

Remote-IT

Integrated Action Plan

City of Tirana



Credits

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Executive Summary of the IAP

RemoteIT Tirana presents a strategic approach to addressing youth emigration and the limited integration of Tirana into global labour markets. While many young professionals feel compelled to leave Albania to build successful careers, the city possesses strong but underutilised assets—improving digital infrastructure, a skilled and young population, high English proficiency, and an affordable cost of living.

By 2027, Tirana aims to become a globally connected remote-work hub that retains local talent, enables young people to access international job markets while staying in the city, and attracts international digital nomads who contribute to the local economy and urban life.

RemoteIT Tirana transforms remote work from a global trend into a concrete local opportunity through an integrated ecosystem of co-working spaces, skills development, community building, global partnerships, and the Digital Nomad Festival as a key testing and visibility tool. The plan strengthens the causal logic from challenge to impact, ensuring that every action contributes to long-term talent retention and sustainable urban-development.

This Integrated Action Plan (IAP) presents a strategic approach for addressing the emerging challenges related to remote work and digital nomadism in Tirana. Building on the success of the first and second Digital Nomad Festivals (TDNF2022, TDNF2024), we aim to create an environment where youth can pursue remote work opportunities, find sustainable employment, and contribute to the local economy—all without needing to migrate abroad.

The plan is structured around several key areas: increasing awareness of remote work, providing access to relevant skills training, enhancing digital infrastructure, and fostering a community of digital nomads in Tirana. By 2025, our goal is to equip over 200 students with the skills necessary for successful remote careers, strengthen the local ecosystem to support digital nomads, and ensure Tirana becomes a hub for remote workers in the region.

This plan is the result of a collaborative effort by local stakeholders, including government bodies, universities, coworking spaces, and private sector partners. We are committed to monitoring progress and adjusting strategies as needed to ensure its successful implementation.

SECTION 1

1.1 Introduction and project presentation

The Urbact Remote IT project is designed to explore and tackle the evolving challenges faced by cities in light of the rapid shift towards remote and hybrid work models. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation, fundamentally changing how work is organized, impacting both citizens and businesses. Tirana, like many cities, faces challenges in retaining its youth, with many seeking remote work opportunities abroad, believing they must leave Albania to build successful careers.

The aim of this action plan is to provide a roadmap for creating an environment where young people can take advantage of the remote work lifestyle and build sustainable careers without leaving Tirana. Through the Digital Nomad Festival, we have already tested our approach and seen positive results. With this plan, we seek to expand and solidify these efforts.

1.2 Current situation/ data relevant to the themes addressed

Tirana, like many urban centers, faces a growing trend of youth migration. Data from local universities and employment agencies show that a significant percentage of graduates are seeking opportunities abroad, particularly in digital fields. However, there is a growing interest in remote work, and many young people are exploring the possibility of staying in Albania while working for international companies.

Tirana's digital infrastructure is improving, but there is still work to be done to ensure consistent internet access, coworking spaces, and business support structures that can cater to digital nomads.

Key statistics:

- **Percentage of Tirana's youth expressing interest in remote work:** Specific data on the percentage of Tirana's youth interested in remote work is not readily available. However, a 2024 study highlights that remote working offers increased flexibility in employment, suggesting a growing interest among the youth.
library.fes.de
- **Number of digital nomads currently living in Tirana:** Tirana has become a notable destination for digital nomads. As of late 2024, approximately 3,000 digital nomads were residing in the city, making it the leading digital nomad hub in the Balkans.
aman-alliance.org
- **Percentage of university graduates seeking jobs abroad each year:** While exact annual percentages are not specified, a 2023 study indicates that half of Albanian respondents are employed and no longer studying, with about one in seven (14%) working in an EU country.
western-balkans-alumni.eu

1.3 Relevant existing strategies and policies (local/regional/national/European) including:

Here is an overview of **relevant existing strategies and policies** at the **local, regional, national, and European** levels concerning **digital nomadism and remote working** in Tirana:

1.3.1 Local Level (Municipality of Tirana)

1. Smart City and Digital Transformation Strategy (Tirana Smart City)

Tirana has embraced digital transformation through smart city initiatives aimed at improving public services, connectivity, and data-driven decision-making. Though not explicitly tailored to digital nomads, these policies provide the necessary infrastructure—public Wi-Fi, co-working spaces, smart mobility, and e-governance tools—that make remote work more accessible.

2. Start-Up Tirana & Tirana Innovation Hub

These initiatives support local and international entrepreneurs, freelancers, and start-ups. They promote Tirana as a flexible and tech-savvy urban ecosystem, indirectly attracting digital nomads through incubators, events, and tech-oriented public-private partnerships.

3. Tirana Tourism Strategy 2023–2027 (*Draft form – internal reference*)

This strategy emphasizes attracting longer-stay visitors and positioning Tirana as a creative, green, and youth-driven destination—aligning well with the lifestyle and preferences of digital nomads.

1.3.2 Regional Level

Regional Development Programmes (e.g., South-East Europe Transnational Cooperation)

These programs promote innovation, connectivity, and business-friendly environments across regions, including Tirana. Some pilot projects have focused on digital ecosystems, smart mobility, and youth entrepreneurship—elements that indirectly support remote working models.

1.3.3 National Level

1. National Strategy for Information Society 2021–2026

This national strategy outlines Albania's roadmap for digital infrastructure, e-services, and online access. It strengthens the ICT framework necessary to enable remote work and digital services across the country.

2. Tourism Strategy of Albania 2023–2030

The strategy recognizes the potential of **long-term stays and remote workers** in revitalizing rural and urban tourism. It proposes reforms for easier visa access, digital visa processing, and improved digital infrastructure in tourist destinations.

3. Albanian Government Digital Nomad Visa (Planned 2024)

While still under internal discussion (as of mid-2024), the government has expressed interest in launching a **Digital Nomad Visa**, allowing foreign nationals to live and work remotely from Albania for extended periods. This policy is expected to align with best practices from countries like Estonia and Croatia.

4. National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2019–2025

Promotes upskilling in ICT and digital skills, encouraging the growth of remote work capacities among Albanians, especially youth and women.

1.3.4 European Level

1. EU Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030

As a candidate country, Albania is aligning its digital strategies with the EU Digital Decade objectives. These include goals for digital skills, infrastructure, and e-governance, all of which support the remote work ecosystem.

2. EU Cohesion Policy & Interreg IPA CBC Programmes

These programs finance cross-border digitalization initiatives and support innovation hubs, co-working centers, and sustainable tourism—all relevant to Tirana's strategy to become a digital nomad-friendly city.

3. Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe – Remote Work & Digital Skills Actions

Although not Tirana-specific, these European programs fund projects that include remote collaboration models, digital inclusion, and training for remote work readiness.

Gaps and Opportunities

Area	Current Status	Opportunity for Tirana
Infrastructure	Improving, with Smart City strategy & Wi-Fi zones	Expand public workspaces, invest in 5G and fiber optics
Legal Framework	No official Digital Nomad Visa yet	Finalize and promote a dedicated remote work/residency scheme
Marketing & Positioning	Emerging as a tourism and startup hub	Stronger branding as a digital nomad destination
Ecosystem Support	Good base with co-working hubs and incubators	Offer remote worker packages (housing + workspace + community)
Governance & Partnerships	Fragmented coordination between levels	Align local and national strategies, engage with EU partners

1.4 Problem identification

ULG Stakeholder Map (with Visual Approach)

Stakeholders involved in the ULG meetings can be categorized across four main sectors:

Stakeholder Category	Examples/Institutions	Role in Remote Work Ecosystem
Public Sector	Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of Tourism	Policy-making, infrastructure, tourism promotion
Private Sector	Co-working hubs (Coolab, Innospace), Real estate agencies	Hosting nomads, workspace provision
Civil Society	Tourism and Youth NGOs, Cultural Associations	Community building, local integration
Digital Nomads & Remote Workers	Expats, long-term visitors	End-users and community drivers

Key Problems Identified During ULG Meetings

1. Limited Digital Visibility

While physical infrastructure (e.g., bus stations) is improving, digital visibility remains fragmented. ULG stakeholders applauded the inclusion of Tirana's bus stations on Google Maps, but pointed to broader gaps in centralized and updated digital information.

2. Absence of a Unified Digital Platform

There is **no integrated tourism and remote work platform**. Stakeholders proposed developing a dedicated **section within the municipal website** to serve as an information hub for:

- City guides
- Public transport schedules (including interurban buses)
- Housing and apartments
- Cultural events
- Outdoor activities (e.g., hiking, kayaking)
- Opportunities for **digital nomad engagement and local interaction**

3. Fragmented Communication Channels

Digital nomads often rely on social media groups and informal networks, which hinders **municipal coordination**, data collection, and long-term engagement.

4. Missed Community Engagement Opportunities

Local residents are often **not integrated** into the digital nomad ecosystem. There's a lack of **structured events, volunteer programs, or co-creation spaces** to foster inclusion and mutual learning.

Local Strengths & Opportunities

Strengths	Opportunities
- Fast internet and growing number of co-working spaces	- Develop a smart remote-worker/tourism portal
- Affordable cost of living and safe city environment	- Launch Digital Nomad Visa (in coordination with national gov)
- Young population with digital skills	- Promote intercultural exchanges and community engagement
- High English proficiency in urban population	- Offer tailored services/packages for long-term remote stays

Local Challenges

1. Lack of **official digital nomad statistics** and insights for policymaking
2. Low visibility of local services on global platforms (Google, TripAdvisor, NomadList)
3. No single digital hub for **tourism, housing, and lifestyle information**
4. Underdeveloped **local interaction mechanisms** between residents and nomads
5. Limited promotion of **alternative tourism paths** (nature, sports, culture) outside of central zones)

Local Priorities (Emerging from ULG Meetings)

1. Develop and maintain a **centralized online platform** as part of the Municipality's

website

2. Improve integration of **urban mobility and digital tools** (Google Maps, open transport data)
3. Encourage creation of **community-based experiences** linking nomads with locals
4. Collaborate with co-working spaces and private actors for **tailored services**
5. Create a **real-time event calendar** and cultural map accessible to tourists and nomads
6. Ensure **sustainability and affordability** are kept in focus as Tirana attracts more remote workers

SWOT Analysis: Tirana and Remote Work/Digital Nomads

Strengths	Weaknesses
Fast internet, safe city, low cost of living	No centralized information portal for digital nomads
Attractive climate and culture	Lack of targeted incentives or visa schemes
High English proficiency	Informal networks dominate digital nomad communication
Growing number of co-working spaces	Limited long-stay housing options in peak months

Opportunities	Threats
Digital Nomad Visa and national promotion	Rising housing prices due to influx of digital nomads
Cross-promotion of nature and slow tourism	Cultural disconnection or friction with locals
Regional cooperation for remote worker hubs	Competition from better-branded nomad destinations (e.g. Lisbon, Tbilisi)

Persona Exercise: Remote Work & Digital Nomads in Tirana

To better understand and address the needs of users impacted by digital nomadism and remote work strategies in Tirana, we've developed the following **representative personas**. These are fictional characters based on real stakeholder types identified in the ULG meetings.

Emma – The Digital Nomad

Age: 32

Origin: Berlin, Germany

Occupation: UX Designer, working remotely for a European tech company

Stay Duration: 3–6 months

Living Situation: Rents a short-term apartment in Tirana's city center

Motivations:

Affordable living with a European feel

Good weather and safe environment

Access to coworking spaces and stable internet

Pain Points:

- No centralized platform to discover events, co-working spaces, or housing
- Difficult to find long-stay apartments during high season
- Few structured opportunities to meet locals or join volunteer programs

Needs:

- Clear info on transport, events, housing
- Cultural immersion opportunities
- A network/community for remote workers

Erion – The Local Tech Graduate

Age: 24

Origin: Tirana, Albania

Occupation: Junior Software Developer

Motivations:

- Improve his English and professional network
- Learn from international workers
- Find new job or freelance opportunities

Pain Points:

- No structured channels to interact with foreign digital nomads
- Not aware of events or co-working spaces where he can participate

Needs:

- Municipal support to access events, trainings, and collaboration spaces
- Incentives to join local-digital nomad exchange programs
- Online calendar of workshops and networking events

Teuta – The Local Community Anchor

Age: 58

Origin: Tirana suburbs

Occupation: Retired teacher, active in local cultural NGO

Motivations:

- Preserve local traditions and connect them to newcomers
- Offer Albanian cooking or craft classes to tourists
- Support youth involvement in cultural exchange

Pain Points:

- Lack of municipal coordination to include locals in tourism/remote work experiences
- No promotion or booking system for local experiences

Needs:

- Visibility on the municipal digital platform
- Support for organizing events with cultural relevance
- Training to promote services to international visitors

Bledi – The Local Entrepreneur & Co-Working Owner

Age: 38

Business: Co-founder of "Coolab Tirana"

Motivations:

- Expand co-working business to attract long-term remote workers

Collaborate with city to promote Tirana as a nomad destination

Pain Points:

Fragmented information for digital nomads

No incentive or support scheme from the municipality

Needs:

Public-private partnerships for joint promotion

One-stop portal where his co-working hub is listed

Involvement in strategy and policy discussions

Persona	Role in Ecosystem	Key Needs	Pain Points
Emma	End-user (digital nomad)	Info, community, engagement	No central platform, no events
Erion	Local youth	Networking, skills, inclusion	No structured engagement
Teuta	Local cultural actor	Visibility, connection	Not integrated into ecosystem
Bledi	Private sector partner	Promotion, policy support	No public-private synergy

1.5 Local stakeholders involved in the project

ULG Structure and Role in the IAP Development – Municipality of Tirana

The Urban Local Group (ULG) in Tirana has proven to be a dynamic and essential component of the Remote-IT journey. Through structured engagement and collaborative problem-solving, the ULG has played a key role in shaping both the thematic focus and the implementation approach of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). The co-production process has significantly improved the potential for successful IAP implementation by ensuring local ownership, fostering inter-institutional coordination, and securing early political support.

To ensure this momentum continues, the Municipality of Tirana commits to maintaining regular follow-up actions with the ULG. This includes periodic stakeholder meetings, co-reviewing progress on the IAP, and involving members in future implementation phases and evaluations. Such continued engagement will be key to embedding long-term change across municipal departments and within the broader community.

Explicit Recognition of ULG Contributions

The IAP of Tirana explicitly recognizes the input and involvement of ULG members at every stage of its development. Their feedback has shaped strategic priorities, identified practical constraints, and proposed actionable solutions that reflect local needs. As such, the ULG is not only a consultative group but also a co-creator of the policy process.

ULG Composition: Municipality of Tirana

The ULG in Tirana reflects a wide cross-section of local, national, academic, and business stakeholders. This diverse composition ensures a holistic approach to urban development and remote working strategies. The stakeholder map is structured around four main categories:

Governmental

- Municipality of Tirana
- Ministry for Finance and Economy
- Ministry of State for Entrepreneurship Protection
- Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Tourism and Environment
- Ministry of Interior

Community & International Organizations (NGOs)

- GIZ Albania
- Swisscontact

Academia

- University of Tirana – Faculty of Economics
- Epoka University
- Luarasi University
- European University of Tirana

Industry & Business

- Chamber of Commerce
- Saltwater (Tech Company)
- Vodafone Albania
- One Telecommunications
- Credins Bank
- Local Restaurants: Era, Millennium, Lift
- Coworking Spaces: Coolab, Innospace, Destil

1.6 Vision/overarching objective (Revised)

By 2027, Tirana will be a globally connected remote-work hub that:

- retains local talent by creating viable remote career pathways,
- enables young professionals to work for international markets while staying in Tirana,
- and attracts international digital nomads who enrich the local economy, innovation ecosystem, and cultural life.

This vision aligns the objectives of attracting digital nomads and retaining local youth into a single, coherent development strategy.

City: TIRANA

Date:

Core Problem

LACK OF RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR DIGITAL NOMADS

Main Causes of the Core Problem

- LIMITED INTERNET CONNECTIVITY (inconsistent speed and access in certain areas)
- LACK OF LOCAL NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY (Minimal events or groups)
- INSUFFICIENT CO-WORKING SOURCES (Few dedicated spaces that foster collaboration and productivity)
- CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE BARRIERS (Challenging Local Integration)

Your Vision

TO ESTABLISH TIRANA AS A VIBRANT HUB FOR DIGITAL NOMADS PROVIDING THEM WITH THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY TO THRIVE PROFESIONALLY AND PERSONALLY

Specific Objectives

- IMPROVE INTERNET CONNECTIVITY
- EXPAND CO-WORKING FACILITIES
- FOSTER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Indicators

- INTERNET CONNECTIVITY
 - user satisfaction surveys
 - percentage coverage
- CO-WORKING SPACES
 - number of spaces
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
 - Attendance numbers at events
 - Feedback

Summary of main actions

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

- Partner with local internet providers to enhance connectivity
- Free wifi at Tirana's main square
- Upgrade Existing Co-Working Spaces (Upgrade the library)
- Article (leaflet) that highlights all co-working spaces, reliable cafes and public areas with strong connectivity

COMMUNITY BUILDING

- TDNF
- Skill sharing sessions
- Integration (cultural) workshops
- Networking events until the end of 2025

Intervention area 3

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

Intervention area 4

- ...
- ...
- ...

Where are you?Where do you want to go? How do you get there?

1.7 Main integration challenge(s)

Assessment of Integrated Approaches in Tirana's IAP

Aspect	Is it Relevant for Your City? Why?	What is the Current Situation?	What Can You Do to Improve This?
i. Stakeholder involvement in planning	☒ Yes – inclusive planning builds ownership and reflects diverse needs.	ULG is active and includes a variety of sectors (government, academia, private sector, civil society).	Deepen engagement with underrepresented groups (e.g., youth, local nomads), formalize feedback loops during planning.
ii. Coherence with existing strategies	☒ Yes – alignment prevents overlap and enhances resource efficiency.	The IAP aligns with local strategies on tourism, innovation, youth, and economic development.	Map all relevant local, national, and EU strategies and explicitly reference them in the IAP document.

iii. Sustainable urban development (economic, social, environmental)	✅ Essential – ensures long-term city resilience and attractiveness.	Economic and digital dimensions are well represented; more work is needed on social inclusion and environmental goals.	Introduce green mobility, inclusion policies, and links to climate adaptation or circular economy.
ix. Integration over time	✅ Yes – remote work and innovation require phased implementation.	Some temporal planning is in place, especially in pilot projects.	Develop a detailed timeline for IAP rollout with short-, mid-, and long-term goals.
xii. Stakeholder involvement in implementation	✅ Yes – critical for accountability and impact.	Implementation involvement is not yet fully defined.	Clearly assign roles to ULG members in IAP execution, include co-monitoring mechanisms.

Optional Aspects of More Integrated Approaches

Aspect	Is it Relevant for Your City? Why?	What is the Current Situation?	What Can You Do to Improve This?
iv. Sectoral integration	✅ Yes – digital nomadism spans tourism, ICT, housing, mobility.	Informal connections exist between departments and sectors.	Formalize inter-sectoral working groups or integrate in ULG operations.
v. Spatial integration	✅ Yes – includes urban core, parks, and peri-urban	Mostly focused on the city center.	Expand focus to include peripheral areas and potential digital nomad hubs

	areas.		in suburban zones.
vi. Territorial integration	✅ Yes – relevant to link Tirana with national/regional mobility and economy.	Limited coordination with surrounding municipalities.	Engage regional councils or inter-municipal committees in planning and promotion efforts.
vii. Multi-level governance	✅ Yes – coordination with ministries and national policies is key.	Good collaboration exists with several ministries.	Set up a coordination unit to ensure alignment between local and national strategies and funding.
viii. Integration of cross-cutting thematic aspects	✅ Yes – gender, youth, and sustainability are core themes.	These aspects are acknowledged but not always mainstreamed.	Include cross-cutting principles as evaluation criteria for IAP actions.
x. Complementary types of investment	✅ Yes – public-private partnerships and innovation investment can scale impact.	Some collaboration with telecoms and tech companies.	Expand PPP frameworks and support start-ups or housing solutions via incentives.
xi. Mobilizing all available funding	✅ Yes – EU, national, local, and private funding needed.	Currently reliant on project-based funding.	Develop a funding roadmap and integrate financial instruments (grants, loans, public-private funds).

1.8 How your testing activities contributed to the IAP development

How Testing Activities Contributed to the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) Development – The Case of TDNF2024

As part of Tirana's commitment to inclusive, evidence-based policymaking, the **Digital Nomad Festival TDNF2024**, held in November 2024, served as a key **pilot action** within the co-production process of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). This testing initiative provided a unique opportunity to evaluate, in real time, the viability of several policy measures foreseen in the IAP, while also fostering stakeholder engagement and reinforcing the political relevance of the digital nomad agenda.

Proof of Concept and Pilot Validation

The festival acted as a **proof of concept** for several IAP actions, enabling the Municipality to test ideas in practice before scaling them further. These included:

- **Improved stakeholder engagement** through a live forum for digital nomads, businesses, academia, and public authorities.
- **Validation of the demand** for co-working spaces and digital infrastructure, informing the IAP's planned support for spatial infrastructure expansion.
- **Pilot testing of cultural and social integration programs** for international nomads, later incorporated as a strategic objective in the IAP.

For example, the direct feedback gathered during TDNF2024 led to the refinement of **Action 3: Expanding and diversifying co-working and community spaces** and **Action 5: Promoting Tirana as a year-round destination for remote workers through seasonal campaigns**.

Building Political and Public Buy-In

TDNF2024 significantly contributed to **generating political interest and public awareness**, especially by demonstrating the economic and cultural value of attracting digital nomads. It engaged over 650 attendees, including 22 international speakers, which elevated the political visibility of the initiative and created momentum for more sustained policy commitment. The public discussion and media coverage surrounding the festival helped **normalize the concept of digital nomadism** and reduce resistance to future urban changes (e.g., new infrastructure, zoning for co-working, visa facilitation).

Activating the ULG Through Real Collaboration

The festival also created a new dynamic within the **Urban Local Group (ULG)**. Members from government, academia, the private sector, and civil society were involved not only in planning but also in the **implementation** of the event. This hands-on engagement shifted the ULG from a consultative group to a co-implementing body. For instance, co-working hubs like **Coolab and Innospace**, together with universities and tourism NGOs, led sessions, hosted events, and contributed to knowledge sharing. This contributed to **Action 6: Institutionalizing the ULG for long-term digital ecosystem governance** in the IAP.

Fostering Innovation and Administrative Agility

The planning and execution of TDNF2024 encouraged **cross-departmental collaboration** within the Municipality, especially between departments responsible for innovation, youth, culture, and tourism. This experience promoted a more **experimental mindset**, supporting IAP measures aimed

at creating a more agile and adaptive local administration. The success of the event has laid the groundwork for exploring **new forms of public-private partnerships**, including the use of pop-up infrastructure and digital services for nomads.

Quick Wins and Enabling Further Action

Finally, TDNF2024 represented a valuable quick win for the city. It demonstrated that Tirana can attract

international attention with relatively limited investment and coordination, offering a replicable model for future actions. The success of this pilot supports the prioritization of **Action 1: Establishment of a yearly Tirana Remote Work Week** and **Action 4: Development of a digital portal aggregating services for remote workers**, both of which were strengthened based on the lessons learned from the festival.

In sum, the testing activities around TDNF2024 have deeply informed the IAP both in terms of **strategic direction and operational detail**. They validated several planned actions, enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation, and strengthened the long-term commitment of stakeholders. Most importantly, they showed that **real-world experimentation can lead to more robust, realistic, and responsive urban policy**.

SECTION 2

2.1 Overall Logic and Integrated Approach (Revised Summary)

Challenge:

Persistent youth emigration and limited access to global career pathways.

Strategic Objective:

Integrate Tirana into the global remote-work economy in order to retain local talent.

Key Actions:

Development of co-working spaces, skills development for remote work, community building, global partnerships, the Digital Nomad Festival, and pilot testing actions.

Outputs:

Active remote-work spaces, skilled participants, local–global professional networks, and vibrant city events.

Outcomes:

More young professionals working remotely from Tirana, a stronger digital ecosystem, and enhanced international visibility.

Long-term Impact:

Reduced brain drain and a resilient local economy connected to global markets.

This strengthened intervention logic responds directly to expert feedback calling for a clearer and more accessible causal flow from actions to long-term impact.

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) of the Municipality of Tirana is designed as a strategic roadmap to position the city as dynamic and inclusive destination for digital nomads and remote workers. It responds to growing global trends in remote work and the local ambition to harness this momentum for sustainable urban, economic, and cultural development. The plan adopts an integrated, cross-sectoral, and participatory approach, aligning with both local strategic priorities and broader European policy objectives.

At the heart of the IAP is a **multi-dimensional vision**: to create an enabling ecosystem that supports remote work through inclusive governance, resilient infrastructure, and an engaged community. The plan recognizes that attracting and retaining digital nomads is not only about offering co-working spaces or high-speed internet—it also requires investments in mobility, public services, cultural vibrancy, environmental quality, and a welcoming social atmosphere.

The IAP is structured around a set of **concrete, actionable measures**, co-produced with local

stakeholders through the Urban Local Group (ULG). This process has ensured that the plan is both locally grounded and forward-looking. The co-creation methodology used throughout the planning process allowed stakeholders from government, academia, civil society, and the private sector to align their efforts and co-design solutions. Testing activities, such as the Digital Nomad Festival (TDNF2024), further strengthened this process by validating key actions in real-world settings.

The plan emphasizes **integration on several levels**:

- **Horizontal integration**, by fostering collaboration across municipal departments (tourism, innovation, infrastructure, and youth).
- **Vertical integration**, through alignment with national strategies (e.g., the digital nomad visa, regional development) and engagement with international partners.
- **Territorial and spatial integration**, ensuring that benefits extend beyond the city center to include peripheral and nature-rich areas attractive to remote workers.
- **Temporal integration**, with a phased action timeline that includes short-term quick wins, mid-term infrastructure enhancements, and long-term policy innovations.

Additionally, the IAP incorporates cross-cutting principles such as **digital inclusion, sustainability, gender equity**, and **youth engagement**, ensuring that the benefits of remote work are accessible and equitable. The plan also builds on **existing strategies and projects**, complementing initiatives in smart city development, innovation hubs, and tourism branding.

In summary, the overall logic of Tirana's IAP is to leverage digital nomadism not as an isolated trend, but as a catalyst for broader urban transformation—one that fosters innovation, stimulates economic development, promotes social inclusion, and enhances the city's international visibility and resilience.

2.1 Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objectives

1. Foster an Enabling Environment for Remote Work and Digital Innovation

Create the infrastructural, regulatory, and digital foundations necessary to attract and retain remote workers by:

- Enhancing internet connectivity across urban and peri-urban areas
- Supporting the development and accessibility of co-working spaces
- Advocating for inclusive visa and residency frameworks for digital nomads

2. Promote Social and Cultural Integration Between Digital Nomads and the Local Community

Facilitate meaningful exchanges and social cohesion between international remote workers and Tirana's residents by:

- Supporting events, workshops, and cultural programs that promote interaction
- Encouraging public-private partnerships for community-based initiatives
- Providing English-language resources and local guides for newcomers

3. Strengthen Governance and Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation for Sustainable Ecosystem Development

Institutionalize collaboration among municipal departments, local businesses, NGOs, academia, and national agencies by:

- Maintaining an active and evolving Urban Local Group (ULG)
- Establishing governance mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation
- Fostering interdepartmental and multi-level policy alignment

4. Position Tirana as a Year-Round, Globally Competitive Destination for Digital Nomads

Enhance Tirana's visibility and attractiveness through targeted branding and seasonal strategies by:

- Launching international campaigns and promotional platforms
- Highlighting the city's unique natural, cultural, and economic assets
- Addressing seasonal gaps in infrastructure and services

2.3 Intervention areas

Areas of Intervention in Tirana's IAP

(Aligned with TDNF2024 feedback and strategic goals)

1. Digital and Physical Infrastructure for Remote Work

Linked Strategic Objective: *Foster an enabling environment for remote work and digital innovation*

Key Issues Identified:

- Internet stability is strong in the city center but weak in peri-urban and rural zones
- Insufficient co-working spaces outside central areas

Specific Objectives & Actions:

- **Improve digital infrastructure beyond the city center**
 - Action: Partner with ISPs to expand broadband in suburban and rural areas
- **Increase co-working capacity and diversity**
 - Action: Incentivize creation of co-working spaces through public-private partnerships, including repurposing underutilized municipal buildings

2. Legal, Visa, and Administrative Support for Digital Nomads

Linked Strategic Objective: *Foster an enabling environment / Position Tirana globally*

Key Issues Identified:

- Lack of clarity and reach of Albania's digital nomad visa
- Long-term stay limitations

Specific Objectives & Actions:

- **Enhance awareness and uptake of the digital nomad visa**
 - Action: Develop and distribute multilingual guides in collaboration with ministries
- **Improve administrative conditions for long stays**
 - Action: Advocate for streamlined registration and service access (e.g. health, taxation) for nomads

3. Urban Governance and Stakeholder Coordination

Linked Strategic Objective: *Strengthen governance and stakeholder cooperation*

Key Issues Identified:

- Multi-stakeholder effort needed for complex interventions
- Limited long-term institutionalization of cooperation

Specific Objectives & Actions:

- **Maintain and expand the ULG beyond the project**
 - Action: Formalize the ULG as a standing working group for digital transition & innovation
- **Enhance inter-departmental cooperation in the municipality**
 - Action: Launch regular coordination meetings between tourism, innovation, and infrastructure departments

4. Social and Cultural Integration for Digital Nomads

Linked Strategic Objective: *Promote integration between nomads and locals*

Key Issues Identified:

- Nomads request deeper engagement with local culture and people
- English language gaps and lack of community bridging activities

Specific Objectives & Actions:

- **Foster exchange and integration with locals**
 - Action: Organize seasonal events (meetups, tours, co-creation workshops) with local NGOs and universities
- **Improve communication and service accessibility**
 - Action: Launch a multilingual “Welcome to Tirana” portal for digital nomads

5. Branding, Seasonality, and International Positioning

Linked Strategic Objective: *Position Tirana as a year-round, globally competitive destination*

Key Issues Identified:

- Digital nomad presence is seasonal, with high inflows in summer only
- Limited coordinated promotion outside Albania

Specific Objectives & Actions:

- **Address seasonality through targeted branding**
 - Action: Launch “Off-Season Remote Tirana” campaigns (e.g., January coworking discounts, local cultural events)
- **Strengthen digital presence and storytelling**
 - Action: Promote Tirana through nomad blogs, influencer partnerships, and interactive content about lifestyle, cost, and connectivity

6. Safety, Mobility, and Public Services Adaptation

Linked Strategic Objective: *Support sustainable urban development for digital economy*

Key Issues Identified:

- Public transport is weak in outer urban/nature areas attractive to nomads
- Safety levels are good but not widely communicated

Specific Objectives & Actions:

- **Improve transport access to nature/work zones**

- Action: Extend bus lines to key green and coastal areas (e.g., for cycling, hiking)
- **Promote the city's safety profile and adapt services**
 - Action: Include safety ratings and tips in the digital portal and Airbnb-style welcome kits

These areas are not siloed but **interconnected**, reflecting Tirana's integrated approach. Each action supports several strategic goals and responds directly to needs **validated through the TDNF2024 Festival**, proving that **testing in action** can inform durable urban policies and future-proof strategies.

2.4 Specific/ operational objectives

Strategic Objective 1: Foster an Enabling Environment for Remote Work and Digital Innovation

Specific Objective	SMART Description
1.1 Expand broadband internet to underserved areas	Extend high-speed internet coverage by 25% to peri-urban areas of Tirana by the end of 2026, in partnership with at least two telecom providers.
1.2 Increase availability of co-working spaces	Open or upgrade 5 new co-working hubs (including at least 2 outside the city center) by mid-2026 through public-private partnerships.
1.3 Improve awareness and uptake of the digital nomad visa	Launch a national digital nomad visa awareness campaign by Q1 2025, reaching at least 50,000 international impressions and increasing visa uptake by 30% year-on-year.

Strategic Objective 2: Promote Social and Cultural Integration Between Digital Nomads and the Local Community

Specific Objective	SMART Description
2.1 Organize regular integration events	Host quarterly bilingual "Nomad Meets Tirana" events starting from Q2 2025, engaging at least 100 participants annually.
2.2 Improve language accessibility of local services	Translate 10 key municipal services and guides into English by Q3 2025, ensuring easy access via a centralized online portal.
2.3 Build long-term collaboration with local NGOs and universities	Formalize collaboration agreements with at least 3 local NGOs and 2 universities by early 2025 to co-design inclusion initiatives.

Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen Governance and Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation

Specific Objective	SMART Description
3.1 Institutionalize the ULG as an advisory platform	Integrate the ULG into the city's official innovation and tourism strategy framework by Q4 2025, holding biannual meetings with published minutes.
3.2 Build city administration's capacity in digital governance	Deliver three interdepartmental training sessions on agile policymaking and digital innovation by mid-2026.
3.3 Develop a multi-stakeholder monitoring tool	Co-design a dashboard to track digital nomad KPIs with ULG members by the end of 2025.

Strategic Objective 4: Position Tirana as a Year-Round, Globally Competitive Destination

Specific Objective	SMART Description
4.1 Launch seasonal digital campaigns	Implement three digital campaigns promoting off-season Tirana (Spring, Autumn, Winter) by end of 2026, aiming to increase low-season visits by 20%.
4.2 Create a centralized digital portal for nomads	Develop and launch a user-friendly, mobile-responsive portal by Q2 2025, including coworking maps, housing info, visa guidance, and events calendar.
4.3 Increase Tirana's visibility in international nomad communities	Partner with at least 10 global nomad influencers or content creators annually to promote Tirana online from 2025 onward.

2.5 Actions

Area of Intervention	Action Code	Action Title	Brief Description	Expected Timing
1. Digital and Physical Infrastructure	1.1	Broadband Expansion Program	Partner with ISPs to extend broadband coverage to 5 peri-urban and nature-adjacent zones	2025–2026
	1.2	Coworking Capacity Boost	Repurpose 3 public buildings and co-finance 2 new private hubs in underserved areas	2025–2026
	1.3	Co-Working Map and Directory	Create and maintain an interactive map of all coworking and creative spaces	Q2 2025
2. Legal, Visa & Administrative Support	2.1	Visa Awareness Campaign	Coordinate with national authorities to promote the digital nomad visa through multilingual media	Q1–Q3 2025

	2.2	“Digital Welcome Kit”	Provide new nomads with information on taxes, services, safety, and regulations in English	Q2 2025 onward
3. Urban Governance & Stakeholder Cooperation	3.1	ULG Institutionalization	Formalize ULG’s role through a City Council decision and annual working plan	Q4 2025
	3.2	Digital Nomad Dashboard	Develop a data dashboard tracking seasonal flows, user needs, and service performance	Q4 2025–Q1 2026
	3.3	Staff Training Workshops	Deliver 3 municipal workshops on agile governance and innovation ecosystems	Throughout 2025
4. Social & Cultural Integration	4.1	“Nomads Meet Tirana” Series	Host quarterly meetups co-organized by locals and internationals	Start Q2 2025
	4.2	Community Co-Creation Labs	Co-develop community-led projects (e.g., cleanups, micro-events) with NGOs & nomads	2025–2026
	4.3	Language Access Expansion	Translate 10 core services and signage into English; integrate into online portal	Q3 2025
5. Branding & Global Positioning	5.1	Seasonal City Promotion Campaigns	Launch targeted campaigns (e.g., “Remote Winter in Tirana”) via social and digital media	Start Q4 2025
	5.2	Nomad Content Creator Program	Invite and host 10 global influencers/bloggers per year to share Tirana stories	Starting Q2 2025
	5.3	Tirana Remote Work Portal	Build an interactive platform with info on housing, mobility, events, permits, coworking	Launch Q2 2025
6. Safety, Mobility & Services Adaptation	6.1	Green Mobility to Remote Zones	Improve public transit or bike access to 3 key nature zones used by nomads	Plan 2025, implement 2026
	6.2	Safety Communication Campaign	Develop digital content and signage promoting Tirana’s safety and emergency contacts	Start Q3 2025

Gantt Chart – Tirana IAP Actions Timeline



SECTION 3

Short Description:

A multi-day international festival organized by the Municipality of Tirana to test and promote Tirana as a remote work-friendly city. The event provided coworking hubs, cultural events, networking opportunities, and panel discussions to attract digital nomads, strengthen urban digital infrastructure, and foster integration with local businesses and communities.

Stakeholders:

- Municipality of Tirana
- Coworking spaces (Coolab, Innospace)
- Piramida (venue partner)
- Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Entrepreneurship
- Local businesses and SMEs
- Local NGOs and youth organizations
- Universities (e.g., Epoka, University of Tirana)
- International digital nomads and remote workers

Action Owner:

Municipality of Tirana – I

Link to Strategy:

Contributes to Strategic Objectives 2 and 4: promoting integration between locals and nomads and positioning Tirana as a year-round remote work destination.

Finance & Resources:

Total Budget: 15,391,512 ALL (~€148,000)

Funded by: Municipality of Tirana

Venue: Provided free by Piramida

Action Readiness:

✅ Completed (Q4 2024). Evaluation phase ongoing.

Risks:

- Risk of limited engagement from locals: addressed through NGO partnerships
- Technical issues: mitigated by partnering with ISPs
- Low visibility: mitigated through influencer marketing & digital campaigns

Activities Summary – Steps: 3 Months of Implementation

Activity	Dates	Outputs	Related Activities	Problems/Concerns
Preparation & stakeholder coordination	Q1–Q2 2024	List of speakers, partnerships confirmed	Coordination with ministries, ULG, private sector	Scheduling conflicts
Promotion & outreach campaign	Q2–Q3 2024	Social media traction, influencer engagement	Marketing collaboration with nomads	Low early reach
Registration & onboarding	October 2024	Registered attendees list, onboarding kits	Set up of coworking spaces	Technical failures

Festival Implementation	November 2024	Festival held, panels/workshops completed	Cultural side-events, daily wrap-ups	Weather or logistic delays
Post-event evaluation	Q4 2024	Feedback reports, economic impact estimates	Reports for funding justification	Lack of timely survey replies

SECTION 4

Section 4 – Implementation Framework

The Integrated Action Plan will be completed by the end of Month 30, corresponding to the end of 2025.

This final section defines how the city will move from planning to implementation after the end of URBACT support. It consolidates the governance arrangements, stakeholder engagement model, funding approach, implementation timeline, risk assessment, and monitoring framework needed to ensure that the IAP remains operational, realistic, and accountable beyond the network lifetime.

4.1 Governance and Overall Coordination

While Section 3 identifies the responsible actors for each individual action, the overall implementation of the IAP will require a clear coordination structure. The city will confirm an overall body responsible for supervising the implementation of the IAP as a whole.

This role may be assigned to an existing municipal structure, such as a strategic planning, urban development, environment, European projects, or interdepartmental coordination unit. Alternatively, the city may establish a dedicated IAP Implementation Coordination Group composed of relevant municipal departments and key institutional partners.

The main responsibilities of this body will include:

- coordinating the implementation of the different IAP actions;
- ensuring communication between departments and external partners;
- monitoring progress against the agreed timeline;
- identifying delays, risks, or implementation bottlenecks;
- supporting the preparation of funding applications;
- reporting periodically to municipal leadership and relevant stakeholders;
- ensuring that the participatory principles developed through URBACT continue after the project ends.

This governance structure will help avoid fragmentation and ensure that the IAP is treated as a coherent implementation framework rather than a list of separate actions.

4.2 Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

The participatory process developed through the URBACT Local Group has been central to the preparation of the IAP. For this reason, the city will define how the ULG, or a new delivery-oriented version of it, will continue during the implementation phase.

The future stakeholder structure may take the form of an IAP Delivery Group, an expanded ULG, or a thematic working group linked to the municipality. Its purpose will be to maintain dialogue between the municipality, citizens, civil society organisations, local institutions, businesses, academia, and community representatives.

The stakeholder engagement mechanism will support:

- regular consultation on the progress of IAP actions;

- feedback from citizens and affected groups;
- co-design of specific implementation activities;
- identification of local needs and emerging challenges;
- stronger ownership of the IAP by local actors;
- transparency in decision-making and reporting.

The group should meet periodically, for example twice per year or at key implementation milestones. Additional thematic meetings may be organised for specific actions where direct stakeholder input is needed.

This approach will ensure that the participatory method promoted by URBACT does not end with the project, but becomes part of the city's longer-term implementation culture.

4.3 Overall Costings and Funding Strategy

A comprehensive funding strategy will be developed for the IAP as a whole. This will build on the cost estimates prepared for each action in Section 3 and will provide a consolidated financial picture of the resources needed for implementation.

The funding strategy should include:

- estimated total cost of the IAP;
- cost estimates by action or group of actions;
- distinction between short-term, medium-term, and long-term funding needs;
- identification of municipal budget contributions;
- identification of national funding opportunities;
- identification of EU and international funding programmes;
- possible private-sector or public-private contributions;
- in-kind contributions from partners and stakeholders.

The funding strategy should also assess which actions can be implemented using existing municipal resources and which actions require additional external funding. Where possible, actions should be matched with realistic funding sources, such as municipal budget lines, national programmes, EU funds, donor programmes, thematic calls, or future project applications.

The purpose of this section is not only to estimate costs, but to show a credible pathway for financing the implementation of the IAP after the URBACT network ends.

4.4 Overall Implementation Timeline

An overall implementation timeline will be prepared to show how the actions of the IAP will be delivered over time. This may be presented through a Gantt chart or a similar visual planning tool.

The timeline should show:

- when each action starts and ends;
- which actions are short-term, medium-term, or long-term;
- which actions depend on the completion of previous steps;
- periods of high workload for the municipality or partners;
- key milestones and decision points;
- expected funding application periods;
- reporting and monitoring moments.

The timeline will help the city assess whether the implementation plan is realistic. It will also help identify possible bottlenecks, overlapping responsibilities, or periods where too many activities are planned at the same time.

A clear timeline will support better coordination between municipal departments and external partners and will help maintain momentum after the formal end of URBACT support.

4.5 Risk Assessment and Mitigation

The implementation framework will include an overall assessment of the main risks that may affect the successful implementation of the IAP. This will complement the action-specific risks identified in Section 3.

The risk assessment should consider the likelihood and potential impact of each risk, together with mitigation measures. The main categories of risk may include:

Risk area	Possible risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measure
Governance	Weak coordination between departments	Medium	High	Establish a clear coordination body and regular interdepartmental meetings
Funding	Lack of sufficient financial resources	Medium/High	High	Prepare a funding strategy and match actions with realistic funding sources
Political/institutional	Change in priorities or leadership	Medium	High	Secure formal approval of the IAP and integrate actions into municipal planning documents
Stakeholder engagement	Reduced participation after URBACT ends	Medium	Medium	Continue the ULG or create an IAP Delivery Group with regular meetings
Administrative capacity	Limited staff time or technical expertise	Medium	Medium/High	Assign clear responsibilities and seek external technical support when needed
Timeline	Delays in procurement, approvals, or funding	Medium	Medium	Prepare realistic timelines and monitor bottlenecks early
Data and monitoring	Lack of reliable indicators or baseline data	Medium	Medium	Define indicators, collect baseline information, and update data periodically

4.6 Monitoring, Indicators and Reporting

Monitoring and reporting will be essential to ensure that the IAP remains active and measurable after completion. The city will define an overall monitoring framework linked to the strategic objectives of the IAP and to the specific actions included in Section 3.

The monitoring framework should include:

- strategic objectives;
- indicators;
- baseline values, where available;

- target values;
- data sources;
- responsible departments or partners;
- reporting frequency.

Possible indicators may include:

Objective level	Example indicator	Possible target
Governance	Number of coordination meetings held per year	At least 2 per year
Participation	Number of stakeholders involved in implementation meetings	Increased or maintained compared to the ULG phase
Implementation	Percentage of IAP actions started	Progressive increase year by year
Funding	Number of funding applications submitted	At least one or more relevant applications
Delivery	Number of completed actions or milestones	According to the approved timeline
Communication	Number of public updates or reports shared	Periodic public communication
Impact	Improvements linked to the thematic objectives of the IAP	To be defined according to each objective

Progress should be reviewed at least annually. A short implementation report may be prepared by the responsible coordination body and shared with municipal leadership, the stakeholder group, and relevant partners.

The reporting process should not only record what has been completed, but also identify delays, lessons learned, risks, and funding needs. This will allow the city to adjust the implementation plan when necessary and maintain accountability over time.

4.7 Transition Beyond URBACT Support

The completion of Section 4 marks the transition from the URBACT-supported planning phase to the city-led implementation phase. By the end of 2025, the IAP should provide not only a list of actions, but also a clear framework for how those actions will be governed, funded, implemented, monitored, and adjusted over time.

The implementation framework will therefore ensure continuity beyond the duration of URBACT support. It will help the city preserve the participatory approach developed through the ULG, strengthen coordination between actors, and create a realistic pathway for turning the IAP into concrete local results.

Conclusion

Conclusion and Lessons Learnt (Updated)

The revised RemoteIT Tirana IAP reflects key lessons from testing actions and expert feedback:

1. From rich content to clear intervention logic

The plan now presents a streamlined structure and a visible chain from challenge to impact.

2. Balancing digital nomads and local youth

Digital nomads are positioned as catalysts for development, while local young people remain the primary beneficiaries.

3. Value of testing actions

Pilot initiatives—especially the Digital Nomad Festival—proved essential for improving policy design and strengthening political and public buy-in.

4. From activity indicators to change indicators

Greater emphasis is placed on indicators capturing real change, such as youth employment in remote work and talent retention.

RemoteIT Tirana is now positioned as a policy-ready, integrated action plan that uses remote work as a strategic tool for urban, economic, and social development.