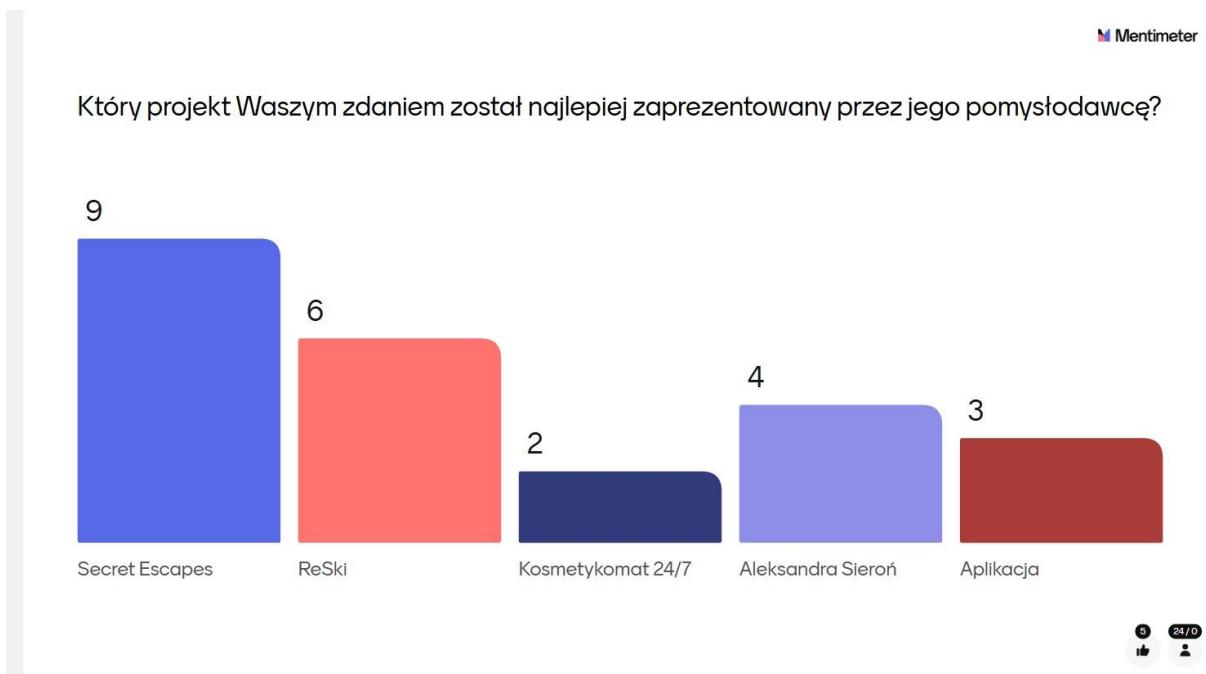
Based on the knowledge they had acquired and their own creativity, the **students proposed solutions such as a green tunnel, a company garden, an additional break for commuting to work by bicycle, and a network of ivy over the city streets**.

It is worth noting that the organization of the **#RzeClimat(On)** event involved both members of the Local URBACT Group, representing the University of Rzeszów and the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów, as well as representatives of other departments of the city hall (the Climate and Environment Department and the Press and Social Communication Office), which in practice demonstrated an **integrated approach** and **the fact that many issues overlap and interact on various levels**, affecting different aspects of urban life.

## 6 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

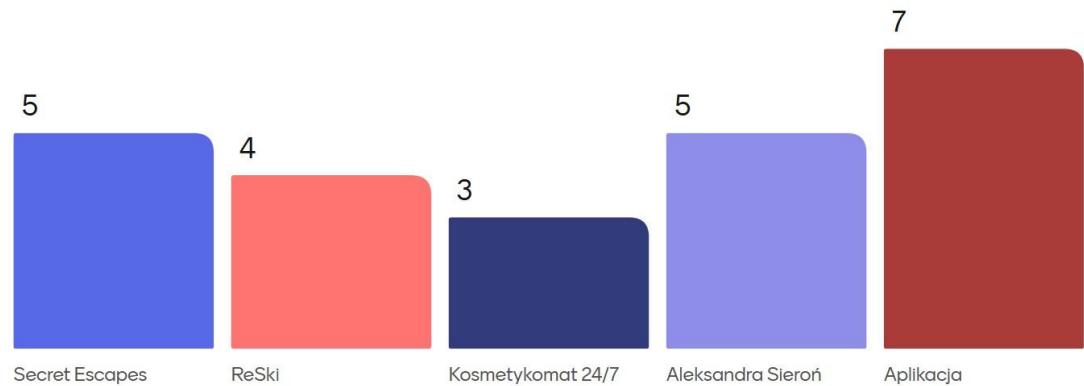


Graphic 8. Survey results (BusinessUP Green actions - Mentimeter) during the event "BusinessUP! Green actions seminar", source: [Interactive presentation software](#)



Graphic 9. Survey results (BusinessUP Green actions - Mentimeter) during the "BusinessUP! Green actions seminar" event, source: [Interactive presentation software](#), February 2025

W który projekt zainwestowałibyście w pierwszej kolejności?



Graphic 10. Survey results (BusinessUP Green actions - Mentimeter) during the event "BusinessUP! Green actions seminar", source: [Interactive presentation software](#); February 2025

