

URBACT ITN RECUP

REinventing Culture in Urban Places



Culture & Community

Transferability Study

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Introduction

“REinventing Culture in Urban Places” (RECUP) is the name and the main mission of one of the 10 Innovation Transfer Networks (ITNs) funded by the [URBACT](#) Programme.

ITNs are networks designed to facilitate the transfer and adaptation of innovative integrated projects—originally developed under the **European Urban Initiative’s** Innovative Actions (formerly Urban Innovative Actions)—to diverse urban contexts using an integrated and participatory approach.

In the case of the RECUP Network, the main object of transfer are the guiding principles of the [CUP4Creativity](#) project, developed by Ujbuda – District XI of Budapest, the Lead Partner of the network. The transfer involves five partner cities or organizations: Dubrovnik Development Agency (DURA) (HR), the City of Amersfoort (NL), Mancomunidad de l’Horta Nord (ES), the City of Bielsko-Biała (PL), and the Sandyford Business Improvement District (IE). Each partner will have to develop an Investment Plan, conceptualized as a financial planning tool integrated into a broader strategic framework. The Network began its activities in September 2024 and will operate until August 2026 for a period of 24 months.

Objectives of the Transferability study.

The primary aim of this study is to conduct a thorough assessment of the original good practice project and the profiles of the different partners, with the goal of developing a methodology and transferability roadmap to guide the transfer process within the Network. To this aim, the study is structured as follows: the first section has a double purpose: to place the original project into the broader policy context at the EU and global level and to provide an in-depth understanding of the original project, by investigating achievement, challenges and a potential for further improvement;

the second section focuses on analyzing the profile of each partner to understand their local context, including specific challenges, policies, and opportunities. It aims to identify baseline

conditions and assess each partner’s potential for transferring and adapting the good practice; the third section outlines the methodology needed to enable an effective transfer. It also defines the network roadmap, detailing learning needs, tools, activities, outputs and a timeline for implementation.

Methodology

This transferability study was authored by Lead Expert Elisa Filippi, in collaboration with Lead Partner Project Coordinator Mate Abraham and representatives from the partner organizations (see Section 2). A mixed-methods empirical approach involving the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data sources underpins the study. Data collections and collection methods:

For Section 1 Interviews: Conducted with Ujbuda’s Project Coordinator, Mate Abraham (who was also project manager for CUP4Creativity), with the former CUP4Creativity UIA Expert, Levente Polyak, with city’s representatives and with local stakeholders providing critical insights.

Study Visit: An in-depth site visit to Ujbuda allowed for the observation of project achievements and stakeholder interviews.

Desk Research: Included document analysis of CUP4Creativity project’, of the cultural policies at the European and global level and a brief literature review focused on cultural policies.

For Sections 2 and 3

Study visits: Conducted for each partner city or organization to gather context-specific data.

Questionnaire Survey: Designed by the Lead Expert, the questionnaire comprised open-ended questions and closed-ended Likert scale items for self-assessment. Interviews: Held with local elected representatives and stakeholders.

Section 1. The innovative practice

1.1 EU Policy Context

This section aims to place the **CUP4Creativity UIA project** within the framework of EU policies while also exploring its alignment with broader global contexts, including UN policies and the most significant international perspectives. A consistent definition of the primary topic, understood as the key policy challenge addressed by the project, is essential for this analysis. While a detailed description of the project will be provided in Section 1.3., it is worth noting that **CUP4Creativity** was one of the **11 projects** selected (out of 222 proposals submitted) under the 5th Call for proposals of the **Urban Innovative Actions (UIA)** program. The project falls within the theme of “community-based solutions in accessibility to and participation in culture and cultural heritage, which can have a positive impact on growth and jobs, social cohesion, and social inclusion.”

The **UIA program**, funded by the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, was designed to identify and test innovative solutions for sustainable urban development. It emphasized integrated investments that were innovative, participatory, measurable, transferable, and of high quality. The program encouraged cities to experiment with innovative solutions through integrated and participatory approaches. Recently, UIA has evolved into the **European Urban Initiative (EUI)**, reinforcing its connection to the **European Urban Agenda**.

The original focus of **CUP4Creativity** was to address loneliness through culture and creativity. It proposed a shift from a consumption-based model to one centered on active participation and creativity, redefining the role of citizens from passive spectators to active stakeholders in cultural creation. However, as discussed further in Section 1.3, the project’s scope became broader, focusing on reshaping cultural policies through creativity. Describing how its transfer and adaptation across five different EU cities within the **URBACT RECUP Network** will

contribute to addressing this policy challenge and how it is embedded within the broader EU policy framework, is the purpose of this section.

NOTE. Legal framework. While culture is not a direct competence of the EU, to the European Union is assigned the faculty of encouraging cooperation, supporting, and complementing the actions of Member States. The legal basis for EU action in cultural matters is provided by article 3 of the Treaty on European Union and by article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Although cultural policy remains a national competence, with Member States holding exclusive authority, the EU has addressed cultural matters at various levels through key frameworks and initiatives, including:

- [European Commission Communication: “A New European Agenda for Culture” \(2018\)](#)
- **European Cohesion Policy objectives**
- **European Council Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026 (2022)**
- **EU Urban Agenda Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage**

1.1.1 [Contribution/relevance to “A new European Agenda for Culture” \(EC,2018\)](#)

The **URBACT RECUP Network** aligns strongly with the basis of the **New European Agenda for Culture (2018)**, which recognizes three critical challenges: limited cultural participation of European citizens, the relevance of cultural access for well-being of citizens, and the pivotal role of cities and regions in promoting culture-led development. The **RECUP Network** addresses these challenges and supports all three strategic objectives outlined in the New Agenda, namely:

Social Dimension: Harnessing the power of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion and well-being.

RECUP: By promoting active cultural participation and fostering inclusivity, the RECUP Network supports cultural capability, enabling citizens to engage in and benefit from cultural activities.

Economic Dimension: Supporting culture-based creativity in education, innovation, and for jobs and growth.

RECUP: Cities and regions play a central role in this objective. By leveraging cultural and creative sectors as drivers of innovation, RECUP fosters urban and rural regeneration, promotes talent attraction, and strengthens local economies.

External Dimension: Strengthening international cultural relations.

RECUP facilitates cross-border cultural collaboration and global engagement.

1.1.2 Contribution to the EU Cohesion policy

The European Cohesion policy has set the following 5 policy objectives (PO) for the programming period 2021-2027:

1. a more **competitive** and **smarter** Europe
2. a **greener**, low carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy
3. a more **connected** Europe by enhancing mobility
4. a more **social** and inclusive Europe
5. Europe closer to **citizens** by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories

In this context, the RECUP Network is going to directly contribute the achievement of the PO5 and PO4:

PO5 – A Europe closer to citizens

- By fostering sustainable and integrated urban development through cultural activities, RECUP strengthens local ecosystems, enhances social cohesion, and helps to reduce regional disparities. Its initiatives, such as creating programming frameworks (i.e. INSERT programme), the use of innovative technologies and regeneration of cultural spaces, can act as catalysts for economic and social development.

PO4 – A more social and inclusive Europe

- RECUP promotes social inclusion by lowering barriers to cultural participation and enabling diverse community engagement. Its participatory approaches (through URBACT Local Group -ULG and

co-planning) will help in building stronger peer-to-peer networks and support bottom-up cultural initiatives.

Additionally, RECUP aligns with **PO1: A more competitive and smarter Europe** by establishing or enhancing partnership with business and IT stakeholders it will help in driving innovation in cultural and creative industries (CCIs), and enabling a productive “contamination” among science, technology, arts and creativity.

1.1.3 EU Council resolution (2022)

The [EU Council Resolution on the Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026](#) identified four overarching priorities to which the **URBACT RECUP** Network is well aligned. The Network will provide a direct contribution to achieve the second and third priorities and it will indirectly support the first and four priorities.

DIRECT CONTRIBUTION

2) Culture for the people: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society

RECUP: project’s main objective is to promote active participation in cultural and creative activities by citizens. In this way, RECUP will foster inclusive access to cultural heritage and creative activities, by removing entry barriers and improving societal well-being.

3) Culture for the planet: unleashing the power of culture

RECUP: Digital and green technologies will be used by the project to support green transitions in the urban regeneration process. Green requirements will be envisaged in all the cities’ investment plans as well as the use of digital technologies when appropriate to make culture more accessible and to foster the creativity potential of citizens.

INDIRECT CONTRIBUTION

1) Artists and cultural professionals: empowering the cultural and creative sectors

RECUP: By promoting culture activities through a new sustainability model and innovative practices, RECUP will help in strengthening the resilience of cultural professionals and improving their working conditions.

4) Culture for co-creative partnerships:

strengthening the cultural dimension of EU external relations

RECUP: By engaging diverse stakeholders at the local level and through the exchange of practices at the transnational level, RECUP Network will reinforce cultural cooperation and mutual understanding.

1.1.4 Contribution to the EU Urban Agenda and the Partnership on Culture/Cultural Heritage

The partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage, established in 2018 and active until 2022, was coordinated by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community and by the Italian Agency for the Territorial Cohesion, jointly with the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Cultural Activities. It is one of the 14 partnerships of the European Urban Agenda, and it counts more than 30 partners, among which many European cities and the EU programme URBACT. The partnership pursued two primary objectives. The first one was more focused on the protection, promotion, and creation of cultural heritage as a means of fostering sustainable, and high-quality urban development. The second aimed to analyze the role of culture and cultural services for the development of inclusive and cohesive cities. According to the framework of cooperation established by the [Pact of Amsterdam \(2016\)](#), the partnership focused on three key dimensions:

1. **Better Funding:** Enhancing access to and utilization of EU funds
2. **Better Regulation:** Improving the implementation and evaluation of EU legislation.
3. **Better Knowledge:** Strengthening the EU knowledge base and facilitating the exchange of best practices.

Within this framework, the partnership identified seven priority topics, comprising five vertical and two cross-sectoral themes. In alignment with these objectives, the **Action Plan** developed by the partnership outlined five strategies, hereby listed, each connected to the

identified topics.

1. The strategy “Rebalancing and managing touristic flows for a more sustainable management of Cultural Heritage” refers to topic 1 – “Cultural Tourism”;
2. The strategy “Fostering inclusion and local economy through cultural initiatives” refers to topic 2 – “Cultural and Creative Sectors”;
3. The strategy “use Culture & Cultural Heritage to create balanced living cities” refers to topic 3 – “Transformation, adaptive reuse urban reconversion”;
4. The strategy “Strengthening and protecting heritage against natural and anthropic pressures” refers to topic 4 – “Resilience of heritage”;
5. The strategy “Enlarging and enhancing the role of cultural urban services to strengthen the wellbeing of citizens” refers to topic 5 – “Cultural services”.

While the **RECUP Network** is connected to all the strategies outlined in the Action Plan, the major link lies particularly in strategies 2, 3, and 5 focusing on the **Creative and Cultural Sectors, Cultural Services, Adaptive Reuse and Urban Transformation, and Culture for Inclusive Cities**.

Indeed, through the RECUP Network’s integrated methodological approach, several challenges identified in the Partnership Action Plan can be addressed, including:

1. **Reusing, adapting, and transforming** existing cultural heritage sites and buildings for cultural and social purposes.
2. **Facilitating, delegating, and managing investment** in cultural heritage sites and buildings in a manner that is commercially viable, environmentally sustainable, and socially responsible.
3. **Promoting culture and cultural heritage transformation** through a comprehensive and holistic approach, reducing barriers to cultural access for all, including using digital and innovative technologies.

Additionally, the RECUP Network will address the two cross-cutting priorities identified in the

Action Plan:

Integrated governance, which will be supported through the establishment of the URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) and their active involvement in the process.

Funding, which will be tackled by designing an investment plan tailored to each city's specific needs and opportunities.

Operational contributions and EU programmes

Operationally, the EU's commitment to cultural innovation is implemented through the direct funding of the [Creative Europe](#) programme, and by other relevant initiatives, such as:

- The [EIT Culture Cluster Network](#), fostering collaboration in cultural and creative sectors.
- The [Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor](#) (2019), developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC), with the aim to develop a multidimensional evidence-based measurement system of the impact of culture and creativity in promoting urban development.
- [Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities](#) (CCSC) project, co-funded by the Creative Europe program, based on 7 urban labs. The aim was to co-create participatory public policies for cultural spaces and urban regeneration.

The **RECUP** Network will aim at capitalizing the knowledge produced within these initiatives and to establish cooperative connections when appropriate.

Global perspectives

At the global level, the **URBACT RECUP Network** aligns with key frameworks such as:

- the **UN 2030 Agenda** particularly on the goal **11 Sustainable cities and communities**, and especially for the targets n. **11.4** Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage and n.**11.7** By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

However, indirect contribution is also envisaged for the target 12 (responsible consumption) and 13 (climate change).

- [UNESCO's ReShaping Policies for Creativity – Addressing culture as a global public good Report \(2022\)](#). Within the report, chapter 8 has been dedicated to unlocking the potential of culture among cities and regions. Overall, the recommendations of the report may be inspiring for the implementation of the **URBACT RECUP Network**.

1.2 Summary of UIA project

1.2.1 Újbuda – XI District of Budapest

The 11th district of Budapest, Újbuda, is the most populous district of the city of Budapest with a population of approximately 141,000 (as of 2022). Located on the west side of the Danube River, in the original city of Buda, the district has undergone a significant process of development. The first urbanization process began in the 1900s, and during the socialist period the district underwent further development with the construction of boulevards, tram lines and housing estates to accommodate the growing population. Today, the district is home to knowledge-intensive activities, such as two major university campuses and a technology park, particularly populated by IT and telco companies. The area's quality of life is considered good, even thanks to the presence of important green areas. Starting from the beginning of 2000s, a process of transformation of Újbuda began when the municipality-initiated efforts to revitalize the main street, Bartók Béla Boulevard and its surrounding streets. The area later was named Béla Bartók quarter and became known as a cultural hub. The municipality's strategy included different actions such as renovating public spaces and leasing ground-floor retail spaces to cultural and creative organizations. ([Polyak 2024](#)). Following this perspective, Újbuda grew significantly with an influx of new residents and cultural-creative actors. This

demographic shift, combined with insufficient mechanisms to engage citizens in meaningful community activities, amplified the risk of social isolation and cultural passivity. Despite these challenges, Újbuda offered rich potential for cultural innovation. The district hosted a burgeoning Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI) sector, underutilized public spaces ready for adaptive reuse, a range of engaged stakeholders, including NGOs, businesses, and grassroots organizations. A relevant contribution in terms of cultural stakeholders mapping and engagement, had also been provided by the participation of Ujbuda as a Lead partner to the [URBACT Creative Sprints](#) Implementation Network 2015-16 which was especially focused on the Bela-Bartok quarter regeneration strategy. Despite these advancements, a crucial gap remained: newly arrived residents struggled to integrate into the local urban identity, and there was a lack of connection with university students. These factors made Újbuda an ideal testing ground for innovative, community-driven approaches to urban cultural policy.

1.2.2 CUP4Creativity'original project

The main challenge. Loneliness, including digital loneliness, affects the wellbeing of the adult population through loss of social connections. Major health determinant, potentially leading to unhealthy behaviors, psychological problems or poor cognitive performance.

The solution proposed. The main original idea was to fight loneliness by reactivating social

contacts, through culture, arts and creativity. It envisaged the design of a new cultural policy based on a shift of paradigm from passive consumption to cultural co-creation. Among many other investments, the project aimed at developing a complex, versatile and adaptable Cultural Urban Platform (CUP), lowering access barriers and integrating actors into a cultural community engaged in active consumption, creation and community-sourced activities. As shown in the figure below, **CUP4Creativity's** outputs were organized across four work packages.

1.2.3 Key stakeholders involved

The project involved a diverse group of stakeholders, related to different sectors:

1. Local Government - the Újbuda District played a leading role in project coordination and implementation as well as KözPont, the municipal company in charge of planning cultural offer, SMART 11, the Municipality's own IT Company.
2. Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI)' organisations - such as the MU Theater, Bartók Béla Boulevard Association, Eleven Blokk Visual Art Foundation.
3. Private Sector - businesses, including British Telecom and Allee Center (Mall shops chain), participated in community activities and corporate cultural engagement programs, enhancing sustainability and outreach.
4. Research institution and consultancies - such as: Kék, Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Centre Foundation, (KÉ



Figure 1 - CUP4Creativity outputs

K), MEET Service Design, PopCode developments.

1.2.4 Development process

CUP4Creativity followed a participatory and iterative development process articulated in the following phases:

1. **Community Mapping:**

- o KÉK conducted a comprehensive mapping of Újbuda's cultural ecosystem, identifying over 2,000 CCI actors and underutilized spaces. The activity was fundamental for the development of the further phases of the project.

2. **Insert programme:**

- o Originally conceived to foster a community to use and test the Insert digital platform, it turned out as an effective mechanism for activating Újbuda's rich cultural fabric. It aimed to scale up smaller, scattered, grassroots initiatives and build an active cultural community. The **INSERT program** was articulated into three pillars:
Support Grassroot initiatives:

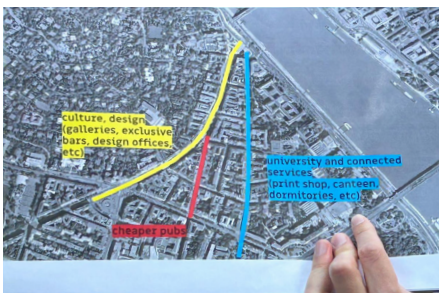


Photo 1 - Újbuda ecosystem mapping



Photo 2 - Home concert in Újbuda
(credits: "A thousand threats" brochure)

Empowering community-driven projects such as block parties, reverse serenades, and backyard community-building events (Example: Reversed Serenade, where balcony concerts turned streets into audience spaces.);

- o **Initiate cultural events:** aimed at recognizing local potential and fostering cultural activities grounded in Újbuda's unique identity (i.e.: Plane Tree Project, which transformed cut-down trees into community-built benches; University Talent Program; Private Concert Series) **Connecting the dots:** partnership with partners who already have relevant experience.

A total of 120 Projects pilots, contests, involvement events has been funded with a budget of 110,000 euro. These initiatives demonstrated the transformative potential of small-scale, community-driven cultural activities.

3. **Infrastructure investments:**

- o Adaptér, a municipal property was

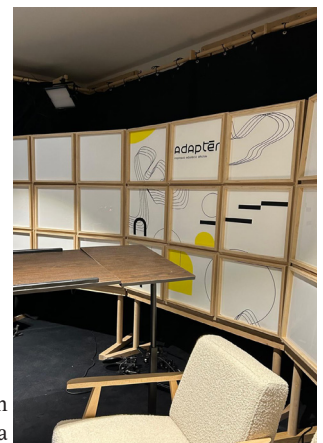


Photo 3 - Recording room
in Adaptér - Újbuda



Photo 4 - One of the small studios renovated in Újbuda thanks to the CUP4Creativity project

renovated and became a central hub for cultural and technological activities, hosting workshops, performances, and educational programs.

- o Creative corners and pop-up installations extended the project's reach in different and unusual locations.
- o Small renovation interventions of arts studios managed by the association Eleven – Eleven.

4. **Involvement of business and industries:** the promotion of relationships and interactions between actors, including companies and individuals (e.g. the unusual collaboration of BT, Allee (shopping mall) with 11 and MU Theatre).

5. **Governance and sustainability:** The Bela Bartok Roundtable engaged stakeholders from diverse sectors, ensuring that cultural policies were aligned with community needs and priorities.

Note: a detailed description of the **CUP4Creativity** project can be consulted in the brochure [“A thousand threats”](#).

the target of the cultural offer. Indeed, the CCI mapping was a fundamental and preparatory action for the review of calls for tenders and micro-financing, implemented mainly through the INSERT programme (e.g. theatre in the homes, neighbourhood music, micro-festivals, calls for studio makeovers, etc.); 2) the physical investments in the renovation of spaces for CCI ecosystem, which are the main focus of the project; 3) although to a lesser extent than originally planned, the combination of digital, technological and scientific elements with artistic production and creativity, partly through the digital platform INSERT and partly in the implementation of activities, e.g. in the new innovation centre Adapter; 4) the promotion of relationships and interactions between actors, including companies and individuals such the collaboration with British Telecom (BT), Allee shopping mall, with 11-11 and MU Theatre; 5) the establishment of the Bela Bartok Round Table for a participatory governance model. Through these actions, the project led to revise the initial challenge, abandoning the specification of digital loneliness to embrace the broader phenomenon of cultural ‘passivity’, social isolation, through the transformation of cultural policies towards the paradigm: ‘from consumers to producers of culture’.

1.2.5 Lessons learnt

The project proved to be more incisive on the challenge of policy redefinition than on the specific challenge of loneliness, on which little baseline data are available (and no specific data were collected during the project), and which also poses different challenges in terms of measurement, taking on a much more individual and perceptual dimension. In terms of policy, on the other hand, the project has indeed been transformative, introducing the concept of culture as the production and exercise of creativity, and gradually modelling cultural policies towards this end. It has done this through several lines of action: 1) the mapping of the CCI ecosystem, MEET Agency conducted qualitative research with locals which led to the creation of 4 typical personas who became

1.2.6 Weaknesses and Strengths

The project highlighted both weaknesses and strengths.

Weaknesses

1. The digital component worked only to a partial extent; The digital platform INSERT did not create the desired results. In contrast, the INSERT programme worked better than expected, contributing to citizens' activation and to the enhancement of the CCI ecosystem.
2. The very specific issue of loneliness, particularly digital loneliness, was not addressed directly, but mostly indirectly. Instead, the scope moved to the redefinition of a policy.
3. Economic sustainability: while the project

shows a strong political commitment and public investment, it was less innovative in developing or experimenting with new public private partnership models for the funding of events and initiatives.

4. Measurement gaps: No or poor baseline data on loneliness was collected and cultural impacts were not systematically measured.
5. Lengthy processes putting the project at risk, especially due to complicated procurement for the renovation of spaces.

Strengths

1. The strong project partnership helped the Municipality and KözPont innovate, design originally unplanned actions and explore unforeseen directions in the project. The project's internal coordination model changed over time. Initial difficulties in the management and commitment of some partners were overcome in the end.
2. Local rootedness and engagement turned out to be a key factor, new ideas based on local knowledge were a key contribution to innovation, many new ideas came from partners and the broader stakeholder group;
3. Insert programme as catalyst: some elements of Insert programme integrated into the regular municipal budget, festivals and events continuing after the project, their sustainability strengthened by the project;
4. Bela-Bartok roundtable: a co-governance structure to define priorities in the district and build synergies between participating organisations.

- More explicit integration of two other transversal dimensions (e.g. green and diversity).
- Economic sustainability of the model (beyond local public funding): exploring private sector partnerships and innovative funding mechanisms might be critical for sustainability.
- Impact measurement (of cultural and artistic activities: developing tools to measure the social and cultural impact of activities would strengthen future iterations.

1.3 Overall transfer potential

Analyzing the **CUP4Creativity** project with a focus on its actual achievements and its potential for transfer to other EU cities, 5 different pillars, understood as lines of action, have been identified. Each pillar is composed of two different modules, except for the governance pillar which serves as structure of integration, management and policy direction. Through an ex ante risk analysis, for each module have been identified enabling conditions (what is needed to implement it?), risk (what challenges could arise?) and potential outcomes (what the main benefits-change could be obtained?).

Pillar 1: Community Engagement and cultural ecosystem mapping/building

Module 1.1 Ecosystem Mapping of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI)

Comprehensive mapping of local CCIs, identifying stakeholders, cultural assets, and

1.2.7 Room for improvement

Although the project has been successful, there is still room for improvement. For the definition of the continuation plan of the project, Ujbuda might consider working on the following directions:

- Scalability in other areas of the district (for example in more “popular” neighborhoods) or in other Districts of the city of Budapest.

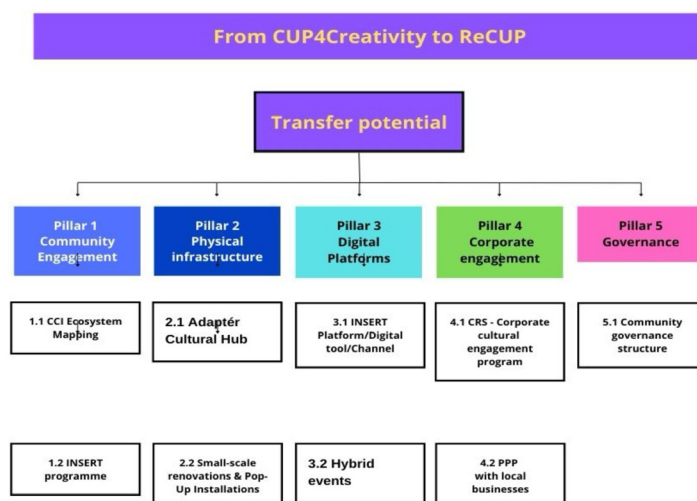


Figure 2 - CUP4Creativity modularization

underutilized resources to understand the cultural ecosystem and its potential.

Enabling Conditions: access to reliable data collection tools and methodologies. Collaboration with local institutions, cultural organizations, and experts. Political and administrative support for mapping efforts.

Risks: Incomplete or outdated data may limit the mapping accuracy. Stakeholder reluctance to participate or share information. Overlooking marginalized or informal cultural sectors.

Main benefits. To provide a clear understanding of local cultural assets and gaps; to facilitate evidence-based planning and resource allocation; to strengthen stakeholder networks.

Module 1.2: INSERT programme. Open Calls and Micro-Grant Program

Public small grants and mentorship to support grassroots cultural initiatives, fostering community-driven creativity.

Enabling Conditions: Availability of funding and resources for micro-grants. Existence or creation of a support system, including mentorship opportunities.

Risks: Complex structure of the call for proposals could lead to a very high competition favouring only the most experienced applicants. Lack of response to the call for proposals.

Benefits: Discover new players and foster the establishment of new relationships. Boost for grassroots participation and innovation. Increase in the number of co-create cultural activities and improvement of their quality.

Pillar 2: Physical infrastructure and creative spaces

Module 2.1: Adaptér– Creative Technology Knowledge Hub

Renovation of a municipally owned space became a creative space offering a mix of art, technology, and educational programming, such as VR and AR workshops.

Enabling Conditions: Availability of a suitable location and physical space. Dedicated funding for renovation, equipment, and staffing. Community buy-in and partnerships with cultural organizations.

Risks: High upfront costs for renovation and

equipment. Difficulty in maintaining operational sustainability without diversified funding.

Benefits: Provides a central hub for cultural innovation and experimentation. Integrates technology and creativity, attracting diverse audiences. Catalyst for urban regeneration and community building.

Module 2.2: Renovation of small art's studio, Partial renovation of a Theater, Pop-Up Installations and Cultural corners, Fab-labs.

Small-scale renovations of art studios, theaters, and cultural corners, as well as temporary pop-up installations.

Enabling Conditions: Availability of underused spaces for renovation or installations.

Partnerships with local artists and organizations.

Risks: Lack of funding to complete the renovations. Resistance from local stakeholders due to space usage concerns.

Benefits: Expands cultural access to underserved communities. Encourages local ownership and participation in cultural activities.

Pillar 3: Digital platform and accessibility

Module 3.1: INSERT Platform (Digital Cultural Events platform)

A digital platform enabling users to plan, promote, and participate in cultural events, increasing accessibility and community involvement.

Enabling conditions: In-depth study (by using design-thinking technique) on users' needs and expectations; High-level expertise for the development and for regular updates to maintain functionality; Effective marketing to encourage its adoption.

Risks: Low adoption rates due to competition with existing platforms. Accessibility challenges for less digital equipped citizens (elderly, etc.) Too high maintenance costs.

Benefits: Enhances community participation and awareness of cultural activities.

Module 3.2: Hybrid Events

It combines in-person and digital formats for cultural events, with the aim to ensure inclusivity and participation.

Enabling Conditions: Good public high-speed internet connections, Trained staff and event organizers

Risks: Limited digital literacy among target audiences.

Benefits: Expands cultural access to those unable to attend physically; New opportunities of cooperation

Pillar 4: Public-Private Partnerships and Corporate Engagement

Module 4.1: Corporate Cultural Engagement Program

It integrates cultural activities into corporate strategies, promoting for example art workshops, participatory theater, and creative events for employees.

Enabling Conditions: Existence of business and industries willing to participate to cultural initiatives with their corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals.

Risks: Limited interest from businesses in cultural engagement activities. Limited interest of cultural organizations in participate in this kind of “unusual” activities.

Benefits: Improvement of the workplace culture and of the employee satisfaction. Strengthening of ties between businesses and the city. Design of sustainable funding models for cultural initiatives.

Module 4.2: Funding Partnerships with Local Businesses.

Creation of partnerships with local businesses to co-fund cultural projects or sponsor community events as part of CSR strategies.

Enabling Conditions: Clear incentives and interest for businesses to invest in cultural initiatives. Strong partnerships between cultural organizations and businesses. Sponsorship framework.

Risks: Business interests may not be aligned with community priorities. Funding inconsistencies might hinder program continuity.

Benefits: Promotes sustainable funding beyond public financing. Strengthens local economies through cultural collaboration.

Pillar 5: Community Governance and Policy Frameworks

Module 5.1: Béla Bartók Roundtable (Community Governance Structure)

A participatory governance forum engaging community groups, art spaces, and stakeholders to co-design cultural policies and programming.

Enabling Conditions: Representation from diverse community stakeholders. Support from local government and cultural organizations.

Risks: Dominance of more structured stakeholders might marginalize others. Difficulty in sustaining long-term engagement and commitment. Challenges in aligning diverse priorities and interests.

Benefits: Ensures inclusive and participatory cultural policymaking. Builds trust and collaboration among stakeholders.

Section 2. Partner profiles

2.1 Introduction

This section aims to deepen the understanding of the different partners' profiles to analyze their assets and barriers while assessing their potential for transfer. To this end, Section 2.2 provides a brief description of each partner, considering their local context and baseline conditions. This includes their historical and socio-economic background, key challenges, and the strategies they have implemented—particularly in relation to the original good practice project to be transferred. Additionally, the section examines the cultural and creative stakeholders involved or to be engaged in the URBACT Local Group (ULG). Building on these profiles, the final Section 2.3 presents a targeted assessment of the transfer potential, based on the modularization of the project outlined in Section 1.2.

Partner	Population	Pop. Density	Demographic trend	% population with tertiary education	Economic sectors	% Municipal budget devoted to culture
Dubrovnik	41,562	288.6/km ²	slightly declining	29,6%	Tourism, maritime trade	8,78%
Amersfoort	161.852	2,590/km ²	growing	<40%	IT, healthcare, logistics, business services, cultural tourism	5-7%
Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord	85.420	1015,80 hab/km ²	Growing	25-26%	Manufacturing, Construction industries, Agriculture	> 5%
Bielsko-Biała	165.000	1.1.1	declining	40%	Manufacturing, Automotive; Textile & Clothing; Tech & IT sector; Services & Commerce; Tourism; Transport & Storage sector; Food industry; Education & Research; Construction & Development; Health Care	5,01%
Sandyford Business District	4.854 Residents	2.555 person /km ²	growing	70%	IT	NA

2.2.1 Dubrovnik

Summary of the city with key relevant metrics

Today celebrated as the “Pearl of the Adriatic,” the city of Dubrovnik is located in Croatia’s southern Dalmatia region, at the tip of the Adriatic coast. Its name, derived from the oak forests (*dub- dubrava*) that once covered the area around Mount Srđ, reflects its natural surroundings, as the city is situated on the promontory overlooking the sea. The City of Dubrovnik is the center of Dubrovnik-Neretva, the southernmost region, boasting the most marine territory (81%) in Croatia **2019 GSTC Tourism Destination Assessment**.

Founded in the 7th century by Roman refugees with the ancient name of “Ragusa”, the city quickly became a melting pot of Roman and Slavic cultures. Thanks to its strategic position between the East and the West, by the 14th and 15th centuries, the Republic of Dubrovnik had become one the most significant maritime trading hubs in the Adriatic. The growth of its prosperity reached its peak in the 16th century, providing the stimulus to foster a culture and humanistic creative production reflected in its urban and architectural development, as well as in literature. After the Napoleonic Wars, the city was incorporated into the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Following World

War II, it was integrated into the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In 1991, the city became part of the newly sovereign Republic of Croatia and experienced significant damage during the 1991–1995 Homeland War.

In the last decades, the city has experienced a rising urbanisation trend, driven mainly by younger residents moving in search of opportunities. In addition, Dubrovnik has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979, and this status has given a strong boost to the city's revival, fostering cultural industries and helping to make the city one of the world's most popular tourist destinations (in 2023, Dubrovnik received 4.5 million overnight stays) [GSTC 2023](#). Tourism development has been further boosted in recent years by a mix of factors such as low-cost flights, Airbnb's, cruise ships and the Game of Thrones filming location. However, while tourism has been a major driver of the city's economy, the lack of industrial production sites, partly due to the city's orographic location and weak logistical infrastructures (i.e. no railways), and a not fully developed agri-food sector, led to the fact that the city's economy is now heavily dependent on tourism, with over 70% of the population employed in tourism and related industries. According to the **2019 GSTC Tourism Destination Assessment**, while bolstering Dubrovnik's economy, this growth resulted in operational difficulties such as traffic congestion, overcrowding of sites and attractions, degradation of important assets, resident alienation, and other challenges. Also, increasing visitor numbers have led to problems

with overtourism, to the point that UNESCO warned that Dubrovnik's world heritage status was at risk.

Challenges and strategies

Note: the figure is based on the Lead 'expert elaboration based on the city's self-assessment.

Cities are an intertwined complex urban system. Indeed in the case of Dubrovnik, all the challenges perceived as the most relevant are strongly interconnected and closely tied to the significant impact of tourism on urban development, which has produced both positive and negative externalities. Viewed through the lens of reshaping cultural policies, these challenges highlight the critical need to balance tourism's economic benefits with its social and cultural costs, particularly in fostering residents' well-being, sense of community and preserving local cultural heritage and production. Different specific dimensions emerge from this analysis.

Gentrification, lack of affordable housing.

Dubrovnik is experiencing tourism-induced gentrification, where rising property values, rental prices, and the concentration of investments in tourist developments tend to displace local residents and transform the city's social and cultural fabric. The influx of tourists and investors has driven up property prices especially in the Old Town and surrounding areas, making housing less affordable for long-term residents. As housing becomes unaffordable, many residents are forced to relocate to peripheral areas. A trend common in many major tourist destinations—**the depopulation of historic centers**—is becoming evident in Dubrovnik. Today only 1,157 residents live within the city's historic centre, compared to the 5,000 inhabitants of 1991. Additionally, local businesses and traditional shops and services for residents are being replaced by businesses catering for tourists - such as souvenir shops, restaurants and boutique hotels. To understand the scale of the concern that these data raise, it must be considered that only 3% of the city's 41,000 residents currently

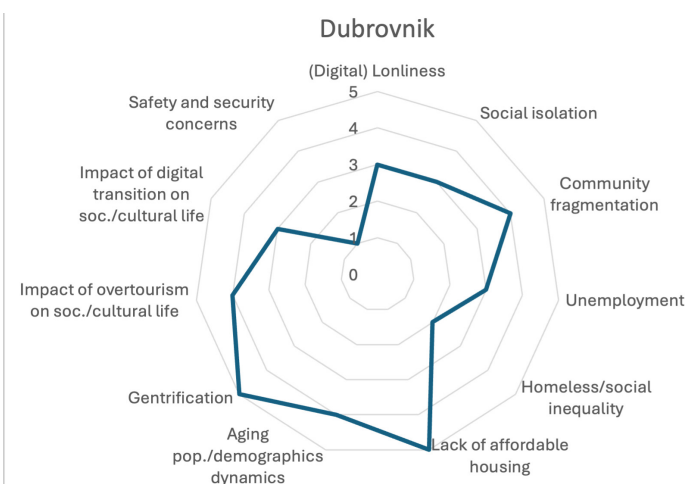


Figure n.3 Partner's self-perception of local challenges

live in the old city centre. This economic and cultural gentrification threatens the authenticity of Dubrovnik's, eroding their original identity.

Increasing divide between residents and visitors and community fragmentation.

It comes as the second urgent challenge, understood as the need to bridge the divide between locals and visitors by fostering meaningful interactions and mutual understanding.

Strategies

The City of Dubrovnik is aware of the above mentioned challenges, and it has heavily worked to mitigate these risks and to promote sustainable urban development through different strategies.

Addressing Housing Challenges. Dubrovnik has been working for several years to address this significant issue through various initiatives such as a social housing program. Over 60 apartments have been built in the Mokošica neighborhood, with plans for further developments in the Lapad area. To further support long-term residency, the Municipality subsidizes rental costs for young families and low-income households, helping to alleviate financial burdens and maintain a stable population within the city. Recognizing the urgency of revitalizing the Old Town and attracting residents back to its historic center, the City has introduced a policy of allocating municipal apartments to young families with multiple children. As part of this initiative, the municipality provides 30,000 euros per family to assist with home purchases or renovations. So far, three families have moved into municipal apartments, and a public tender is underway with 420,000 euros allocated for the renovation of three additional city-owned apartments.

Respect the City Recognizing the urgent need to address overtourism, Dubrovnik launched the **"Respect the City"** initiative, a comprehensive program aimed at reducing the negative impacts of tourism on the city's social, cultural, and environmental well-being through collaboration among stakeholders and a combination of measures and solutions.

Revitalizing the Former TUP Factory. It is the "lighthouse" project on which the city is investing the most. In 2022, the City of Dubrovnik acquired a 9,000-square-meter

area of the former **TUP factory**, located in the Gruž district near the harbor. This very important public investment (about 10 Millions euro) represents a strategic opportunity to address local challenges through innovative urban transformation which can strongly benefit from the URBACT RECUP Network. It should be noted how TUP Factory is strongly embedded in Dubrovnik local history, having been the most important socialist cooperative fabric of the area, employing up to 600 people. Nowadays this investment responds to the need for preserving public spaces for local and re-awaken cultural and creative sectors. The regeneration of this factory was at the core of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) support for local initiatives project ["Revitalization of the 'TUP' Carbon Graphite and Electrical Contact Products Factory"](#). Basically, the project aims to transform the factory complex into a hub for local creative industries and community engagement. So far, spaces have been dedicated to host a public library, several artisanal laboratories of circular economy (i.e. plastic recycling, open spaces for cultural activities. TUP Factory is already hosting the "Dubrovnik Center for Children, Youth, and Families" "house of the local associations" facilitated by the Municipality. Also, an ultimate purpose of the renovation project is to provide a sensory experience in the context of its industrial heritage, connecting the past with a forward-thinking vision. The retrofitting works have been initiated and in some areas are planned to be completed soon. However, the whole renovation plan is still to be completed and the sources of funding still to be fully identified. A contribution to the renovation will be provided also by the revenues of warehouses.



Photo 5 - TUP Factory in Dubrovnik

Dubrovnik's **Strategy for the Development of the Urban Area** serves as a key planning tool within its regional development policy. This strategy is a prerequisite for utilizing the EDRF **Integrated Territorial Investment mechanism**. To implement and complement these strategies, the city, even through its development Agency **DURA**, promoted many initiatives and projects focused on culture and innovation, mostly funded at the European level. Examples of projects focused on management and planning of sustainable tourism and cultural offers are: **Interreg HERIT-DATA**, funded by the Interreg MED program and the ERDF, aimed at, identifying innovative, technology-supported solutions to mitigate tourism's negative impacts on cultural and natural heritage sites; **Interreg EURO-MED HERIT ADAPT** focused on enhancing the adaptation and mitigation capacity of heritage assets tied to the tourism model of the Rector's Palace for better planning and site management; **Interreg EURO-MED COOL NOONS** addressing climate change adaptation in urban tourism through citizen engagement and innovative solutions; **S.LI.DES.** project aimed at preserving and value unexplored cultural heritage, for example through the expansion of the free Wi-Fi network in the old town.

At the **local level**, in addition to the municipal budget, the municipality supports over 107 programs across various arts and cultural institutions with an allocation of 450.000 euros. The City of Dubrovnik has participated in many networks funded by the **URBACT programme**. In the context of cultural and creativity

challenges, significant work has been done through the city's participation in the **URBACT Network Tourism Friendly Cities** and also in the Transfer Network **Active NGOs**, which at the local level focused mainly on the [Lazareti district](#), showcasing an innovative governance model. This initiative transformed Lazareti into a creative hub co-managed by a consortium of local NGOs and a publicly funded company, offering a unique example of collaborative urban management. Also, the city's current participation in the **Remote-IT** Network is relevant, as the project analyzes the impacts of remote work, in particular on digital nomads, on urban environments, providing valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of cities in response to new work trends.

Stakeholders and URBACT Local Group

The City of Dubrovnik and the Dubrovnik Development Agency DURA have identified the range of stakeholders who will be involved in the URBACT Local Group. Some of these stakeholders are also currently involved in the [Remote-IT](#) and [EcoCore](#) ULGs. They also collaborate on various EU projects implemented by DURA, the City, Dubrovnik-Neretva Country, the University of Dubrovnik, and others. The RECUP project will also include new stakeholders from the cities' administrative departments, local NGOs, and key cultural actors, achieving a direct line of communication with the local/regional authority and the local population.

In the **RECUP ULG**, the following key stakeholders will be involved:

Assets and Barriers

Community	Public Sector
- Residents living near the TUP factory - Local artists, cultural practitioners, and creatives - Community organizations, NGOs, and associations - Businesses operating in the area - Educational institutions (schools, universities)	- Local government authorities (city council, mayor's office) - Cultural institutions (museums, libraries, theaters) Culture and Tourism department - Department for Education, Sports, Social Welfare, and Civil Society - Urban planning and development departments - Environmental protection departments
Private sector	Knowledge Institutions
- Businesses interested in sponsoring or collaborating on the project - Major festivals and event organizers	Universities and research institutions with expertise in urban design, sustainability, and community engagement

Table n.1 Dubrovnik's assets and barriers

	Transfer Assets	Transfer Barriers	Comments
Resources: Infrastructures	The TUP Factory project represents a unique opportunity to strengthen the sense of community of locals, by becoming an aggregation and creative place alternative to the over touristic area of Dubrovnik.	Need for identifying resources of funding to complete the renovation and for designing a sustainability plan.	- Leverage the participation to the RECUP Network to develop an integrated strategy for funding and long-term sustainability of TUP investment; - Explore public-private partnerships (PPPs) models and other EU programmes;
Resources: Local expertise to support the transfer	High-level of competencies especially among DURA, Municipality and ULG Coordinator. Strong experience in participative and integrated projects.	- Need to improve digital skills in cultural sectors; - The absence of a local technical university with faculties of Architecture or civil/ environmental Engineering might pose challenges	In general terms, to reinforce the partnership with Dubrovnik University and to establish new connections with other EU Universities also in the medium-long term could be an added value. To enhance and expand the offer of targeted digital upskilling programs for local cultural stakeholders could be useful.
Funding attractiveness capacity	Good competencies of DURA and Municipality in projects's development and implementation.	- Difficulty in establishing PPPs. - Limited presence of large companies or industries outside the tourism sector.	The investment strategy should focus on diversifying public funding sources and exploring innovative financing mechanisms like crowdfunding and PPPs.
Political support	Strong political support which ensures the alignment with the RECUP objectives;	There are no major barriers. However, local communities could be further involved in the decision-making processes, for example even through initiatives such as participatory budgeting.	- Ensure that the decision-making process is transparent and open; - Leveraging on the already dynamic local tissue, it is suggest to develop communication strategies to engage local communities effectively
Coherence with strategies/policies	High coherence and complementarity with local strategies.	National strategy on culture is partially updated. Limited availability of funding.	- In general terms, ensure the alignment of the RECUP project with updated national cultural priorities; - RECUP might be used as a pilot innovative cultural project with a national-level visibility;

2.2.2 Amersfoort

Summary of the city with key relevant metrics

Amersfoort is located in the geographical centre of the Netherlands, as indicated by the “X” embedded in the paving stones in the historic old town. With a population of 162,000 and a wider urban area of around 300,000, the city's strategic location within the Randstad economic region and its excellent connections via major railways and motorways to Amsterdam and Utrecht make it an important regional centre.

Amersfoort began as a settlement at a ford on the river Eem (Amer) and was granted municipal

rights in 1259. Its architectural heritage is rich in medieval monuments, including the Koppelpoort and the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwetoren. Over the centuries, the city prospered mainly from industries such as brewing, tobacco trading and textile manufacturing. A very important event was the arrival of the railways in 1863, which contributed to the transformation of Amersfoort from a small provincial town into a major transport and industrial centre. After the Second World War, Amersfoort underwent significant growth. The urban development model and expansion of the city has been the object of studies from urban planners due to its ability to combine innovativeness, creativity with the preservation of the local cultural heritage. At the beginning of the 20th century, urban expansion resulted in the construction of distinct residential areas for different social classes. These include, for example, the affluent Bergkwartier quarter, developed in the English landscape style near the railway. Modernist residential complexes were created in the post-war period, and in the 1960s and 1970s, new suburbs to the north and east of the city were made possible by improved drainage systems.([J.E.Abrahamse 2014](#)) Since the late 1970s, Amersfoort has been designated by the national government as a national “growth city”. This gave impetus to new, modern suburban developments, which followed innovative projects that attracted international attention. Today, Amersfoort counts for many economic and social assets and peculiarities. They include a rich cultural and architectural heritage, consisting of over 400 national monuments, from medieval landmarks to contemporary museums such as the Mondriaan House. Amersfoort has also been recognized as [European City of the Year 2023](#) by the Academy of Urbanism, due to a vision of urban planning aimed at improving citizens’ quality of life through green urban planning, development control, regeneration initiatives, and a car-free center policy. Key to this vision is the ability to combine the preservation of the historical heritage and the modernization with new infrastructures. In terms of economic and educational ecosystem,

Amersfoort can be defined as a knowledge-intensive industrial ecosystem attracting and employing a highly skilled workforce. Indeed, more than 40% of the population has a tertiary higher education degree positioning the city above the national average (29%). Also, the economic tissue is very dynamic with nearly 22,000 companies and 100,000 employees, especially in sectors such as IT, healthcare, logistics, and business services. Even thanks to the richness of the local ecosystem, Amersfoort is known for having a welcoming nature. Nowadays, the city provides refuge to displaced individuals, including Ukrainian refugees.

Challenges and strategies

Note: the figure is based on the Lead expert elaboration based on the city’s self-assessment.

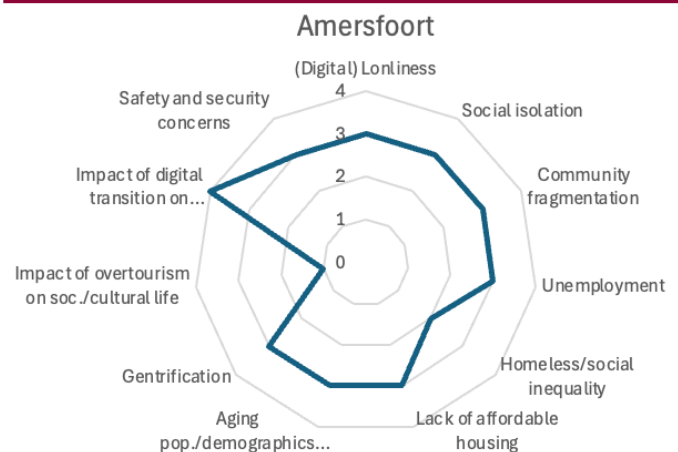


Figure n.4 Partner’s self-perception of local challenges

Although Amersfoort is a wealthy city, with a population generally more educated than the European and national average and even though the city does not have any specific social emergency, such as unemployment or lack of security, at the municipal level two significant challenges have been identified: loneliness and obesity. These issues, while distinct, impact almost half of the population and demand targeted, innovative solutions.

Loneliness. Approximately 47% of Amersfoort residents report feeling lonely, according to [RIVM data](#), a figure that has risen sharply over the past decade. While loneliness is inherently difficult to measure due to its subjective

nature, the issue manifests also across different demographics. Indeed, the city's 33,043 single-person and single-parent households—making up 45% of all households—might underscore structural factors contributing to social isolation. Since 2018, even before the Covid19 pandemic, which exacerbated the problem, the national government, through the Ministry of Health, launched an action programme, '[One Against Loneliness](#)', to tackle the problem of loneliness among older people. The programme started with a budget of €26 million and provided funding at local level for a range of actions, from the establishment of a 24-hour helpline to initiatives such as the creation of community centres, neighbourhood shops and benches in public parks. In this framework, the city of Amersfoort has already contributed to the development of a number of initiatives such as social programmes in community centres in some of the city districts where community lunches and dinners (at least twice a month), recreational activities and joint work (such as community gardens, salvaging and repairing objects, etc.) take place. Community centres tend to be multifunctional centres where there are daytime activities for the elderly, outpatient activities (such as physiotherapy, psychotherapy, etc.), but also art workshops and small start-ups related to the circular economy.

Locally, Amersfoort has adopted complementary measures, focusing on the younger **population** who are also significantly affected. Among [secondary school students](#), an estimated 29% experience loneliness, with 2/3 of these reporting persistent feelings of isolation. The city has developed creative initiatives to tackle youth loneliness, including projects by **Kosmik**, which engage local young artists in producing video and performance art addressing the issue.

These activities not only raise awareness among peers but also provide therapeutic benefits through creative expression. Similarly, the **Mondriaan TurnLabs**, inspired by Mondriaan's philosophy of imagination and innovation, bring together artists, residents, and professionals to explore social challenges

through creativity, fostering connection and dialogue in the process.

Obesity. Obesity affects nearly half of Amersfoort's population, posing a significant public health challenge. To combat this, the city has implemented urban planning and policy changes aimed at promoting active lifestyles. Notably, the historic city center has been made entirely car-free, and a network of safe and accessible cycling paths has been developed to encourage sustainable mobility. Also, attention has been dedicated to the local food policy. Indeed, Amersfoort participates in the [URBACT Food Corridors network](#), focusing on sustainable and healthy food systems. Despite these efforts, the actions taken thus far have not fully addressed the scale of the obesity issue, indicating the need for more robust and integrated approaches. While it is not yet possible to establish a direct correlation between loneliness and obesity, both challenges may be exacerbated by certain underlying factors, such as reduced social interactions and inactive lifestyles. This overlap suggests the potential for an integrated strategy that addresses both issues simultaneously.

The need for an innovative and integrated strategy

As it can be seen, Amersfoort boasts a vibrant cultural landscape, enriched by institutions and innovative initiatives such as the Mondriaan Museum, which uses art to explore global societal challenges, and Kosmik, a cultural hub engaging young people through art, music,



Photo 6 - Partner, Lead Expert and Project coordinator at Kosmik

and creative expression. Additionally, the city's community centers play a vital role in supporting social activities, particularly for the elderly, fostering inclusion and connection. Despite these strengths, the city still faces pressing challenges, regarding loneliness and obesity, which require deeper exploration. Addressing these issues effectively demands innovative approaches, including possible collaborations with local artists, conducting interviews, and organizing focus groups to better understand the underlying causes and nuanced needs of affected populations.

City stakeholders involved in the URBACT Local Group (ULG)

Different organisations will be involved in the Amersfoort ULG including representatives of the creative and cultural ecosystem, Municipality, social organisations, Universities, cultural and social innovators. A peculiarity of the ULG is the intention to involve local churches and mosques thanks to their possible role in facilitating social aggregation among different communities..

An overview of the **ULG Stakeholders** members:

St Omzien	Foundation that contributes to battling loneliness
Amersfoortse Uitdaging	Foundation that contributes to social goals with companies from the region
Annemiek van Raalte	Annemiek is an active citizen that addresses the issue of school dropouts
SamenValent	Care organization providing: Supported/assisted living facilities, community center
Various community centers	Huis Miereveld, Klokhuis, Herberg, Wijkboerderij Nieuwland, De Groene Stee, Wijkcentrum Het Middelpunt, De Driehoek, De Witte Vlinder, De Nieuwe Sleutel, Bij Bosshardt, De Ontmoeting
Churches	Raad van Kerken Amersfoort, Jewish Community Amersfoort, Humanistisch Verbond, Mevlana Mosque, Bahá'í Community, Mosque Masjid el Fath, Rahman Educational Center Amersfoort, Apostolic Society, Het Brandpunt, Veenkerk a
KOSMIK	Art institution
Mondriaanhuis	Museum
Flint	Theater
University of Applied Sciences Utrecht	Social Work, Community Building, Eventmanagement
Indebuurt033	Social welfare organization
Local entrepreneurs	Working in the cultural or social sector.

Assets and Barriers in the Transfer Process

Table n.2 Amersfoort's assets and barriers.

	Transfer Assets	Transfer Barriers	Comments
Resources: Infrastructures	The Municipality owns or is planning to buy several small empty properties that could be renovated to become cultural and creative hubs.	No major difficulties in the implementation.	As a general recommendation, it will be suggested to keep the decision-making process transparent, participative, while ensuring the commitment of the local elected representatives.
Resources: Local expertise to support the transfer	High-level expertise on creativity and culture from the local stakeholders. Rich and innovative cultural tissue.	While the city has solid URBACT experience, cross-departmental collaboration within the administration might be further improved. It might be beneficial to create a shared sense of ownership and to prioritize active participation in the RECUP Network.	As a general recommendation, it could be useful to organize regular interdepartmental meetings and also to embed RECUP objectives into the administration's key performance objectives.
Funding attractiveness capacity	The Municipality already allocates important resources on culture and complementary social activities. Also, availability of additional funding could be identified at the national level (for example through the programme to face loneliness) and or at the EU level.	No major barriers. To establish partnerships with business, industries might be a further opportunity to explore.	To strengthen collaboration with local businesses and industries to diversify funding sources could be useful.
Political support	The political commitment is high as emerged during the on-site visits and to previous initiatives implemented by the city. In addition, the main challenges have also been recognized as a political priority at the National level.	No significant barriers or obstacles.	As a general recommendation: building on the high-level political commitment at the Municipal level, it will be relevant to ensure alignment between RECUP objectives and ongoing national-level initiatives to amplify the project's impact.
Coherence with strategies/policies	The major objective of the project, namely, to face loneliness and reactive social relationships, through the redefinition of cultural policies is consistent with the Municipality's priorities, vision and previous initiatives implemented.	No major obstacles.	To integrate explicitly, RECUP objectives into local strategic frameworks to ensure sustainability in the long-term.

2.2.3 Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord

The Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord is a local public body formed by an association of ten municipalities in the northern metropolitan

area of Valencia (Spain), the third largest metropolitan area in Spain. The Mancomunidad was created to strengthen policy coordination and improve the efficiency of planning and service delivery by supporting the actions of

individual municipalities, some of which are also very small. In fact, while the total population of Mancomunidad is around 85,420, the size of the municipalities varies greatly, ranging from 700 inhabitants in the municipality of Emperor to 21.298 in Puçol. The competences of the Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord have expanded over time; including social services with a new innovative Mental Health programme and addictions unit, Environment education and waste collecting, Youth, European funds, Consumer protection office and Dog shelter. The Mancomunidad owes its name 'Horta Nord' to the area's strong agricultural tradition, which for years has been the main economic sector, with products exported all over the world (especially citrus fruits), thanks to the orography and favourable climate. It should be noted that the population has grown considerably since the 1960s, when the industrialisation of the area gradually increased and at the same time the agricultural land shrank.

The area is strategically located, being very close to the centre of Valencia (20 minutes by car) and with access to the coast in six of its ten municipalities (Puçol, el Puig, la Pobla, Massamagrell, Massalfassar and Albuixech). Despite its great potential, tourism is underdeveloped, whereas there is an important service sector and, above all, manufacturing. Despite its geographical situation, Mancomunidad is not a peripheral area in cultural terms. In fact, it maintains an important cultural tradition, with cultural centres and music schools in almost all the towns. One of its most prominent cultural and festive expressions is the celebration of the Fallas, a festival of national and international renown, though its emergence and development in this region date back only to the 1970s. The most historically rooted cultural tradition, and a distinctive feature of the Valencian Community, is the presence of Musical Societies. These institutions exist in 9 of the 10 municipalities, with some boasting histories spanning more than 160 years.

Challenges and strategies

Note: the Figure is based on the Lead 'expert elaboration based on the city's self-assessment.

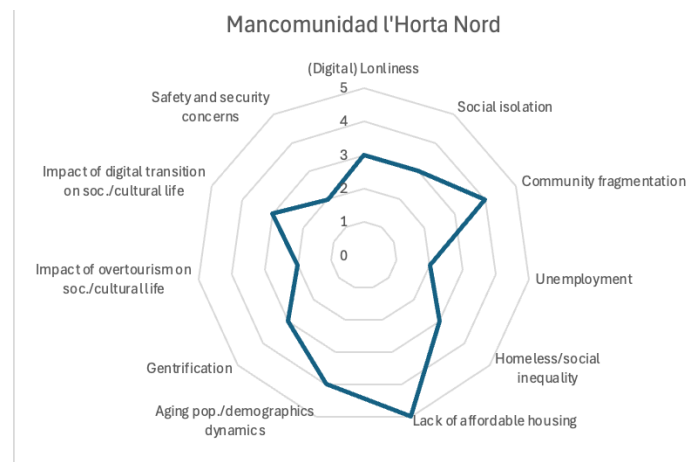


Figure n.5 - Partner's self-perception of local challenges

The **Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord** faces a series of intertwined social and cultural challenges that threaten community cohesion and individual well-being. The proximity to the city of Valencia, the rapid economic transformation towards industrialisation and the strong population growth have brought some significant economic benefits, but at the same time they have eroded the social fabric of the area by creating some interrelated challenges. A dramatic increase occurred in the price of access to permanent housing, which has particularly affected young people and poorer families. On the other hand, the area has become a dormitory city, with a weakening of social cohesion. Due to the attractiveness of the city of Valencia and the excellent connections to the centre, there has been an influx of new people and the development of new businesses and economic activities. However, this has led to a segmentation of the population between the original population, with previous generations born in the municipality, and new residents with very weak ties to the local context. This phenomenon has segmented the population, reduced social cohesion and weakened community ties. Old residents may feel alienated by new developments, while new residents often lack opportunities to integrate. Most of them live in the village only to sleep, without establishing channels of

participation in the leisure, cultural tradition, economy and community of their new place of residence. This is compounded by a specific problem of **territorial identity**. Despite sharing common social and cultural characteristics, the Mancomunidad area does not have a strong common territorial identity. The municipalities are all very active culturally, but they work separately. As a relatively recent association of municipalities, the Mancomunidad lacks a common cultural identity and sense of belonging. Another element that should not be overlooked is **public transport**, which, although efficient, is more focused on connecting the municipalities with the city of Valencia than with each other within the same area of Horta Nord. There are two public railway systems, but they are not interconnected, making it difficult to link work and leisure activities in the different municipalities. In addition, **urban sprawl**, driven by the expansion of the Valencia metropolitan area, is threatening the agricultural and cultural heritage of the area. Traditional practices and historic sites are at risk of being overshadowed or lost amidst new developments. In this framework, a partial disengagement of younger generations is also occurring. Young people are increasingly disconnected from the local traditions, exacerbating the risk of cultural erosion. As it can be seen, a real challenge for the Mancomunidad is to understand how to organise urban cultural activities in -'non-urban' contexts but close to the city where, for example, competition with the center is strongly felt.

Strategies In this context, although the Mancomunidad Horta Nord is a fairly recent institution, with about 50/60 employees and no solid previous experience, it has been very active, especially in recent years. Several initiatives have been developed to address the various challenges and to bring dynamism to the area. On the economic development and innovation front, an **Open Innovation Lab** was developed in Rafelbunyol in 2023 with the aim of stimulating reflections to plan the city's economic development in a more sustainable manner and in line with the SDGs. A very impactful initiative in this context is the opening of the [Volkswagen Gigafactory](#) in Sagunto with more than 6,000 direct and indirect jobs expected. This initiative is planned to involve not only the town of Sagunto, but

also the other neighboring towns such as Rafelbunyol which is engaged in strategic planning and reflection action in order to capitalize the investment and enhance its territorial impact.

The cultural fabric of each municipality is vibrant. Almost every town has a cultural centre and a music Society with many members. They are prominent in each municipality and promote a sense of belonging and continuity, particularly through traditional Valencian music. In addition, the single municipalities of Mancomunidad have launched projects to promote cultural engagement. Some of these are aimed directly at young people, such as the [InclusEU](#) CERV project: an EU-funded project participated by the town of Rafelbunyol that promotes the mental health of young people after the age of 19 through volunteering and cultural activities. In the same direction of promoting cultural exchanges for young people, it can be seen the exchange with the College of the City of Harleen which has already seen a first group of students coming in Rafelbunyol to visit the Spanish Civil War trench. There are also many small-scale creative initiatives. For example, in Rafelbunyol, an equipped room, self-managed by the interested citizens, is located above the public library and it is used as a study room, open to the public 24 hours a day.

Music, art and dance festivals are present in almost every single town. For example:

Jaume I del Puig Festival: a multidisciplinary cultural event that celebrates the region's heritage.

Rafelfestival: a contemporary music festival that blends traditional and modern artistic expressions. It promotes intergenerational links and positions the municipality as a cultural centre.

Dimonis de Massalfassar: a traditional dance performance with fire that aims to preserve and revive Renaissance cultural practices.

Puçol Short Film Festival: an event aimed at young people, with competitions and screenings that encourage creative expression and community participation.

Graffiti urban art Festival: promoting urban art in public spaces, encouraging community participation and attracting younger audiences. Innovative projects are also being carried out on the **libraries and reading front**. In El Puig, the local museum, together with the municipality,

has successfully developed the project “**The City that Reads**”. It consists of 10 towns working together in El Puig. They have set up a reading council, which in turn has drawn up a strategy to promote readings. Among other initiatives: thematic festivals in streets named after writers; relations with training centres (creative writing). The ‘**Metro Line 3 Library Network**’ initiative links libraries in different municipalities to promote a community of readers and improve access to literary culture. Also, cross-booking points, with book-sharing stations in parks to promote reading and community interaction.

In terms of cultural heritage, an important project is the restoration of the trenches of the Spanish Civil War, belonging to “*La línea inmediata*” (the immediate line) of defence of which there are elements in El Puig and Rafelbunyol. Together with the Monastery and the Hermitage of El Puig, these are the most important elements of the cultural heritage. As can be seen from this rich landscape of cultural initiatives, the area is dynamic, vibrant and rich in tradition. However, two major inter- and intra-municipal challenges have yet to be effectively addressed: the need for a more coordinated policy between the different municipalities and the need to reach out to different target groups of the population, especially the newly arrived. These two different processes could lead to the development of a new common cultural identity, with the contribution of the particularities of the different municipalities and through a positive contribution and enrichment provided by the newly arrived citizens.

City stakeholders Involved in the URBACT Local Group (ULG)

The URBACT Local Group has been established and met twice from the beginning of the project. Mancounidad decided to organize a three-level ULG consisting in a core group, composed mostly by the institutional representatives of the Mancomunitat and by the staff (internal and external) working on the project. In addition, they managed to involve cultural stakeholders from all the 10 municipalities as well as companies and industries to develop new private funding strategies. As can be seen in the table below, stakeholders will include cultural and artistic association, local media and press,



Photo 7 - El Puig Monastery

schools. The involvement of the University of Valencia is also foreseen. An interesting element of the URBACT Local Group is that most of these actors are working together for the first time through the project.

- President of the Mancomunitat de l’Horta Nord and Mayor of Rafelbunyol Town Council.
- Councillors of Culture of the Town Councils that form part of the Mancomunitat.
- Technical staff of reference for culture in the town councils that form part of the Mancomunitat (10 municipalities).
- Presidency of the Musical Societies that are active in the territory of the Mancomunitat de l’Horta Nord.
- European funds technician of Rafelbunyol
- Staff of the cultural magazine of excellence “Espai Carraixet”.
- Members of 2 theatre schools of l’Horta Nord.
- Dance company and association “La Crew” and the enterprise “Academy school La crew”
- Folklore music group ‘La Andana’.
- At least 1 school with an artistic baccalaureate (Rafelbunyol secondary school is already involved).
- Coordinators of the “Rafelfestival” Festival
- University of Valencia- Department of Culture- connected with Espai Carraixet
- Semi-organised artists from different disciplines (at least 4)
- Enterprises, industries and local shops by involving their associations and managing bodies.

Assets and Barriers in the Transfer Process

Table n.3 MHN's assets and barriers

	Transfer Assets	Transfer Barriers	Comments
Resources: Infrastructures	Almost all the municipalities have infrastructures that could be used within the project. Renovated spaces could host collective activities and be open to citizen's participation.	Mancomunidad as an institution does not own any infrastructure. Therefore, a coordinated action is needed to identify infrastructures to be used and/or transformed. A logistical challenge is still represented by inefficient transport connectivity between municipalities.	No substantial obstacles. As general recommendations: it could be useful to conduct a mapping and define a centralized inventory of available spaces of the different municipalities, and to define a common transport plan to connect the different spaces.
Resources: Local expertise to support the transfer	Municipal cultural departments are experienced.	There is a need to improve the coordination between the different cultural departments. Also, new expertise related to the use of digital technologies might be required.	No major obstacles. However, there is a need to integrate new expertise, to support the innovative dimension of the process. Capacity-building workshops to increase the interdepartmental cooperation could be organized; Open laboratories to foster expertise in digital innovation might be useful as well as to establish cooperation with open lab innovation and University's representatives.
Funding attractiveness capacity	Municipal ordinary budget for cultural activities. Participation in European programs like CERV, URBACT and INTERREG, enhances access to funding; Strategic initiatives like the Volkswagen Gigafactory could be a leverage.	Dependence on public funding to implement cultural activities as well as a lack of previous experience in public-private partnership in the field could pose specific challenges.	The strongest recommendation is to diversify the funding strategy, integrating different public sources (including at national and EU level) with other sources of funding such as crowdfunding and PPP. Establishing new collaborations with business and industry is also recommended.
Political support	Strong commitment of the political representatives.	One difficulty in terms of governance is a potential political fragmentation between the 10 municipalities having different political orientations. Coordination challenges in aligning priorities across municipalities.	The strong commitment and dynamism of the political representatives represent a major asset for the project's transfer. The participation in the RECUP project is seen as an opportunity to enhance Mancomunitat planning competencies and to improve the citizens' quality of life. To overcome the challenges posed by the governance possible recommendations is to keep the process transparent and open and to assign responsibilities to the different stakeholders.
Coherence with strategies/policies	The RECUP project is consistent with the local strategies implemented both by the Mancomunidad and by the Municipalities individually.	No major obstacles	No major obstacles. As a general recommendation, ensure that the RECUP final investment plan is explicitly integrated into the long-term strategic planning of the Mancomunidad and also consistent with regional level.

2.2.4 Bielsko-Biala

Situated in Silesian Region at the foot of the Beskid Mountains, the town of Bielsko-Biala is crossed by the Biala River, which until 1951 also served as the border of two towns: the town of Bielsko, founded in the 12th century, and the town of Biala on the other side of the river, which was under Austro-Hungarian rule after the First Partition of Poland in 1772 until 1918. The city developed in the 19th century as an important center of the textile industry, particularly wool production, which remained the city's leading sector until the 20th century. Over the years, Bielsko-Biala has manifested a strongly multicultural nature, hosting Polish as well as German, Jewish and Czech communities. This diversity has influenced the local culture, from architecture to art. Of the city's diverse past, valuable traces can be found in its architectural heritage for which it is known as **"Little Vienna"**. Particularly in the Bielsko area, which is rich in monuments of Art Nouveau architecture such as the theatre.

It is precisely its textile past, and the multiculturalism that has characterized it, that is the basis of the concept: **"City of Weaves"**, the motto with which Bielsko-Biala has developed its candidature as European Capital of Culture 2029, playing on the link between tradition and modernity. A finalist in the European competition, Bielsko-Biala won the title of the first **Polish Capital of Culture** in 2026.

Not only art and history, but the city is also an important **tourist area**, especially due to its proximity to the mountains - the Beskydy Mountains, which attract hikers, mountain bikers and skiers.

Also known as: ["The city of 100 industries"](#), Bielsko-Biala is also a dynamic city in socio-economic terms. A significant percentage of the population, around 40 per cent, has a university degree. The city is home to two universities: Bielsko-Biala University and, from 2023, the Silesian Medical University. Economically, the city has evolved from its textile roots (which collapsed in the early 2000) to a

diversified economy encompassing automotive manufacturing, high-tech industries, and a burgeoning service sector. The service sector has also grown in recent years, particularly in areas such as IT services, education and healthcare. Bielsko-Biala also benefits from its strategic location near major transport routes, including its proximity to the Czech border and access to the S1 expressway. This makes the city a strategic hub for logistics and regional business development.

Challenges and strategies

Note: the figure is based on the Lead 'expert elaboration based on the city's self-assessment.

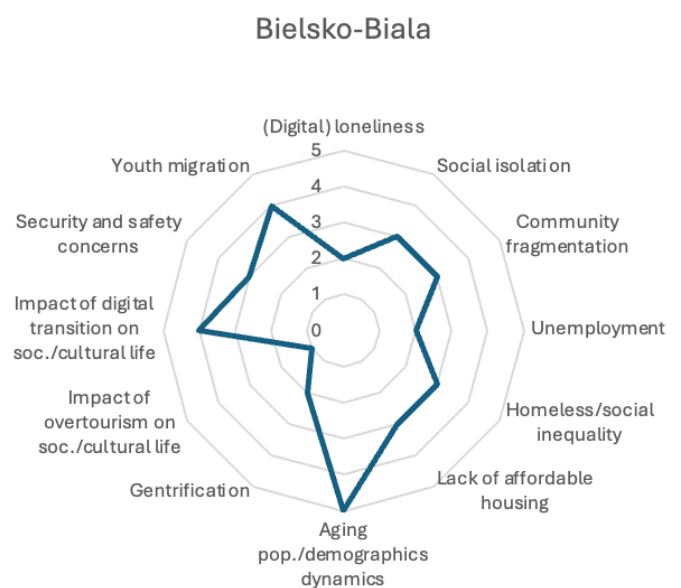


Figure 6 - Partner's self-perception of local challenges

Despite being a dynamic city, Bielsko-Biala has experienced the emergence of a number of interconnected challenges related in particular to the demographic shift due to aging population, emigration of young people, and one of the lowest birth rates in Poland. Indeed, according to the [Polish National Statistics Office\[1\]](#) the City's population shifted from 177.840 in 2002 to 165.770 in 2023, while the average age is about 44,8 years, which is 2 years above the Polish national average ([National Statistics Office](#)).

Youth migration is caused by young people leaving the city in search of better educational and employment opportunities. This brain drain penalizes local development and hinders the growth of innovation and new ideas and perspectives for the city's growth. As

previously by emerged within the [In Focus URBACT Network](#), despite the presence of two Universities and a growing knowledge-intensive industrial ecosystem, a mismatch between a demand of well-educated and skilled workforce (especially in IT engineering) and the local labour market has arisen. An enlargement of the educational system offer should be envisioned. New opportunities can be created focusing on enhancing local research and economic ecosystems and by establishing cooperation between areas such as IT, green technology and also creative industries.

The **ageing population** is putting increasing pressure on social services, health care and infrastructure with the need for age-friendly environments, accessible public spaces and specialised services for the elderly.

To address this issue, Bielsko-Biala has adopted several strategies such as a modern and accessible **Senior Citizens' Centre** offering daily activities and themes to activate the senior community in BB.

Also from a cultural point of view, the city has prioritised making cultural events accessible to older residents through programmes such as workshops, exhibitions and performances designed to engage seniors and promote mental well-being and social cohesion. Among the different projects we find also intergenerational activities bringing younger and older generations together, promoting mutual understanding and shared learning. A programme for **relevant infrastructure adaptations** has also been launched to make accessible public spaces and transport.

Social isolation and exclusion remain growing challenges in Bielsko-Biala, particularly affecting elderly residents and marginalized groups.

Despite the city's robust social ecosystem, many individuals, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, people with disabilities, and the elderly, face significant barriers in accessing higher education, entering the labor market, and fully participating in city life.

The ["Strategy for the Development of Culture in Bielsko-Biala up to 2030"](#) defines a strategic plan to address these issues. The strategy has been conceived through an innovative approach by placing inclusive community building at its core. A key pillar of the strategy is the **co-creation of cultural processes**, which has been implemented in diverse and impactful ways. Notable initiatives include:

- **Street art academy and projects:** Using Street art as a vehicle for social change and community engagement.
- **Participatory history projects:** Involving residents in uncovering the histories of local buildings and districts, fostering a sense of connection with the city's heritage.
- **Grassroots cultural initiatives:** Supported by cultural centers across the different districts, these initiatives empower communities to take ownership of cultural activities and promote localized engagement.

The strategy also emphasizes neighborhood engagement, with local cultural institutions such as libraries and community centers hosting events designed to strengthen connections among residents. The concept of **"Art as a Tool for Inclusion"** has driven creative workshops and public art projects, including contemporary art initiatives, that provide safe and welcoming spaces for interaction. These spaces are particularly important for those who feel excluded from more traditional social settings. So far, these efforts have yielded incremental success. However, the potential of these programmes is still partially underexploited. Indeed, to achieve and maintain a consistent participation is challenging due to a mix of factors from social stigma to financial constraints. Also, **digital exclusion** remains a significant barrier, affecting in particular seniors and low-income groups, experiencing a limited access to online cultural initiatives and opportunities.

The city also has strong expertise in integrated urban development strategies, as evidenced by its participation in various URBACT networks, such as: Welcoming International Talent (2018-2021); In Focus (2015-2018); AS TRANSFER (2021-2022); TechDiversity (current: 2023-2025), U.R. Impact: Prioritising Social Impact in Urban Regeneration (current: 2023-2025). Significant initiatives have been carried out in this framework. For example, within [URBACT Welcoming International Talent Network \(2018-2021\)](#), the city renovated a building that is now a multifunctional centre for training foreigners and also hosts creative labs for young people. Relevant results have also been achieved within the [URBACT TechDiversity Network](#), which is mainly dedicated to improving the participation of women in digital activities, Fab Lab, etc., as well as within the U.R. Impact Network, which has led to the organisation of participatory photo exhibitions aimed at discovering the different points of view of citizens in the city centre.



Photo 8 - Street art in Bielsko-Biala

City Stakeholders Involved in the URBACT Local Group (ULG)

The Local Urbact Group in Bielsko-Biala includes representatives from key cultural institutions and also private sector representatives, urban activists, musicians, visual artists, NGO representatives, and freelancers, a representative of Agency for Regional Development, municipal representatives and city authorities. The ULG will include for examples:

Point 11/ Institute of Urban Culture - City of Weaves, Institute for Urban Culture - City of Weaves, Regional Development Agency - URBACT (Action Planning Network), BIB Municipality (Department of Strategy and Economic Development) - URBACT (Action Planning Network), BIB Municipality (City Development Bureau), BIB Municipality - Department of Culture and Promotion Deputy Mayor of Bielsko-Biała City	Beskid Library Banialuka Puppet Theatre Community Cultural Centres Abel company, LO 5, SmartBB Marcin Buk - artist, BB Editorial Board, DIY Foundation, Municipal House of Culture, "Świat" Theater, Banialuka Puppet Theater Street Art Academy, Foundation for Supporting Culture "Vertical Slice"
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4. Assets and Barriers in the Transfer Process

Table n.4 Bielsko-Biala's assets and barriers

	Transfer Assets	Transfer Barriers	Comments
Resources: Infrastructures	Availability of municipal properties suitable for renovation and adaptation, including in the city center, presenting opportunities for large-scale investment.	No major barriers. However, ensuring accessibility of the renovated infrastructures is essential.	General recommendations: - Prioritize accessibility in renovation projects; Develop a plan to integrate these spaces into the wider urban and cultural strategy;
Resources: Local expertise to support the transfer	A rich cultural ecosystem with solid municipal expertise in culture and creativity, highlighted by the city's European Capital of Culture 2029 bid. In addition, relevant competences on urban integrated development are present in the different municipal departments participating in the previous URBACT networks.	No major transfer barriers. An opportunity to be exploited is the one referring to the enhancement of the dialogue with Universities and Industries.	- Foster cooperation within the different departments of the administration; - Open collaborations with academic and industrial partners to support innovative cultural and urban initiatives.
Funding attractiveness capacity	The Municipality is investing in culture, and it is also participating in EU funded projects.	As for other cities, there is a need to overcome the strong dependency on public funding especially at the local level.	General recommendations: - Encourage public-private partnerships to diversify funding source; - Explore other EU funding sources (i.e. EUI);
Political support	High political support is devoted to the project.	No major barriers	-To capitalize on this, keep the process transparent and ensure the participation of the different stakeholders;
Coherence with strategies/policies	The RECUP Network's objectives are consistent with the existing strategies of the Municipalities. They are very aligned with the approach adopted by the Municipality which is focused on the promotion of the active participation of citizens in the cultural process.	No major barriers.	-Build on this coherence by linking RECUP objectives with other complementary municipal or even regional strategies

2.2.5 Sandyford Business District profile

Sandyford BID CLG (SBID) is a Business Improvement District (BID). It is part of a global network of over 2,000 BIDs, including four in Ireland, one of which is in Dublin. SBID was established in 2017 as a not-for-profit organization to manage and administer the BID system in Sandyford.

The main aim of SBID is to contribute to the improvement of the area through the contribution of businesses established there paying a small fee. In terms of governance, although BIDs are essentially business-led, SBID has a mixed participation with the Council of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County having two representatives in the governing district, while the other 10 are allocated to business owners in the district. Single businesses can participate in BID activities through steering groups and partnerships, influencing initiatives that have a direct impact on their environment. The BID is renewed every five years through a public consultation.

The main mission of SBID is to enhance Sandyford, in particular its innovative fabric, and make it more attractive to businesses as well to residents. Indeed, one of the peculiarities of SBID is to have not only business, but also to host dwellings. The funding mechanism is based on business rates, which are collected by the council and are calculated at 3% of the annual bill, with 69% of businesses paying less than €500 per annum. The BID contribution is used exclusively for local projects, ensuring that funds are not diverted to the central government. The projects are developed in addition to the services provided by the local authority and are in line with the district's mission to create a vibrant and innovative community.

There are a total of **4.854 people** living in the district and they are concentrated in two of the four business parks that make up the Sandyford Business District. The total area of the three parks is 1.9 km². It is really interesting to note that the population and urban organization of the district have some peculiarities compared to the county average: for example, the population

density is higher (2,555 persons/km² compared to 1,850 persons/km² in the county) and as most people work in the district, less than 1 in 5 of the working population drive to work and almost half of the households do not own a car. These data show a situation where the proximity to workplaces allows for a different and more sustainable mobility compared to the rest of the county. The structure of the population is also peculiar: the population is quite young, with the largest cohort of the population in the district being in the 25-44 age group, namely 2,809 or 57.8%, compared to this cohort in the county of 27.6%.

The district is characterized by the fact that it has a well-educated and very cosmopolitan and diverse population. In fact, more than 70% of the inhabitants have a university degree and while a third of the inhabitants were born in Ireland (32%), more than half (51%) of the district's population were born outside the European Union, compared to 12% in the rest of the DLR County.

This diversity fosters a creative and resilient workforce, complementing the district's specialization in technology, business services, and innovation-driven industries.

Challenges and strategies

Note: the Figure is based on the Lead 'expert elaboration based on the city's self-assessment.

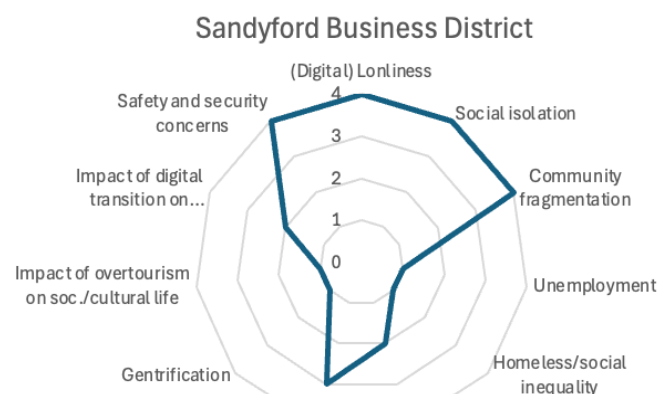


Figure 7 - Partner's self-perception of local challenges

Although SBD can generally be defined as a well-serviced place to live, where the population is generally highly educated and multicultural,

some specific challenges have emerged due to its particular nature. Indeed, as SBD was primarily conceived as a good place to work and live, the social and recreational dimension does not seem to have been at the top of the priorities so far, and there is much room for improvement. An in-depth, targeted analysis carried out by SBD as part of the **IB-Green Interreg project** revealed a number of challenges, including a lack of inviting outdoor spaces, limited opportunities for engagement, and dissatisfaction with the concrete-heavy design of the neighbourhood.

Lack of Outdoor Spaces and limited communal and cultural engagement areas. One of the most significant challenges in SBD is the absence of open, public outdoor and indoor spaces designed to facilitate social interaction and community gatherings. This issue becomes particularly acute during the summer months when the demand for outdoor social spaces is at its peak. Also, after 6 PM in the afternoon, most of the coffee and commercial activities are closed and there is a lack of gathering places open (such as Pub or bistros). Additionally, there is a scarcity of designated areas for children equipped with appropriate recreational facilities. With regards to kids, it must also be noted that while in the district there are pre-schools, there is a lack of primary and secondary schools. The district also lacks cultural venues such as theaters or cinemas, with the nearest options located around 20-25 minutes away by public transport. Compounding this, SBD does not directly own spaces that could be repurposed for public social or cultural activities. This lack of communal spaces for interaction presents a significant barrier to fostering connections among the district's diverse population.

Social fragmentation and the “Parallel society” effect. Another major challenge in SBD is social fragmentation, where different community groups—particularly long-established Irish residents and expat communities—tend to engage in separate social and cultural activities. This lack of integration contributes to the formation of “parallel societies”, reducing opportunities for cross-cultural interactions and potentially hindering efforts to build a more

cohesive and inclusive community.

Short-Term rentals and lack of sense of belonging. Another notable characteristic of the district is that nearly all residents are renters, with almost none owning their homes. This lack of long-term investment poses challenges to fostering a strong sense of belonging within the community. Additionally, a portion of the apartments (which is expected to grow in the future) is designated for social housing, contributing to a diverse and mixed population.

Strategies

In response to these intertwined challenges, a cooperative effort with the Local Council is underway to address these issues. The most substantial investment to date is the transformation of 0.8 hectares of land into a civic park, co-funded through the **Interreg IB-Green project** in collaboration with DLR County Council. The park will incorporate both blue and green infrastructure to promote biodiversity and mitigate urban heat islands, serving both environmental and social purposes. In addition to addressing climate adaptation and mitigation, the park is envisioned as a hub for community activities, fostering social cohesion and engagement. In order to make the park really attractive for the people, a participatory project will accompany its design, with multi-stakeholder workshops involving landscape architects and urban planners looking for innovative and inclusive designs. While challenges have arisen, such as delays in the public procurement process and aligning stakeholder expectations, the project is progressing steadily.

On the other hand, SBD has also designed and implemented an annual plan to promote socialisation among residents by proposing many different opportunities to meet. For example, initiatives have been organised such as the **“September Culture Night”**, which celebrates arts and culture to engage the community and showcase local talent which in recent years saw also the integration of augmented reality (AR) and the participation of the **Dublin Symphony Orchestra, live music sessions** with performances during lunchtime in the summer



Photo 9 - September culture night in SBD. Credits: <https://www.sandyford.ie/news-events/event/sbd-culture-night-2024>

months, but also more family focused activities such as Halloween celebrations, Santa's visit and outdoor parties for children. Overall, these initiatives have been successful, although new planning is needed to further increase participation, which has sometimes been hampered by scheduling conflicts.

In addition, other relevant initiatives include **Innovation Summit** which has been held for nine years. It is a two-day event which gathers experts, leaders, innovators, and policymakers to discuss key themes related to sustainability, digital transformation, and social innovation.

Another interesting initiative is represented by **SBD Wellness Week** held annually in May which features free activities such as fitness classes, challenges, workshops, and live music, fostering community engagement and encouraging healthier lifestyles. SBD team is open to innovation and international exchange learning opportunities. Indeed, SBD is partner of the abovementioned **IB-Green** Interreg project with the specific pilot action aiming to transform 0.8 hectares of land into the Sandyford Business District Civic Park, addressing heat stress and enhancing public spaces and in the **CircularPSP** collaborative project aimed at developing a digital tool to accelerate the green circular transition in cities, enabling local businesses and governments to adopt circular practices.

City Stakeholders Involved in the URBACT Local Group (ULG)

The group of stakeholders to be involved in the ULG is based on a quadruple helix approach including Public administration, as well as business, universities and third sector's

Stakeholder	Relevance
Cultural Organisations	
The Mill Theatre Dundrum	A prominent cultural venue near Sandyford, promoting arts and cultural engagement in the area.
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Arts Office	Champions local arts and cultural projects in the district.
Tech Hubs	
Microsoft Ireland	Based in Sandyford Business District, a leader in technology innovation.
Universities and Educational Institutions	
Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT)	Partnered with SBD through an MOU, with a focus on innovation and creative industries.
University College Dublin (UCD)	A leading academic institution with extensive research capabilities.
Trinity College Dublin	Another key academic partner with whom SBD is working to establish an MOU.
Local Businesses and SMEs	
SME Representatives	Diverse range of small and medium enterprises within the district.
Community Organisations	
Sandyford Community Development Committee	Represents local community interests and priorities.
Transport Stakeholders	
Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)	Responsible for public transport projects in the area.
Bike to Work and Mobility Advocates	Advocacy groups focusing on sustainable commuting solutions.

organizations.

Assets and Barriers in the Transfer Process

Table n.5 SBD's assets and barriers

SBD	Transfer Assets	Transfer Barriers	Comments
Resources: Infrastructures	Possible availability of private spaces that could be temporarily used for recreational activities. A modern and very well-equipped technological district. The existence of a digital twin could be a strategic planning tool. Good cooperation with the local county that can make available or invest in public spaces.	SBD does not own, or control directly spaces to be used for public commons uses. Lack of spaces or infrastructure available for being repurposed into cultural or creative spaces.	The Digital Twin could support temporary urban design planning, helping identify suitable areas for community and cultural activities; Collaboration with the local council and private sector could help unlock spaces for public use.
Resources: Local expertise to support the transfer	High level of local expertise on innovation, digital transformation and sustainability of the local business ecosystems. Highly motivated and professionally prepared staff team of SBD.	No major barriers, although specific competences on integrated urban planning and on the thematic domain of culture and creativity could be generally improved.	Capacity-building initiatives focused on urban planning and cultural development could enhance local expertise. Partnerships with other cultural institutions in the County, and urban planning experts could provide additional insights
Funding attractiveness capacity	SBD has good experience in participating in EU-funded projects. In addition, the economic tissue is rich, and it could be available to co-invest by providing expertise, places and resources.	No major barriers, although to carry out extraordinary interventions, a special funding strategy should be designed.	Leveraging the district's strong business network and exploring diverse funding mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, could support large-scale initiatives.
Political support	High level of political support is provided by the county council and by the board of the SBDI members.	No major barriers, although some challenges could be represented by timeline alignments.	Alignment between local policy agenda and local needs in terms of infrastructural investments and immaterial empowerment programme will be crucial.
Coherence with strategies/policies	The main goals are generally consistent with urban policies of the County. The focus on sustainability and digital transformation is also well aligned with EU priorities.	No major barriers.	Ensuring integration with broader county and national urban strategies could enhance policy support and funding opportunities.

2.3 Assessment of the transfer potential

The analysis of transfer potential was conducted through a triangulation of multiple sources, including: the partner's self-assessment captured in the SWOT analysis of the questionnaire, their evaluation of interest and capacity for transfer across each pillar and modules of the modularized RECUP structure conducted as an exercise on Miro platform, quantitative data gathered through desk research, and qualitative insights obtained from in-depth interviews conducted during the site visits.

The proposed classification has been adopted:

A: a clear Investment Plan will be produced, identifying aspects to be transferred and resources to support the process within a clear future time frame. There is a high prospect of securing financial support.

B: a clear Investment Plan will be produced, identifying aspects to be transferred and resources to support the process within a clear future time frame. There is a reasonable prospect of securing financial support.

C: a clear Investment Plan will be produced, identifying aspects to be transferred and resources to support the process within a clear future time frame. Limited prospect of securing financial support.

Table n.6 Dubrovnik's Assessment of the transfer potential

Dubrovnik	Level of interest/ Relevance	Capacity to transfer	Transfer Potential
Pillar 1. Community engagement			A Very high potential to transfer.
1.1 CCI Ecosystem mapping	High	High	
1.2 INSERT Programme	High	High	
Pillar 2. Infrastructure renovation			B-A The potential of transfer is promising and the commitment is very high. However, since the process might be quite complex, it is prudently assessed as a B with good expectations.
2.1 Renovation - Cultural, creative hub	High	Medium	
2.2 Small scale renovations	Medium	Medium	
Pillar 3. Digital platform			C This pillar might be not so relevant to the specific local needs. However, further adaptation ways can be identified.
3.1 Digital platform/channels	Low	Low	
3.2 Hybrid events	Low	Medium	
4. Corporate engagement			B Good potential for transfer. This pillar represents a general challenge for Dubrovnik. However, the level of interest is high as well as the partner's competencies.
4.1 CSR engagement programme	High	Medium	
4.2 PPP	High	Medium	
5 Governance			A High potential of transfer
5.1 Community governance structure	High	High	

Table n.7 Amersfoort's Assessment of the transfer potential

Amersfoort	Level of interest/ Relevance	Capacity to transfer	Transfer Potential
Pillar 1. Community engagement			A The potential of transfer is very high without major barriers.
1.1 CCI Ecosystem mapping	High	High	
1.2 INSERT Programme	Medium	High	
Pillar 2. Infrastructure renovation			B The potential of transfer is high, however the process of identifying suitable spaces might pose some challenges.
2.1 Renovation - Cultural, creative hub	High		
2.2 Small scale renovations	High	Medium-High	
Pillar 3. Digital platform			B The potential of transfer is good.
3.1 Digital platform/channels	High	Medium	
3.2 Hybrid events	Medium	High	
4. Corporate engagement			A The potential of transfer is high considering also the rich ecosystem context
4.1 CSR engagement programme	High	Medium-High	
4.2 PPP	High	Medium-High	
5 Governance			
5.1 Community governance structure	High	Medium	

Table n.8 MHN's Assessment of the transfer potential

Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord	Level of interest/ Relevance	Capacity to transfer	Transfer Potential
Pillar 1. Community engagement			A High potential for transfer and no major barriers. Good expertise and commitment of the partner.
1.1 CCI Ecosystem mapping	High	High	
1.2 INSERT Programme	High	Medium-High	
Pillar 2. Infrastructure renovation			A High potential for transfer. No major barriers.
2.1 Renovation - Cultural, creative hub	High	Medium-High	
2.2 Small scale renovations	High	Medium-High	
Pillar 3. Digital platform			B Good transfer potential. This pillar is one of the most challenging and relevant for the partner.
3.1 Digital platform/channels	High	Medium	
3.2 Hybrid events	High	Medium	
4. Corporate engagement			B Good transfer potential. This pillar is particularly relevant for the local context's needs. Some existing initiatives (i.e. open lab) could help in the process.
4.1 CSR engagement programme	High	Medium	
4.2 PPP	High	Medium	
5 Governance			
5.1 Community governance structure	High	Medium	B Good transfer potential. This pillar is strategic for the sustainability of the project/policy design in the long-term.

Table n.9 Bielsko-Biala's Assessment of the transfer potential

Bielsko-Biala	Level of interest/Relevance	Capacity to transfer	Transfer Potential
Pillar 1. Community engagement			A High potential for transfer. Good expertise and commitment of the partner.
1.1 CCI Ecosystem mapping	High	High	
1.2 INSERT Programme	High	Medium	
Pillar 2. Infrastructure renovation			B Good potential for transfer in terms of relevance and commitments. Specific work should be done in enhancing enabling conditions.
2.1 Renovation - Cultural, creative hub	High	Low	
2.2 Small scale renovations	High	Low	
Pillar 3. Digital platform			C This pillar is not on the top of the partner's priorities and local needs. Adaptation strategies should be implemented.
3.1 Digital platform/channels	Medium	Medium	
3.2 Hybrid events	Medium	Medium	
4. Corporate engagement			B Good potential for transfer. Specific work might be needed on the capacity of transfer.
4.1 CSR engagement programme	Low	Medium	
4.2 PPP	High	Medium	
5 Governance			A High potential for transfer. Good expertise and commitment of the partner.
5.1 Community governance structure			

Table n.10 SBD's Assessment of the transfer potential

SBD	Level of interest/Relevance	Capacity to transfer	Transfer Potential
Pillar 1. Community engagement			B Good potential for transfer regarding the CCI Ecosystem mapping.
1.1 CCI Ecosystem mapping	High	Medium	
1.2 INSERT Programme	Low	Low	
Pillar 2. Infrastructure renovation			B Good potential for transfer with special regards to small-scale renovations and pop-ups.
2.1 Renovation - Cultural, creative hub	High	Low	
2.2 Small scale renovations	High	Medium	
Pillar 3. Digital platform			C This pillar could be not so relevant to the local context needs. However, the digital twin could be a useful platform to leverage on.
3.1 Digital platform/channels	Low	Medium	
3.2 Hybrid events	Medium	Medium	
4. Corporate engagement			A Very high potential for transfer due to the peculiar nature of SBD and the rich local ecosystem.
4.1 CSR engagement programme	High	High	
4.2 PPP	High	High	
5 Governance			
5.1 Community governance structure	High	Medium	B Good potential for transfer.

Section 3. Synthesis, overall transferability and methodology

Introduction

This methodology section aims to describe the expected objectives of the Network, the tools available to support the transfer and the expected Roadmap as well as the expected outputs. To this purpose, this section will firstly recall the Network's main objectives and guiding principles, then it will introduce the current needs analysis conducted on the different partners and the ways through which these needs will be addressed through the Network. As described in section 1, the main objective of the **RECUP Network** is to transfer guiding principles of the **CUP4Creativity** project, developed by Ujbuda – District XI of Budapest, the Lead Partner of the network to other five partner cities and organizations: **Dubrovnik Development Agency (DURA) (HR)**, the **City of Amersfoort (NL)**, **Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord (MHN) (ES)**, the **City of Bielsko-Biala (PL)**, and the **Sandyford Business District (SBD) (IE)**. The main final output of the transfer will be the development of local investment Plans, through an integrated and participative process. Indeed, the Network will operate on two interrelated levels. At the **local Level** with the creation of **URBACT Local Groups (ULGs)** to ensure participatory and integrated planning processes and testing of small-scale actions to address specific urban challenges; at the **transnational Level** with the facilitation of mutual learning and exchange among partners through structured activities, including six core meetings (five remaining at the time of writing), ensuring that insights flow between local and transnational levels. A key feature of this process is its bidirectional nature, ensuring that knowledge transfer is dynamic, with insights flowing between the local and transnational levels. The investment plan should be conceptualized as a financial planning tool that integrates into a broader strategic framework.

The network aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Transfer and adaptation: Leverage CUP4Creativity principles to address urban policy challenges in diverse contexts.
2. Local experimentation: Test innovative practices through small-scale actions at the local level.
3. Knowledge Exchange: Sharing experiences and practices among partners and their ULG to enhance collective learning.

The Network began its activities in September 2024 and will operate until August 2026 for a period of 24 months. The Network will follow three phases: Understand – Adapt – ReUse. To this end, according to the URBACT programme methodology and framework, different initiatives/tools will be developed and used to support the transfer, such as: in presence core-meeting, study-visits, capacity building workshops organized by the programme, bilateral on-line meetings, masterclass etc.

3.1 Innovation Transfer Network Methodology

Scale and structure of the Innovative Practice.

As can be seen from the table n.9, the degree of transferability of the different pillars and sub-modules into which the original project was structured varies according to the specific assets and needs of the local context. While each partner will develop a tailor-made transfer and adaptation path, some general considerations can be shared about the most relevant, easily transferable and most challenging pillars. Overall, Pillar 1 'Community engagement' can be seen as a foundational pillar, highly relevant for transfer design (especially in 1.1) and effective implementation (1.2). It also does not pose any significant barriers to transfer. Similarly, Pillar 5 'Governance' can be seen as highly relevant for promoting the participatory approach and the sustainability of the project in the long term. The three more "thematic" Pillars, namely Pillar 2, Pillar 3 and Pillar 4,

are the most dependent on the specific local context characteristics of the partners. In this case, the pillar that presents more difficulties is the one related to the digital platform (Pillar 3), which was also the most problematic in the original project. In this respect, the overview of the needs and expectations of the partners is diverse: while for the Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord the interest in developing a digital platform is very high, although they do not yet have specific competences, for other partners, such as Dubrovnik or Amersfoort, it is not at the top of their priorities. With regard to the Infrastructure Renovation Pillar, there is generally a high level of interest among the partners with no relevant barriers, with the exception of the Sandyford Business District, which does not have any premises to renovate

and will need to work closely with the County Council on this issue. Pillar 4, which focuses on involving business and industry in cultural policy through corporate social responsibility programmes and the development of PPPs, is one of the most innovative aspects of the original good practice and it has attracted the interest of all partners. However, even in this case, local contexts are very different and adaptation strategies should be defined. In conclusion, while the more “transversal” pillars on community involvement and governance could be more easily adapted and transferred, the degree of transfer and adaptation of the three more “thematic” pillars could vary the most.

Table n.9 Transferability matrix overall assessment

Transfer potential	Dubrovnik	Amersfoort	MHN	Bielsko-Biała	SBD	TOTAL
Pillar 1. Community engagement	A	A	A	A	B	 
Pillar 2. Infrastructure renovation	B-A	B	A	B	B	
Pillar 3. Digital platform	C	B	B	C	C	
4. Corporate engagement	B	A	B	B	A	
5 Governance	A	B	B	A	B	 

While community engagement and governance pillars are quite easily-adaptable for all cities, the infrastructure, digital, and corporate engagement pillars require additional adaptation based on local constraints and perspectives. Some recommendations for this adaptation strategies have been shared in Section2 (see the tables “Asset and barriers”) and it will be part of the work to be carried out during the project at the local and transnational level.

Learning needs assessment

Given the capacity building nature of the RECUP network, it was very important to identify emerging needs from the outset. Again, the analysis of needs as directly perceived by the partners was crossed with the assessment of the lead expert based on interviews and desk analysis.

In general, the dimensions to be investigated and explored in the project can be grouped into five dimensions:

- 1) Integrated and participatory planning. Improving the integrated and participatory planning capacity typical of the URBACT method, in particular as sub-themes (horizontal integration and cross-collaboration and ULG management and animation);
- 2) Cultural thematic innovation. Thematic deepening related to the good practices to be transferred and their possible evolution (e.g. innovation practices in culture, relationship with businesses, arts and health, SDGs, measurement of cultural initiatives, etc.);
- 3) Financial skills. Specific skills related to the design of an investment plan, PPP, sustainability in the long-term, etc;
- 4) Transversal priorities. Transversal skills related to digital and green transition and inclusion;

5) Local adaptation. Specific skills to design tailored strategies depending on the context; On the basis of this framework, and with reference to dimensions 1 and 2, which constitute the central scaffolding on which the project is based, a specific survey was carried out, which revealed the following positioning of the cities.

As Table 10 shows, the self-assessment of the partners with regard to the dimension of their ability to cooperate between different departments (horizontal integration) and with regard to the attitude towards the adoption of innovative practices, presents, on a scale 1:5, average values of 3.8 and 3.4 respectively, and the values tend not to show a high variability, with the values tending to be medium or higher for all of them. However, the Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord stands out with a relatively lower score in innovation adoption, primarily due to its institutional structure as an association of municipalities and its limited staff capacity, despite their strong motivation. Overall, these results indicate a solid foundation for collaboration and innovation within the RECUP network. However, there remains room for improvement in terms of knowledge and, above all, the practical application of these skills, which will be explored within the RECUP network.

Table n.10 Partner's self-assessment of their cross-cooperation and innovation adoption degree (on a scale 1:5)

Cross-Cooperation and Innovation Adoption		
Partner	Cross-Cooperation	Innovation Adoption
Amersfoort	3	4
Dubrovnik	5	3
Bielsko-Biala	4	4
Mancomunidad	3	2
SBD	4	4
Average	3,8	3,4

Table n.11 Partners' self-assessment of their local system in terms of cultural innovation, digital transformation and strength of social networks (on a scale 1:5)

Partner	Cultural Innovation	Digital Transformation	Strength of Social Networks
Amersfoort	3	1	5
Dubrovnik	3	3	3
Bielsko-Biala	3	3	3
Mancomunidad	1	1	3
SBD	3	5	3
Average	2,6	2,6	3,4

In this case, as can be seen in Table n.5, the average values are lower, in particular with regard to the potential of the local context in terms of cultural innovation and digital transformation, with a value of 2.6 for both dimensions. In general, the strength of social networks in the local tissue is perceived as higher, with a value of 3.4. Overall, these data confirm the need to work on improving the partners' competences in these areas, which represent the thematic core of the RECUP network.

Model and tools

In defining the methodology and activity plan to support the transfer process, it was decided to use the 'hybrid carousel model' as a reference, retaining the carousel structure to enhance the peer learning component, and complementing it with a strong presence of the lead expert and lead partner to ensure the coherence of the pathway at the local level, and in particular to provide specific support to partners new to URBACT or those facing particular challenges. For this reason, in addition to the elements already foreseen in the original proposal, such as transnational meetings, it was decided to integrate further opportunities for in-depth study and support in collective form such as **Masterclasses** and in **bilateral meetings**.

In total, it is foreseen:

- **6 Transnational meetings** (one of which already carried out);
- **3 Thematic Masterclasses** in-between the core transnational meetings to have a deep-understanding of related topics of interest;

- **3 individual on-line meetings with each city/partner** to support the creation, communication and finalization of the investment plan as well as to support the stakeholders' engagement. (3 individual meetings: one in M13, one in M16 and one in M22);

Indicatively, the Transnational meetings will be of two-days duration and they will be organized as follows: I session (2-3 hours) thematic sessions linked to the specific challenge/relevance of the hosting city and to the network's needs, II session (2-3 hours) exercise on integrated and participatory planning activities, III session (2-3 hours) learning and exchange among cities (i.e. peer review, etc.), IV session (3 hours) on-site visits, V session (1- hour) managerial and administrative matters. The order of the sessions is indicative. The transnational meeting will tend to follow the same structure, while the thematic focus and topics will vary. They will allow partners to transfer the knowledge acquired at the local level. Following each meeting, a thematic report

will be produced, documenting key insights, best practices, and lessons learned. Additionally, partners will be encouraged to identify the most relevant and inspirational learnings and plan a transfer strategy into their local contexts, ensuring that acquired knowledge is effectively adapted and integrated.

3.2 Network roadmap and outputs

As illustrated in Figure 8 and analyzed in greater detail in Figure 9, the Network will follow a Roadmap structured around various kinds of exchange, learning, and support activities, detailed as follows:

M3: Deep Dive Study Visit in Újbuda (November 2024) - Understand Phase

Focus Pillars: 1 (Community Engagement), 5 (Governance)

RECUP Network Roadmap

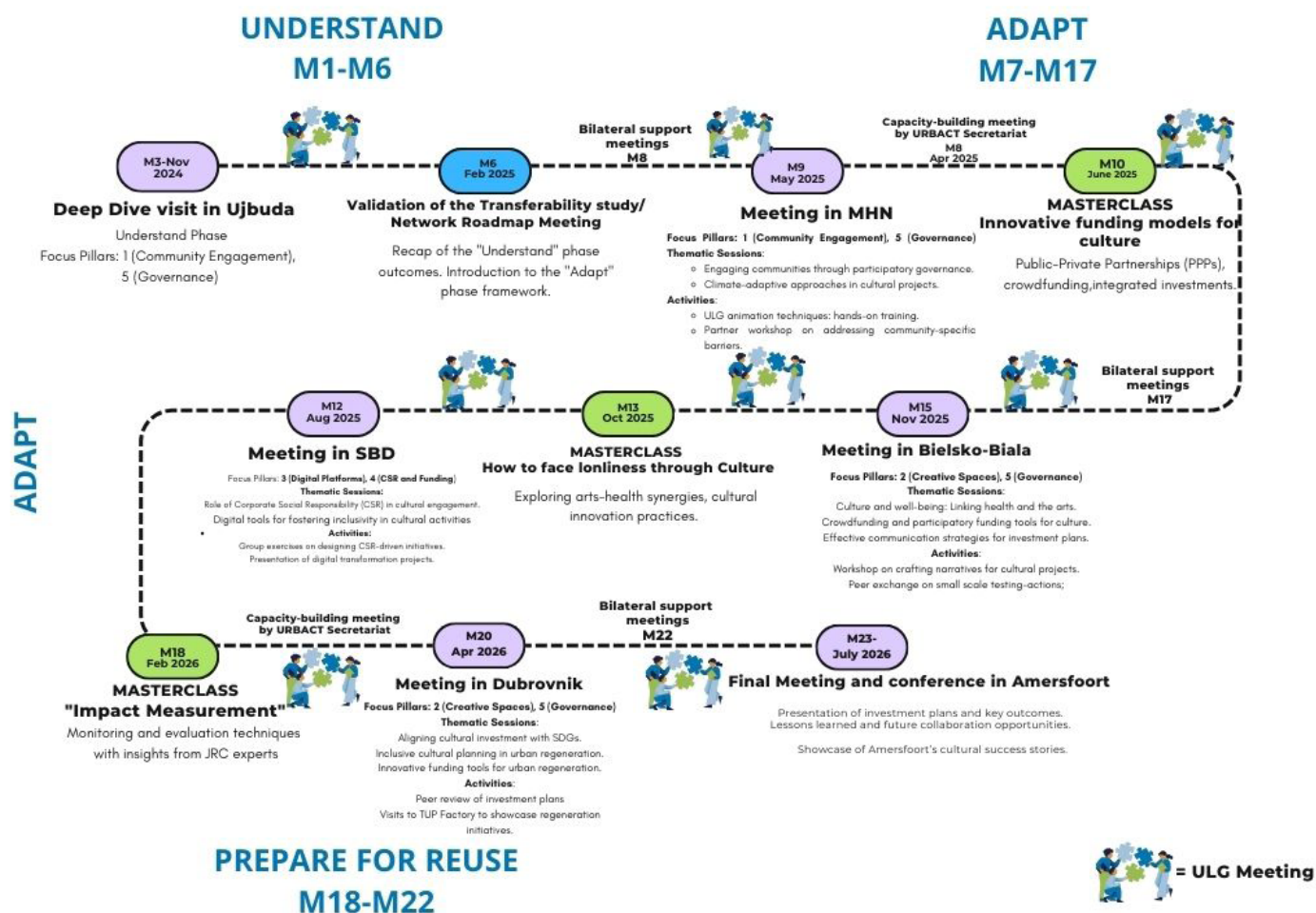


Figure 8 - Network roadmap for transnational exchange and learning

- **Thematic Sessions:**
 - Stakeholder mapping for Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI).
 - Co-planning frameworks for cultural initiatives.
- **Activities:**
 - Workshop on ecosystem mapping techniques.
 - Case study of the INSERT program and its impact on the local CCI sector.

M6: Validation of the Transferability study and Network Roadmap meeting (Online, February 2025)

- **Objectives:**
 - Recap of the “Understand” phase outcomes.
 - Validation of the Transferability Study and of the Network Roadmap

M8: Bilateral online support meetings - I round (April 2025)

M8: Capacity-building meeting 29-30 April 2025 in Paris organized by URBACT Secretariat

M9: Transnational meeting in Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord (May 2025)

Focus Pillars: 1 (Community engagement), 5 (Governance)

- **Thematic sessions:**
 - Engaging communities through participatory governance.
 - Climate-adaptive approaches in cultural projects.
- **Activities:**
 - Study visit in Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord
 - ULG animation techniques: hands-on training.
 - Sharing knowledge and updates on the local progress.

- **Expected outcomes:**
 - Enhanced ULG animation and community engagement strategies.

M10: MASTERCLASS “Innovative financing models for culture” (July 2025) On-line: Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), crowdfunding, and integrated investments.

M12: Transnational meeting in Sandyford Business District (August 2025)

Focus Pillars: 3 (Digital Platforms), 4 (CSR and Funding)

- **Thematic Sessions:**
 - Potential for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in cultural engagement.
 - Digital tools for fostering creativity in cultural activities.
- **Activities:**
 - Study visit in Sandyford Business District
 - Group exercises on designing CSR-driven initiatives.
 - Sharing knowledge and updates on the local progress with ULG. Ideas for Small-scale testing actions.
- **Expected Outcomes:**
 - Enhanced skills in engaging strategically business in cultural initiatives.

M13: MASTERCLASS “How to face loneliness through culture” (October Online 2025)
Exploring arts-health synergies, cultural innovation practices.

M15: Transnational Meeting in Bielsko-Biala (November 2025)

Focus Pillars: 2 (Creative Spaces), 5 (Governance)

- **Thematic Sessions:**
 - Culture and well-being: Linking health and the arts.
 - Effective communication strategies for investment plans.
- **Activities:**
 - Study visit in Bielsko-Biala
 - Workshop on crafting effective narratives for cultural projects and funding attraction.
 - Peer exchange on small scale testing-actions;
- **Expected Outcomes:**
 - Draft communication strategies and insights into small-scale testing actions.

M17: Bilateral online support meetings - II round (January 2025)

M18: MASTERCLASS “Impact measurement of creative and cultural initiatives” (February 2026) Monitoring and evaluation techniques with insights from JRC experts

M18-19: Capacity-building meeting 2026 organized by URBACT Secretariat

M20: Transnational Meeting in Dubrovnik (April 2026)

Focus Pillars: 2 (Creative Spaces), 5 (Governance)

- **Thematic Sessions:**
 - Aligning cultural investment with SDGs.
 - Inclusive cultural planning in urban regeneration.
 - Innovative funding tools for urban regeneration.
- **Activities:**
 - Peer review of investment plans including SDG compliance.
 - Visits to Dubrovnik and TUP Factory to showcase regeneration initiatives.
- **Expected Outcomes:**
 - Enhanced integration of SDG

principles into cultural planning. Enhanced knowledge of culture driven urban regeneration processes.

M22: Bilateral online support meetings - III round (June 2026)

M23: Final Meeting and Conference in Amersfoort (July 2026)

Focus Pillars: All

Thematic Sessions:

- Presentation of investment plans and key outcomes.
- The potential of culture and creativity to face social fragmentation.
- **Activities:**
 - Group exercises on sustainability plans.
 - Showcase of Amersfoort’s cultural success stories.
- **Expected Outcomes:**
 - Consolidated best practices and actionable recommendations.

At the Local level, in between the transnational meetings, **8 ULG** meetings will be organized by the partners with the aim to transfer and integrate the knowledge acquired and to prepare the ground for the investment plan and the testing actions. As shown in **Figure 9** the activities foreseen in the Network roadmap will be developed combining different dimensions along three phases: Understand, Adapt and Prepare for Reuse

Network OUTPUTS

Overall, the project will produce different outputs at two levels:

At the transnational level: one Transferability study and one Network final report as critical tools to analyze and summarize the process carried out within the Networks; 4 Network

Date: M1 - M6		Date: M7 - M17					Date: M18 - M24	
UNDERSTAND		ADAPT					PREPARE FOR REUSE	
In-person meetings (Pillars)	M3 Deep Dive in Újbuda 1 Community Engagement + 5 Governance	M6 Validation Transferability study and Network Roadmap (On-line)	M9 TM in MHN 1 Community engagement + 5 Governance Engaging communities through participatory governance.	M12 TM in SBD 3 Digital Platforms + 4 CSR and Funding Potential for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in cultural engagement. Digital tools for fostering creativity in cultural activities.	M15 TM in Bielsko-Biala 2 Creative Spaces + 3 Governance Culture and well-being: Linking health and the arts. Effective communication strategies.		M20 TM in Dubrovnik 2 Creative Spaces + 3 Governance Inclusive cultural planning in urban regeneration. Innovative funding tools for urban regeneration.	M23 Final Meeting in Amersfoort Presentation of investment plans and key outcomes. The potential of culture to face social fragmentation.
ULG meetings								
	ULG Meeting Team building	ULG Meeting Visioning	ULG Meeting Co-planning Identify Transfer Testing activities	ULG Meeting TT activities + Investment Plan co-planning	ULG Meeting TT Implementation + Investment Plan co-planning	ULG Meeting Drafting of Investment plan	ULG Meeting TTN funding and resourcing	ULG Meeting Sharing and sustainability
Masterclass (online)		M10 MASTERCLASS "Innovative financing models for culture"		M13 MASTERCLASS "How to face loneliness through culture"			M18 MASTERCLASS "Impact measurement of creative and cultural initiatives"	
Bilateral Support meetings (on-line)		M8 I round			M17 II round		M22 III round	
Capacity-building events - URBACT Secretariat	M2 - Capacity Building Event organized by URBACT Secretariat		M8 Capacity-building organized by URBACT Secretariat				M18-19: Capacity-building meeting organized by URBACT Secretariat	
Outputs	Transferability Study Com&Dissemination Plan	I Network Article	(n.2) URBACT Journals Q4 and Q5 II Network Article				(n.2) URBACT Journals Q6 and Q7 III Network Article 5 Investment plans 1 Continuity Plan 1 Network Final Report	

Figure 9 Analytical RECUP Network Roadmap

Journals and 3 Network articles.

At the local level: 5 Investment plans one for each partner; 1 Continuity plan to be realized by the Lead Partner;

One repository of good practices from the partners experiences and outside will be produced basecamp folder and it will be continuously fed with inputs (such as articles, video, etc.) by the partners, the Lead Partner and by the Lead and Ad-hoc experts involved.

3.3 Communications and Dissemination

A Communication & Dissemination Plan has been produced within the Understand phase in order to define the strategy to support the visibility, knowledge transfer, and stakeholder engagement objectives of the RECUP Network. The plan includes the description of: strategic principles, branding strategy, key messages, target audiences, channels and tools, KPI. In the initial Understand phase of the RECUP network, a comprehensive Communication & Dissemination Plan was developed through a collaborative effort led by the Lead Partner's Communication Officer, in close collaboration with the Lead Expert (LE) and all project partners. This plan outlines a strategic approach

to increasing visibility, facilitating knowledge transfer and promoting stakeholder engagement within the network. The REinventing Culture in Urban Places (RECUP) network is driven by a unifying vision: to rebuild connected communities by integrating culture and creativity into the fabric of urban life. The initiative is anchored in the belief that vibrant cultural ecosystems are essential for social cohesion, resilience and sustainable development in cities. As part of this effort, a common visual identity for the RECUP network has been developed. The common image of the network, shown on the cover page, is derived from an authentic photograph taken during a home concert in Újbuda - an event originally organised under the previous project. The image captures the spirit of RECUP's core message: "Creating connected communities through art, active participation and cultural integration". Target audience

In order to effectively communicate RECUP's goals and activities, the plan identifies distinct target groups whose engagement is critical to the project's success. Rather than relying on broad categories such as 'the general public', the network prioritises clearly defined audiences to ensure more impactful and meaningful

interactions:

European decision-makers: To engage representatives and officials of European institutions by sharing insights, lessons learned, and policy recommendations derived from the RECUP network's experiments in rethinking cultural policies;

International urban and cultural professionals: To raise awareness within the global community of urban and cultural practitioners and policy makers.

National urban stakeholders: To build visibility and dialogue among professionals and institutions working within the national urban and cultural sector.

Local decision-makers and Municipal officers: To engage those responsible for urban governance and encourage the adoption of RECUP strategies in urban development.

Local cultural and creative actors: To foster partnerships with artists, cultural institutions and creative entrepreneurs who act as catalysts for community-driven initiatives.

Local business community: To involve business stakeholders in the cultural and creative economy, promoting synergies.

Local residents and communities: Encouraging active participation in cultural events, strengthening social cohesion and a shared sense of belonging.

Wider public: To disseminate RECUP's activities and outcomes widely to stimulate interest and engagement beyond the immediate target groups.

Communication Channels

A multi-channel communication strategy has been defined to reach these diverse audiences, ensuring messages are delivered through both digital and traditional formats. The selected channels include:

- Institutional Website: The primary hub for comprehensive project information, resources, and updates.
- URBACT Website: To connect with the wider URBACT community and share RECUP's experiences and findings.
- LinkedIn: To engage with professionals and institutions, foster dialogue, and showcase project milestones.

- YouTube: To disseminate engaging video content, including interviews, event highlights, and success stories.
- International and National URBACT Point and events: To present RECUP's insights, tools, and results to a broader audience of urban development professionals.
- Cultural Events: To reach local communities through participatory cultural activities.
- Online and Offline Media: To publish articles and stories in relevant publications, increasing project visibility across different platforms.
- Emails and Newsletters: To provide regular updates to stakeholders, ensuring ongoing engagement and information sharing.

By implementing this Communication & Dissemination Plan, RECUP seeks not only to inform and engage but to inspire cities across Europe to recognize and embrace the transformative potential of culture and creativity in building resilient, connected communities for the future.

Conclusion and overall transfer assessment

The CUP4Creativity project carried out by the Ujbuda - XI District of Budapest has been assessed as an innovative urban project focused on the re-design of cultural policies through a creative and integrated approach. Its transfer potential has been in depth analyzed and modularized in 5 pillars and 9 modules in order to be transferred to other 5 local contexts. These contexts, as also emerged in section 2, present very different characteristics. In general, the partners present some structural differences, such as the number of inhabitants, but also the size of the organization: they range from thousands of employees in Amersfoort and Bielsko-Biala to a few dozen in Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord and about ten in SBD. The partners also differ in demographic trends between those experiencing a danger of gradual depopulation, in particular Bielsko-Biala, and to some extent, in relation to the city centre also Dubrovnik, to urban or peri-urban areas experiencing strong growth such as Amersfoort, Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord and also SBD. In these diversified contexts, the positioning of the different partners with respect to the thematic challenges posed by the Network, such as innovation in culture or the utilization of the potential of digital transformation to strengthen social connections, seem to represent a common ground for the partners. Indeed, some commonalities have also arisen. As shown in Tab. 4 most partners acknowledge a need to introduce more innovative approaches in the design of cultural activities, to experiment and to test new ways to engage people and face loneliness, while at the same time a specific interest has been shown in order to strengthen digital literacy and adopt digital tools to enhance cultural access and innovation, despite varying levels of progress in this area. Although with different degrees, generally all partners show a certain dependence on public funding related to the support of cultural activities and they shared a common need to explore innovative funding models like public-private partnerships

(PPPs), crowdfunding, and territorial integrated investments. The relationship with local businesses and industries and the effort to engage them effectively represent a common challenge and one the most innovative elements of the RECUP Network approach. All these aspects and trends have been considered in the design of the Network Roadmap shown in Figure 8 and 9.

Between the different in-presence meetings, and building on the new knowledge and competencies acquired, partners will work at the local with their URBACT Local Group on the drafting of the investment plans as well as with the identification and experimentation of small-scale testing actions to be implemented. The Lead Expert, together with the Lead Partner, will offer the support along the process, as well as through specific bilateral calls in three phases. The thematic Masterclasses will enhance partner's knowledge and provide new inputs on the three core-topics for the building of the Investment plans. While partner cities will focus on adapting CUP4Creativity to their local contexts, the Lead Partner, Ujbuda, will leverage the exchange process to enhance the original project through the development of a Continuity Plan, ensuring its long-term impact and sustainability.

Although operational risks exist in its implementation, the RECUP Network presents a unique opportunity to pioneer new cultural policy models that position culture as a key driver of social and economic transformation in urban and peri-urban settings.

Credits

Lead Expert: Elisa Filippi

Lead Partner: Ujbuda - XI Budapest District

Partners:

DURA - Dubrovnik Development Agency
City of Amersfoort
Mancomunidad de l'Horta Nord
City of Bielsko-Biala
Sandyford Business Improvement District