EcoCore

Alba Iulia, Romania
74 617 inhabitants

Challenge

Intense daily commuting along the south-north axis of the city and congestion towards the industrial area.

Transport accounted for 21% of total CO_2 emissions.

The need: alternative to cars for employees and safer, data-driven traffic management.

Local heroes

The Mobility Dispatch center (traffic + IT), public transport operator, local police, ITS providers, and companies in the industrial area.



Lessons learnt

Pick a mobility corridor with clear demand (commuting).

Make the line fast and predictable (time > promises).

Dedicated lanes for public transport, where possible.

Set data sharing rules from the start.

Combine technology with behavior change.

Solution

GREEN LINE FOR COMMUTERS IN THE INDUSTRIAL AREA

Pilot "green" line with electric buses for commuters to/from the industrial area, with predictable schedules and competitive travel times.

Launch of Integrated Mobility Dispatch: real-time monitoring, dynamically adjusted traffic lights, priority for public transport, and dedicated lanes, including to the targeted area.

The measure is also supported by 2 Local Green Deals (ICC): behavior change + data sharing in transpor

34 km of bike paths, including on the targeted route

bike sharing system



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union

Interreg

cealaltă capitală

ALBA IULIA

BINE ATI VENIT IN CEA MAI MARE CETATE DIN ROMÂNIA

EcoCore

Balbriggan, Ireland
27,292 inhabitants

Challenge

Balbriggan, Ireland's youngest and fastest growing town, is a commuter town with residents leaving every day to work in the city. The town faces the challenge of attracting new business to create local jobs and attract green business to support the town's designation as a Decarbonising Zone.

Local heroes

Balbriggan's ULG included local Councillors, representatives from national and regional industrial promotion agencies, business interests, universities and various departments from the municipality including Climate Action, Economic & Business Development and Active Travel.



Solution

Storytelling

We started talking to local businesses about their sustainability challenges. We built relationships with those businesses and started to explore potential circular economy opportunities. We started to tell their stories to inspire other businesses to start their own sustainability journeys. We held a Sustainability in Business Briefing, bringing together over 50 businesses to learn from each other. We developed two videos of local hero businesses which we shared on our platforms. We held a Hackathon on Circular Economy Opportunities which has translated into a collaboration to develop a Circular Economy Hub and Digital Platform.



Lessons learnt

Balbriggan learned the value of bringing together multi-level, multi-sectoral stakeholders to bring a range of perspectives to develop a future vision for the town and consider how best to approach green investment attraction and how Balbriggan could lead the way on the green industrial transition. Over the last 2.5 years we learned:

- **Importance of Branding**
- **Value of Storytelling**
- **Strength of Regional Collaboration**

URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall
Fingal County Council

EcoCore

Dubrovnik Urban Area, Croatia
60,000 inhabitants

Challenge

Dubrovnik faced strong economic dependence on tourism, limited diversification of its urban economy, pressure on infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled workforce. Business areas lacked green infrastructure, sustainable mobility solutions, and stronger links with education and innovation ecosystems.

Local heroes

Local heroes include the City of Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik Development Agency (DURA), local entrepreneurs, educational institutions, and public bodies. Their collaboration through the URBACT Local Group enabled shared problem-solving, practical insights from businesses, and the co-creation of realistic actions grounded in local needs.

Lessons learnt

Integrated planning works best when it connects spatial planning, economic development, mobility, and skills policies. Start small, focus on concrete actions, and clearly communicate benefits to businesses. Transnational exchange helps cities adapt proven solutions, but success depends on strong local partnerships and trust.

Solution

Sustainable Transformation of Dubrovnik's Urban Business Areas

Dubrovnik's IAP focuses on the sustainable transformation of its wider urban area. The action promotes greener business environments by integrating green and blue infrastructure, improving access and sustainable mobility, supporting energy-efficient solutions, and strengthening cooperation between business, the city, and education. A strong emphasis is placed on skills development, talent retention, and creating more attractive working environments. Expected impacts include improved competitiveness of local businesses, better use of space, reduced environmental pressure, and increased capacity to attract and retain skilled professionals beyond the tourism sector.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

DURA
Dubrovačka razvojna agencija
Dubrovnik Development Agency

EcoCore

Ķekava Municipality, Latvia
32 300 inhabitants

Challenge

Ķekava Municipality's growing population and proximity to Riga highlight the need for sustainable green mobility solutions and the development of eco-friendly transport infrastructure within the municipality and in connections to Riga.

Local heroes

EcoCore was a strong starting point for fostering dialogue between businesses, citizens, NGOs and even neighbouring municipalities. Yet we believe that local government must take the lead. It is our role to shape a clear vision, bring everyone on board, and sustain momentum when the initial excitement fades. Without someone to keep the ball rolling, even the best plans remain just ideas.

Lessons learnt

Don't wait for perfect conditions. Start small, build partnerships and lead by doing! That's how small cities can drive meaningful change in the green transition.

Solution

Your Bike, Your Ride, Your Fix

To promote green mobility, we have built over 24 km of new bicycle lanes in recent years, connecting neighbourhoods and linking to Riga. In 2024, three self-service bike maintenance stations were installed in key towns, inspired by residents' ideas and lessons from other municipalities. Conveniently located near schools and neighbourhoods, they let cyclists quickly handle minor repairs, supporting both students and daily riders. By improving safety and reliability, these initiatives make cycling an affordable, practical and sustainable way to travel across the municipality.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL
URBACT
Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg
KEKAVAS NOVADS

EcoCore

Ormož, Slovenia
12,000 inhabitants

Challenge

Ormož faced high car dependency, brain drain, limited business opportunities, and low uptake of green practices among companies, combined with environmental pressures and underused development potential.

Local heroes

Local heroes include local entrepreneurs, and employees who actively use and promote the bike-sharing scheme. Their commitment is essential for testing the solution, encouraging wider adoption, and embedding sustainable mobility into everyday business practices.

Lessons learnt

Start with a shared vision and involve stakeholders early. Combine economic, environmental, and social goals in one integrated approach. Support local businesses with practical tools, not just strategies. Continuous communication and visible results help build trust and long-term commitment.

Solution

Bike-Sharing for Business

To address car dependency and support the green transition, Ormož introduced a bike-sharing scheme tailored to workers in the local business zone. Shared bicycles are provided for commuting, short business trips, and daily mobility between workplaces and the town centre. The action encourages a shift from car use to active, low-carbon transport and directly supports the IAP objective of achieving a 30% reduction in car dependency. Expected impacts include lower CO_2 emissions, reduced traffic, healthier lifestyles, and increased awareness of sustainable mobility solutions among local businesses, demonstrating how small-scale actions can generate measurable environmental and social benefits.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

EcoCore

Pärnu City, Estonia
50 000 inhabitants

Challenge

The economy's over-reliance on tourism and its seasonal nature highlights a critical need for higher-paying jobs. To address this, it is essential to bolster collaboration between the business community, educational institutions, and municipal authorities.

Local heroes

Our "local heroes" are a synergy-driven task force of city planners, logistics experts, and regional entrepreneurs.

By uniting public vision with private sector expertise, this coalition transformed complex infrastructure challenges into a strategic roadmap for Pärnu's future

Lessons learnt

Success lies in early multi-stakeholder engagement.
Ensure that city planners, private logistics firms, and national infrastructure providers are aligned from day one.
Focus on creating an integrated roadmap rather than isolated projects.
Transparency in land-use planning and proactive energy-grid preparation are vital for attracting long-term industrial investment.

Solution

Pärnu Multimodal Logistics and Industrial Hub

To reduce reliance on seasonal tourism, Pärnu is leveraging its position at the crossroads of Rail Baltica, Via Baltica and Pärnu Airport to develop a multimodal logistics hub. Working groups have produced an action plan to transform the Rail Baltica freight terminal area into a modern industrial zone, with key investments in road access, utilities and green energy. The project aims to diversify the economy, create 400–600 logistics and manufacturing jobs, attract more FDI through plug and play industrial plots, and cut seasonal unemployment by 5%, positioning Pärnu as a Baltic logistics gateway.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

Pärnu

EcoCore

Santo Tirso, Portugal
67 700 inhabitants

Challenge

To reduce dependency of private vehicles; Attract and retain young people in the city (to work as well as to live); To rebuild commercial zones focused on sustainability and environmental considerations.

Local heroes

Associations, Comercial and Industrial Association- ACIST; professional schools such as CESAE Digital; representatives of local companies; entrepreneurs and young people, companies of public transportations- Bus and Train

Lessons learnt

Involve all the citizens listening their suggestions in focus groups

Creation and re-enforcement of the local network in the city

Re-enforce the communication with citizens
Involve companies in mobility plan oh the city

Solution

Collective and Alternative Mobility

To improve collective and alternative mobility, increasing the number of users of public transport, to invest in transport infrastructure and develop the concept of a "walking city";

Demographic rebalancing, renovation and influx, promoting the development of new housing for young people under 35 years of age, reinforcing talent attraction and retention.

To rehabilitate and develop ecological entrepreneurial centers, supporting the ecological transition on entrepreneurial zones through incentives, among others.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

INVEST SANTO TIRSO
GABINETE DE DINAMIZAÇÃO ECONÓMICA

SANTO TIRSO
CÂMARA MUNICIPAL

EcoCore

Tuusula, Finland
42 500 inhabitants

Challenge

Tuusula is developing large scale industrial areas in greenfield areas in response to business growth needs. Huge land development, new buildings and increased traffic will create a lot of emissions and challenges with rainwater and ecology if not planned and managed.

Local heroes

Investors and businesses, which take climate change and sustainable development seriously. are driving this change. They push for solutions such as public transport, sustainable infrastructure, bike lanes, preserving vegetation etc.



Lessons learnt

It's easy to start improvement from your weaknesses. Often the best solutions are found by looking at your strenghts.

- Do a proper SWOT with your stakeholders
- Short term gains are necessary to keep momentum going for bigger changes
- Don't be afraid to talk about money, but focus on impact

Solution

Sustainability concept for Focus Business Park

In 2023, for the first time we reached out to investors and infrastructure builders about sustainability. The theme was often mentioned in announcements and discussions, but how important it really was? Turns out - very. Together with keen developers, and logistics, sustainability and energy experts, Tuusula built a sustainainability concept and list of solutions to be used in 200 hectar Focus Business Park near the Helsinki airport. For example, one solution is to distribute excess heat within the area to achieve carbon neutrality for heating.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL
URBACT
Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg
TUUSULA

EcoCore

Villena, Spain
34 000 inhabitants

Challenge

For over 15 years, Villena has been identified as a strategic logistics hub due to its location on the Mediterranean freight corridor and at the crossroads of four Spanish regions. The challenge was to unlock the stalled dry port project through governance, sustainability and citizen support.

Local heroes

A key role is played by The Platfrom Nodo Logístico Levante Interior private business platform representing over 400 companies from surrounding regions, actively supporting the development of the dry port. On the civic side, Villena's Economic and Social Forum has been essential in channeling citizen participation, ensuring transparency, social dialogue and long-term community support for the project.

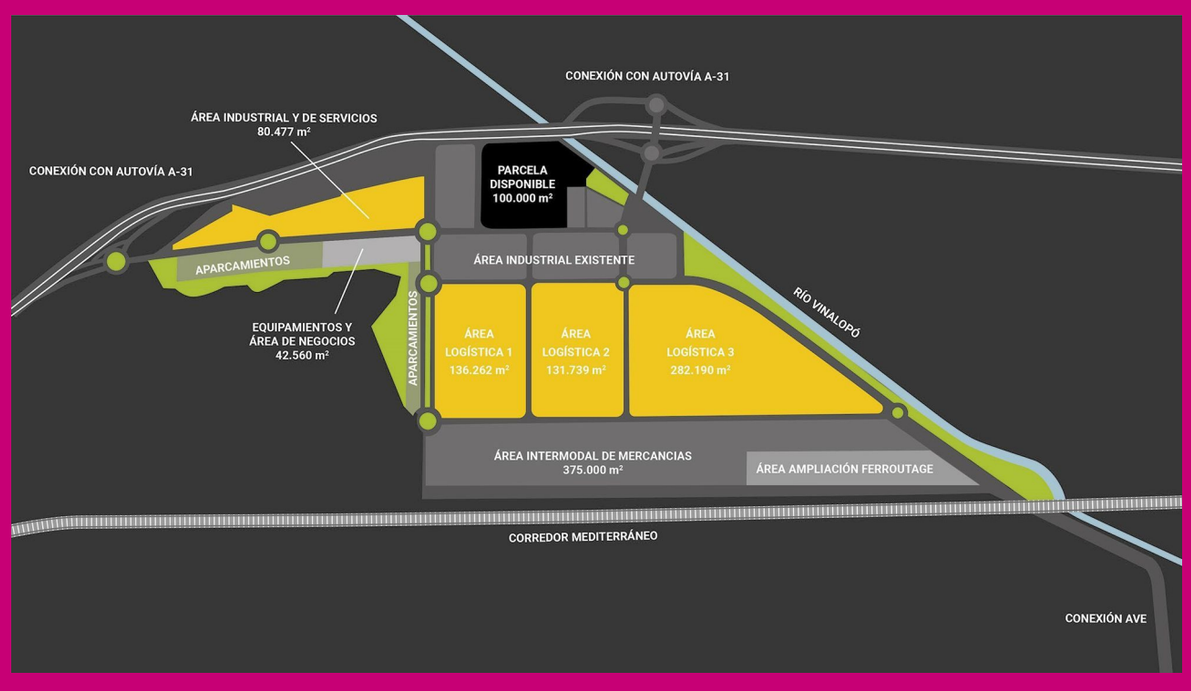
Lessons learnt

Learning from cities facing similar challenges is invaluable.
Exchanging good practices helps design clearer roadmaps, avoid mistakes and accelerate progress.
Strong public–private cooperation, early citizen involvement and genuine environmental commitment are essential to turning large strategic projects into shared, sustainable realities.

Solution

Reactivating the Levante Interior Logistics Node

Villena formed a Local Action Group of key public and private stakeholders to relaunch the dry port project. The group realigned priorities and set a shared roadmap built on three pillars: governance, citizen engagement, and environmental sustainability.
This collaborative process helped rebuild trust, improve public–private coordination, and bring citizen input into decision-making. It strengthened the project's position within the Mediterranean Corridor, promoted low carbon rail logistics, and established a basis for quality jobs and sustainable economic diversification.
Expected impacts include smoother administration, greater social acceptance, and a clearer, greener path to implementation.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

M.I. AYUNTAMIENTO DE VILLENA