

URBACT



Co-funded by  
the European Union  
Interreg

# C4TALENT (Cities for Talent) Baseline Study





# Table of content

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>State of the art</b>	<b>Partner profiles</b>	<b>Workplan</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <b>C4TALENT</b> <i>What is the project about?</i></li><li>❖ <b>Baseline Study</b> <i>The goal and structure of this document</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <b>Network theme</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <i>The challenge</i></li><li>→ <i>Talent attraction and retention</i></li><li>→ <i>Startup community &amp; business support</i></li></ul></li><li>❖ <b>EU policy context</b> <i>Key European policies related to the topic</i></li><li>❖ <b>City examples</b> <i>Inspiring good practices</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <b>Overview of the partnership</b> <i>Short description with a map</i></li><li>❖ <b>Individual partner profiles</b> <i>City overview, context, specific challenges, insights, recommendations, IAP focus, ULG (by partner)</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <b>Synthesis</b> <i>Summary of key insights &amp; conclusions</i></li><li>❖ <b>Methodology</b> <i>Description of the overall approach (training needs, study tours, masterclasses, etc.)</i></li><li>❖ <b>Roadmap</b> <i>Learning (and other) events of the network journey</i></li></ul>

# C4TALENT – Where Talent Meets Opportunity

C4TALENT (Cities for Talent) is an URBACT IV Action Planning Network. The project has been designed to help partners to efficiently address the brain drain phenomenon and the outmigration of talented workforce.

 **LOCAL ECONOMY**  **10 PARTNERS**  
(8 MUNICIPALITIES & 2 AGENCIES)

 **JUNE 1, 2023 – DECEMBER 31, 2025**  **847,388.47 €**

The move of people between regions and countries is motivated by a combination of lifestyle and work-related factors. **C4TALENT adopts an integrated approach**, considering all important factors, but **with a strong focus on fostering entrepreneurship and an attractive startup ecosystem.**

The key question the network intends to answer is the following:

*“How can small- and medium-sized cities contribute to attracting and retaining talent... by developing an attractive business support and startup ecosystem?”*

The partners are all small- and medium-sized towns from all corners of Europe, suffering from the consequences of **brain drain** and ready to implement **active policies to counteract this negative process through creating favourable conditions for starting and growing businesses.**

While there is a strong commitment at all partners to address this challenge, as **local authorities**, they **have limited experience in talent attraction and retention and in business support.** So, they have created the C4TALENT URBACT network to **share knowledge and experience, to learn from each other and from inspiring good practices** in other cities.

For more information about the network and its current activities, click on the following links:



# Baseline Study

This document is the Baseline Study – the foundation of project implementation. The Baseline Study is the outcome of an intense work and collaboration process of all partners. This process involved:

## ❑ CITY QUESTIONNAIRES

Partners have provided detailed information on their local situation and city context by using a standard city questionnaire.

## ❑ CITY VISITS

The Lead Expert (in most cases, together with the representative of the Lead Partner) visited all partners to further explore the city context, the specific challenges, unique local problems, as well as to have a dialogue with local stakeholders and help the host city to build the URBACT Local Group.

## ❑ AN IN-PERSON 2-DAY COLLABORATIVE MEETING

This took place in Alytus, Lithuania on November 22-23, 2023 (see the picture on the upper right corner), aimed at creating a common understanding of the network's theme and designing a journey that will enable all partners to identify the necessary steps to counteract their local challenges.

The Baseline Study has **three main sections**:

- ❑ **Section 1** presents a concise overview of the **state of the art** – the policy theme, the EU context, and summary descriptions of inspiring city practices.
- ❑ **Section 2** includes the **profiles of the partner cities**, presented using a standard template, highlighting the city context, the specific challenges, opportunities and the initial focus of interventions.
- ❑ **Section 3** contains a **synthesis of main findings**, the **presentation of the network methodology** – explaining the exchange and learning process that will enable partners to design their Integrated Action Plan through a participatory process. It also includes a detailed Roadmap that serves as a dynamic workplan for project implementation.





# STATE OF THE ART

Network theme  
EU policy context  
City examples



# STATE OF THE ART

**Network theme**

EU policy context

City examples

# THE CHALLENGE

All C4TALENT partners are small- and medium-sized towns from different parts of Europe that intend to significantly improve the local entrepreneurship ecosystem, build a thriving startup community – with the overall goal to address the brain drain phenomenon – and attract and retain talent. Therefore,

*the overarching network theme is talent attraction and retention – but with a strong focus on entrepreneurship ecosystems and startup communities.*

## THE BRAIN-DRAIN PHENOMENON

One of the four fundamental freedoms within the European Union is the free movement of workers, guaranteed by *Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*. Basically, this has facilitated intra-EU labour mobility, and it enables a more balanced and functional Europe-wide labour market. According to the European Commission's *2022 Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility*, the number of long-term EU and EFTA movers in the EU was 13.9 million (1 January 2021), up 2.5% from the previous year. 10.2 million (over 73%) of EU movers were between 20 and 64 years.

According to the *ESPON* research on “*The Geography of New Employment Dynamics in Europe*” in 2017, the migration flows typically follow east-west and south-north patterns.

In-country migration is also present in all European countries – people move from rural areas, peripheral regions, and smaller towns to big cities and economic centres. There is clear evidence that regions hosting national capitals are the main destinations within each country (both for intra-national and intra-EU movers). The *Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility* also highlights that **the proportion of EU movers with tertiary education has steadily increased since 2016**: in 2021, 32% of EU movers had a high level of education, up from 28% in 2016.

While labour migration has a range of potential benefits, it also leads to “brain drain” in the sending regions.

*“The brain drain phenomenon refers to a region’s permanent loss of skilled workers and students.”<sup>1</sup>*

Considering the main direction of migration processes, most European small- and medium-sized towns (including our C4TALENT partners) experience the brain drain process – they steadily lose highly skilled and talented people to nearby bigger cities and the capital cities, as well as to cities in other countries.

# THE CHALLENGE

## THE IMPACTS OF MIGRATION AND BRAIN DRAIN

From a wider perspective, brain drain results in various benefits – but also has a range of negative consequences. While the receiving regions enjoy most of the (potential) benefits – like for instance, increased innovation capacity, economic growth, increased consumption of services –, the sending regions/cities suffer from most of the negative consequences.

Such **negative consequences** include the slow decline of the stock of human capital, which eventually leads to **labour and talent shortage**: enterprises face difficulties in finding qualified professionals and may even be forced to move. It also results in a **limited capacity to innovate** and to adopt more advanced technologies both in the public and private sector. Losing skilled workforce and people with higher education attainment also leads to **lower average salaries**, which in turn contributes to a **steady fall in the consumption of local products and services**.

The combined effect of reduced market size, limited competitiveness of local businesses, lower tax incomes is a slow and **steady decline of the local economy**, which eventually negatively influences the quality of life. This inevitably drives even more talented, highly skilled and mobile residents to move away, which further exacerbates the situation, resulting in a **downward spiral**.

Labour migration and brain drain also has **negative demographic impacts**. As typically people of a working age (especially those from the younger, more mobile population) move, this process can contribute to the acceleration of the aging process and to the increase of the old-age dependency ratio.

Fortunately, even sending regions enjoy some **benefits**, including remittances, and, more importantly, the potential of **return migration** (or “brain regain”) – when some of the movers decide to return after some time of studying and working away. Returning talents can bring “home” new knowledge, financial capital, perspectives and ideas and may contribute to strengthened innovation capacities, the inception of new enterprises, as well as positive cultural changes. However, this is far from being an automatic process, and **cities that want to benefit from brain regain need active measures and policies to stimulate such decisions**.

Finally, it is also important to note that the brain drain process may also lead to some negative consequences on European level: when highly skilled workers migrate to a region ending up being unemployed or employed in a job not requiring their high skills. This phenomenon is referred to as **“brain waste”** and is considered a negative impact for both the sending and receiving regions.<sup>2</sup>



# TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

## WHO IS TALENT?

Brain drain, losing bright minds is a phenomenon that has almost immediate negative consequences and the long-term implications are even graver. This challenge negatively affects many small- and medium-sized towns in Europe – including our C4TALENT partner towns.

To effectively counteract brain drain by implementing talent attraction and retention measures, first we need to identify who do we consider talent. The term “talented individual” is often used in a colloquial sense to **describe someone who possesses exceptional abilities or skills in a particular area** – this **is an exclusive and slightly elitist approach**.

People typically think of world-class sports-people, artists, scientists or celebrity business-people when they hear the term “talent”.

**Our approach is more inclusive and democratic, considering talent as a combination of innate abilities and learned skills that allow an individual to excel in a particular domain.**

C4TALENT perceives “talent” anybody person who is capable of delivering high-quality work in their domain – irrespectively of their age, educational attainment, race, gender, specific profession, type of work, etc.

## WORK AND LIFESTYLE, PUSH AND PULL

To attract and retain talent, it is also important to understand what are the most important factors that motivate people’s choice of place. Many scientists – especially economic geographers – argue that people choose jobs and move where work takes them. On the other hand, an increasing number of researchers – most prominently Richard Florida – claim that people, especially talented individuals in what he refers to as the “creative class”, increasingly choose place first, and that lifestyle factors are more important than work-related factors.

In reality, relocation decisions are complex choices, affected by a multitude of motivations (often very different for different individuals), but eventually **work- and lifestyle-related factors are both essential**. It may well be that someone moves to another city because of an attractive job opportunity, **but if the place, the city, the various amenities and services do not live up to their expectations, at some point they will decide to leave.**

It is also important to note that relocation decisions could be influenced by both **push and pull factors**: “*the reason why someone leaves a location is a push factor*” (for instance, someone with children is not satisfied with the quality of schools); “*the reason why someone moves to a specific new location is a pull factor*” (for instance, someone with a business idea may seek places where there are favourable conditions for starting a new enterprise).<sup>3</sup>

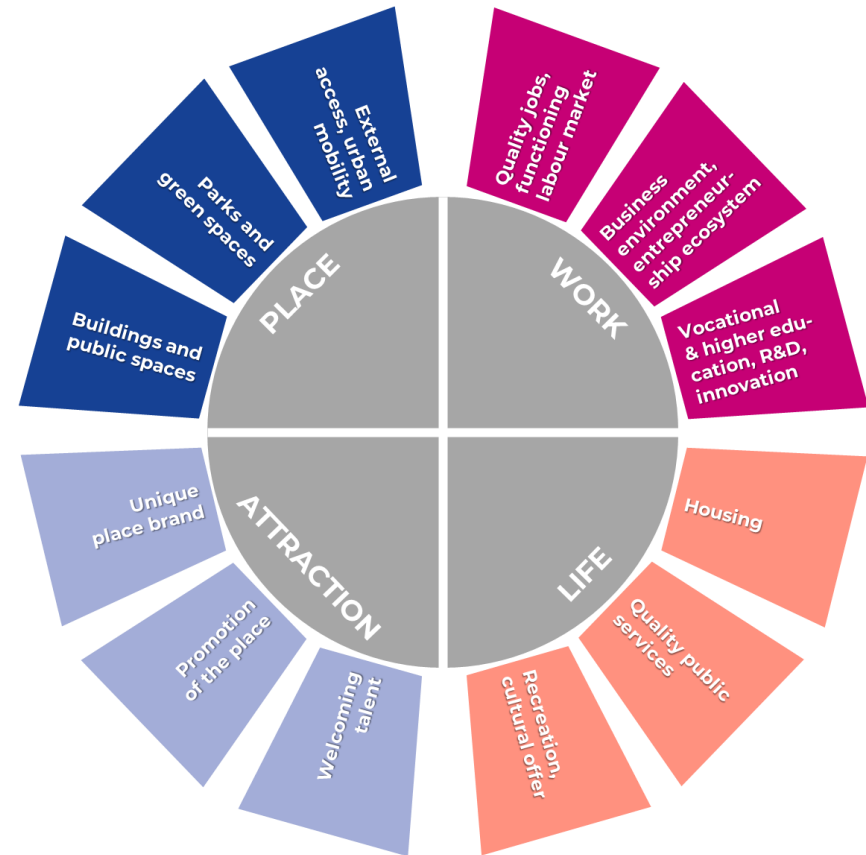
# TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

## SPECIFIC TALENT ATTRACTION & RETENTION FACTORS

While probably every single relocation decision is based on a unique combination of various factors, it is still useful to have a common frame of reference that can help cities to design their talent attraction and retention (TAR) policies and actions. In C4TALENT, we will use the **model developed as part of the TalentMagnet project**, co-financed by the EU's *Interreg Danube Programme*.

This model identifies 4 main “attraction categories”, then breaks them down into 12 more specific attraction factors.

- ❑ **PLACE:** Sustainable transport within the city and good external transport links; Pleasant urban environment, high-quality green spaces; Attractive city architecture and public spaces
- ❑ **WORK:** Quality jobs with competitive wages; Business environment conducive to entrepreneurship and innovation; Opportunities to study a wide variety of subjects and professions, especially on a higher level
- ❑ **LIFE:** Good quality, affordable housing; European level public services; Wide selection of “third places”
- ❑ **ATTRACTION:** Strong city brand, positive image; Effective city marketing; Open, inclusive social environment and a definitive plan for talent attraction and management



# TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

## WHAT CAN CITIES DO?

Understanding the importance of talent attraction and retention and the long-term negative consequences of brain drain, cities increasingly design and implement active policies in this field. Interestingly, though, most of the forerunners are cities that are quite attractive for talent even without active measures (capital cities like Berlin and Copenhagen, economic centres like Gothenburg – just to name a few), while cities that keep losing talent are less active and innovative.

Local authorities intending to implement active policies to attract and retain talent first and foremost **need to be aware that there is a problem and that steps need to be taken to address the challenge**. They also need to understand that talent attraction and retention is not something the local authority should or can do alone – it **requires an extensive partnership** as well as the **involvement of a range of public and private sector stakeholders**. Also, it is **crucial to identify the target groups and understand their specific needs**.

It is also important that the local partnership **critically explore the factors that may push talent away** and (where possible) consider steps to improve those factors, as well as **identify the pull factors that may be attractive** for talent (and can be further enhanced).

When those foundations are in place, the next step is to **develop an authentic city brand** (not as a touristic destination but as a “talent destination”), **design and implement active measures** to promote that brand and attract talent, create the infrastructure and capacities that facilitates the **reception and integration** of the target groups. It is also crucial to **look after talent who is already in the city** and cater for their needs.

Finally, cities need to be aware that *talent attraction and retention is not a project – it is a continuous activity,*

so it requires the **establishment of a sustainable governance structure** with necessary decisions and policies in place, appropriate capacities, financial and other resources.

# STARTUP COMMUNITY & BUSINESS SUPPORT

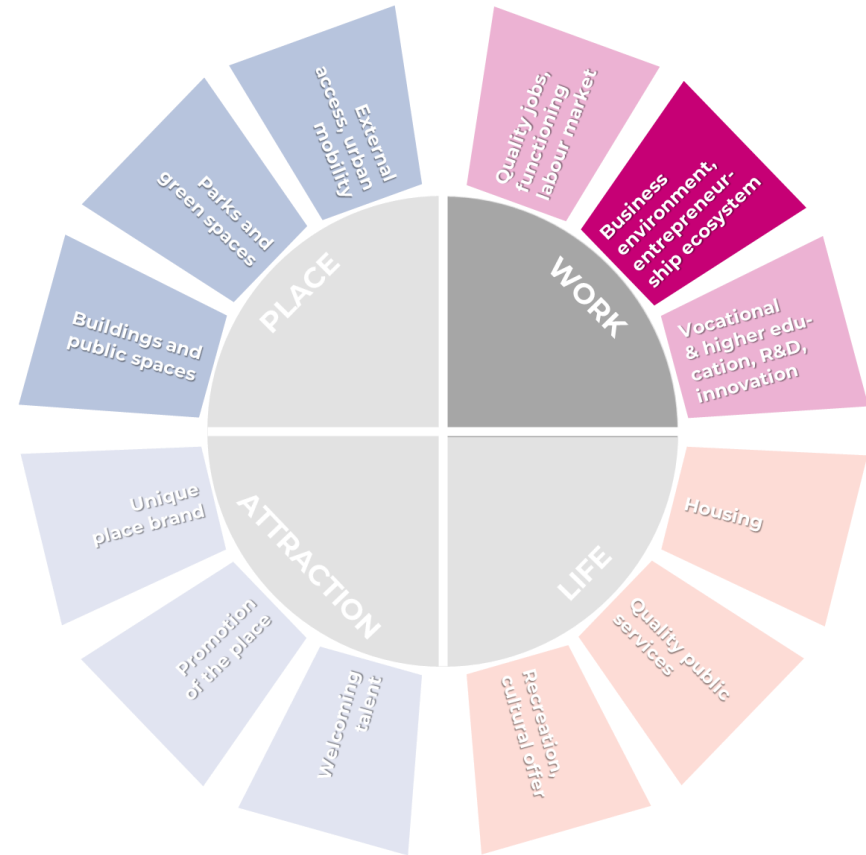
## BUSINESS SUPPORT AS A TALENT ATTRACTION FACTOR

As presented before, work is still one of the most important (if not *the* most important) talent attraction and retention factor: any place that wants to be successful in the competition for talent needs to offer excellent work opportunities. And **it's not about quantity**, either: talents – especially from the younger generation – are attracted by vibrant local labour markets that offer a **wide variety of quality jobs**.

In order to have a healthy labour market in a city, it needs to offer **an environment where businesses can thrive and grow**. Many ambitious, talented people reach a moment in their career when they would like to try themselves as entrepreneurs – launch and grow their own startup enterprise. Therefore, a **well-functioning business support structure** (as also presented in the frame of reference before) is a direct talent attraction and retention factor.

Unfortunately, most smaller towns lag behind capital cities and big economic centres when it comes to offering optimal conditions for starting and growing a business.

This is also reflected in the fact that the top positions of the *Global Startup Ecosystem ranking* (as well as the national rankings) are dominated by big cities (with a few refreshing exceptions, like Oulu in Finland being 2<sup>nd</sup> in the national ranking, or Leuven in Belgium being the 4<sup>th</sup> in Belgium).



# STARTUP COMMUNITY & BUSINESS SUPPORT

## WHAT MAKES AN ENABLING BUSINESS SUPPORT STRUCTURE?

Increasingly, the term “ecosystem” is used by experts and scientists to describe the landscape or environment in which businesses operate. *“This is particularly the case in innovation, entrepreneurship and tech.”*<sup>4</sup>

David Isenberg, adjunct professor at Columbia Business School and Babson, defines entrepreneurship ecosystem as *“a network of individuals, institutions, and organizations that work together to create an environment that fosters entrepreneurship”*.<sup>5</sup> The ecosystem includes a range of stakeholders – entrepreneurs, mentors, universities, investors, research institutions, various government agencies, even large businesses. According to Isenberg, the key components of any successful entrepreneurship ecosystem are **policy, access to finance, access to human capital, access to markets, access to support, and culture**.

The figure on the right presents the key components of Isenberg’s model – the only modification is the separation of soft support and physical spaces (like incubators or co-working spaces). This model, again, can provide a useful starting point, a frame of reference for C4TALENT partners, helping them to review their existing ecosystem, identify main challenges and gaps.

Understanding these components is key for local authorities aspiring to develop entrepreneurship and a startup community – but as countless examples demonstrate, simply ticking the boxes and filling the gaps unfortunately does not automatically lead to success. Because – as the Transferability Study of the TechRevolution URBACT Transfer Network concludes – **local authorities cannot create entrepreneurship ecosystems from the top down**. What they can do, though – especially in more human-scale small- and medium-sized towns – is to **“create the conditions in which an ecosystem can grow and flourish”**.<sup>6</sup>



Policy



Access to finance



Access to human capital



Access to markets



Access to business support



Access to physical spaces



Culture, community

# [ STARTUP COMMUNITY & BUSINESS SUPPORT

## WHO LEADS THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM?

It is clear, then, that the local authority (or any other organisation, for that matter) cannot create an entrepreneurship ecosystem from the top down – so, ideally, it **evolves organically** (given the right conditions). Many argue that successful ecosystems are driven by entrepreneurs – however, this goes against the ecosystem analogy: ecosystems are self-regulating, dynamic networks of a range of actors with different interests and ambitions, who work towards the same goals. Entrepreneurs are undoubtedly essential elements of entrepreneurship ecosystems, but definitely not drivers. In fact, there is no one single driver.

That doesn't mean though, that there are no influential figures, key connectors in the system: most successful examples highlight the **importance of a small number of crucial people**, or even just one person, a **catalyst** – “a committed and passionate champion”.<sup>7</sup> This person – who could be a public leader, a university professor, head of the business support organisation, a local entrepreneur – **does not drive or lead the ecosystem but** plays an important role in **moving it forward and steering** it in the right direction.

So, one of the main lessons here is that probably

*the most essential success factor is not having the right organisations (which is of course important), but having the right people with the right mindset*

involved. (After all, organisations are represented by people). And these people (just like the organisations they represent) need to have a **“give before you get” mentality** “where individuals and organizations contribute to the community without immediate expectations of return”.<sup>8</sup>

And one last thing: working together towards an entrepreneurship ecosystem is **not a quick-win undertaking** – everyone involved should **prepare for a long journey with frequent road bumps**.



# STATE OF THE ART

Network theme

**EU policy context**

City examples

# SUPRANATIONAL POLICIES ADDRESSED BY C4TALENT

The **Cohesion Policy** (CP) 2021-2027 set clear objectives to **create a more competitive and smarter Europe**. The C4TALENT project aims to work on this objective through the creation of **fertile business ecosystems with structured support for start-ups** and with the focus of attracting talent to small and medium-sized cities (SMCs) to ensure their competitiveness. In addition, several subgoals of the CP are part of the project, such as reaping the benefits of **digitization** for citizens, companies and governments; **enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs**; and **developing skills** for smart specialization, industrial transition and **entrepreneurship**.

One of the key objectives of the network is to *help cities develop their local skills and programmes to attract and retain talent*

– this is essential to ensure the right workforce for the growth of SMEs and for the further development of the ecosystem, especially in SMCs.

Moreover, the CP focuses on **good governance** to attain these goals, which is also the starting point for C4TALENT.



In line with the **Urban Agenda**, the cities in C4TALENT address the priority themes of **jobs and skills in the local economy and digital transition** on the governance level closest to the citizens (principle of subsidiarity).

The project contributes to the framework for **sustainable and smart local economy**, aiming to align with EU goals and ensure competitive and future-proof cities.

Moreover, C4TALENT is well aligned with the Urban Agenda as it *"strives to establish a more effective integrated and coordinated approach to EU policies and legislation with a potential impact on urban areas and also contributes to territorial cohesion by reducing the socio-economic gaps observed in urban areas"* and will *"contribute to enhancing the knowledge base on urban issues and exchange best practices and knowledge for evidence-based urban policy-making, as well as for providing tailor-made solutions for major challenges"*.



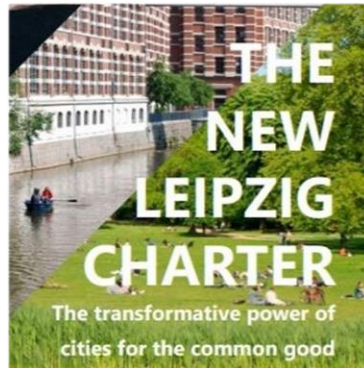


# SUPRANATIONAL POLICIES ADDRESSED BY C4TALENT

The **New Leipzig Charter** defines some key principles of **good urban governance**: it should be (1) **multi-level**, (2) done with an **integrated approach**, and (3) based on **participation and co-creation**. C4TALENT allows SMCs to respond to the brain drain challenge by involving

- (1) **different levels** of governance through their **stakeholders** (both vertical and horizontal – local, regional and national organizations from academia, business, government and civil society);
- (2) **several related urban policy areas**; and
- (3) a **balanced ULG** in the preparation of the IAP.

According to the Charter, one of the dimensions of European cities is the **productive city** as *“an attractive, innovative and competitive business location which needs a skilled workforce, social, technical and logistical infrastructure as well as affordable and accessible space”*. The SMCs in C4TALENT aim to set up action plans regarding this dimension, and to reach their goal (and address the identified challenge), a **fertile business ecosystem with talent and skills** is necessary as well as the creation of a **structured support system**.



C4TALENT contributes to the realization of several elements of the **UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

The most prominent Sustainable Development Goal is Number 8, namely: **promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**.

This URBACT network encourages the formation and growth of SMEs and creates support for entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation (Target 8.3).

By the setup of the ULG and the composition and further development of the economic ecosystem, the project contributes to **community building** (SDG 11) where **inclusiveness and (gender) equality** are crucial (SDG 5, 9 and 10).



Lastly, partnerships play an important role in this project and not only on the local level (ULGs, ecosystem building, etc.), but also between different European cities – transnational exchange is essential in the URBACT Programme and allows the participating cities to **learn from others with similar challenges** (SDG 17).

# SUPRANATIONAL POLICIES ADDRESSED BY C4TALENT

In general, EU policy helps

*make businesses more competitive, promoting job creation and economic growth by creating a business-friendly environment.*

From the perspective of C4TALENT, however, the strongest connection can be found within “COM/2020/103 – An SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe”.

The **SME Strategy** was created in the wake of policy documents and programmes like the *2008 Small Business Act*, the *2016 Start-up and Scaleup Initiative* and the *Competitiveness for Small and Medium Enterprises (COSME) Programme*. Making it easier for start-ups and businesses to expand across borders, decreasing their administrative burdens, streamlining their operations, increasing their access to finance instruments (loans, grants, etc.), and promoting cross-border tools and platforms are all listed as possible ways to support SMEs of all sizes and sectors, from innovative tech start-ups to traditional crafts.



The Strategy includes the following interventions that align with the focus of C4TALENT:

- ❑ Appointing Sustainability Advisors to help SMEs with addressing their challenges and **improve access to skills**
- ❑ Creating more **Digital Innovation Hubs**
- ❑ Offering €300 million through the European Innovation Council (EIC) to **encourage breakthrough innovations** delivering Green Deal objectives
- ❑ Develop an EU Start-up Nations Standard to **accelerate the growth of high-tech SMEs and start-ups**
  - ❑ Setting up partnerships among border regions to encourage them to **coordinate the rules and procedures** on cross-border provision of services
  - ❑ Launching an extended **Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs** Global Scheme
  - ❑ Creating an SME Initial Public Offering (IPO) Fund under the InvestEU programme, including a gender-smart initiative to **stimulate funding for female-led companies**
  - ❑ Starting the ESCALAR initiative, a mechanism to **boost the size of venture capital funds and attract more private investment**



GOOD  
VIBES  
ONLY

## STATE OF THE ART

Network theme  
EU policy context  
**City examples**

# CITY EXAMPLES

## INSPIRING GOOD PRACTICES AND PROJECTS

There have been a range of inspiring programmes related to the interlinking network themes of C4TALENT – talent attraction and retention and entrepreneurship ecosystems. These include innovative local initiatives of various cities, as well as solutions, methodologies developed as part of EU co-financed inter-regional projects. Listing all or even the most relevant initiatives goes far beyond the scope of the Baseline Study. Nevertheless, we briefly present those that have been identified already in the Activation Stage as inspiring examples that can offer valuable learnings for the network partners, also indicating how they relate to the network's themes.

This is an initial collection, but throughout project implementation we will keep collecting and recording initiatives that may be useful inspirations for our partners (as well as any local authority outside the partnership) and can be used as inputs to developing their own local actions.

NAME	LOCATION	Talent attraction & retention factors	Business/startup ecosystem factors
Polar Bear Pitching	Oulu, FI	<b>ATTRACTION:</b> Unique place brand; Promotion of the place	Finance
Co-branding Talent Attraction Toolbox	Copenhagen, DK		Human capital
Wanted in Jönköping	Jönköping, SE		
Openlab	Stockholm, SE	<b>WORK:</b> Education, R&D...	Physical space, Culture
Tecnocampus	Mataro, Catalonia, ES		Human capital, Business support, Physical space, Culture
Cesenalab	Cesena, IT	<b>WORK:</b> Business environment...	Business support, Physical space, Culture
Youth Database (TalentMagnet project)	Nyíregyháza, HU	<b>ATTRACTION (+ PLACE, WORK, LIFE)</b>	
Talent House Programme	San Sebastian, ES	<b>WORK:</b> Business environment...; Education, R&D... & <b>LIFE:</b> Housing & <b>ATTRACTION:</b> Welcoming talent	Physical space, Culture
PROJECT	DURATION		
TechTown APN	2015-2018	<b>WORK:</b> Quality jobs...; Business environment...	Policy, Business support, Culture
TechRevolution and TechRevolution 2.0 TN	2018-2021 2021-2022	<b>WORK:</b> Business environment...	Policy, Finance, Markets, Business support, Physical space, Culture
GenY City APN	2015-2018	<b>PLACE, WORK, LIFE</b>	
Welcoming International Talent TN	2018-2021	<b>ATTRACTION, PLACE, WORK, LIFE</b>	
Residents of the Future APN	2023-		



## POLAR BEAR PITCHING – OULU (FI)

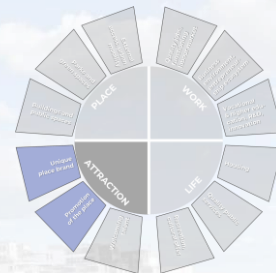
Oulu is a medium-sized town in Northern Finland, with a strong startup community and gaming cluster. However, the city had difficulties in providing access to venture capital to enable the growth of businesses – and thus, in the retention of startups and talent in the gaming sector.

The answer to this challenge was the Polar Bear Challenge – a **unique pitching event for startups**: a hole is cut in the ice on a lake of the city and **entrepreneurs could pitch their startup ideas – as long as they could bear the freezing cold**. The event is broadcasted across the world, enhanced Oulu’s brand as a place for startups, while also drew the attention of venture capitalists.



## WANTED IN JÖNKÖPING (SE)

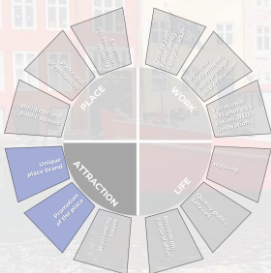
Jönköping is a medium-sized town in Southern Sweden, facing the challenge of keeping talented people in the city. Therefore, they decided to deliver a campaign to target those who already had a link to the city (having been raised or studied there). The campaign organizers **identified people living in the city – and asked them to nominate one person they want to move back to the city**. Then **they contacted each nominated person directly** with an offer to move back, while also **a billboard has been placed at the bus or tram stop closest to their current home** asking them personally to move back to Jönköping (at the request of their Jönköping contact).



## CO-BRANDING TALENT ATTRACTION TOOLBOX

As already presented, place and work are both important in attracting and retaining talent. Usually, individual **employer brands of businesses** and the **place brand of the city** are not **interconnected** – they exist separately. Not in Copenhagen:

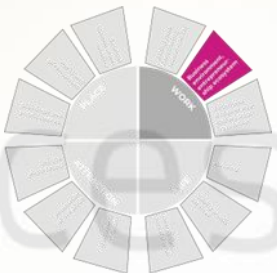
**Copenhagen Capacity**, the organisation responsible for TAR has launched an **online toolbox with free content** (videos, photos, visual documents presenting the lifestyle offered by the city) to support local SMEs & multinationals alike in recruiting international talent. This resource enables the promotion of an attractive “employer place brand” instead of promoting the city and the individual job opportunities separately.



## OPENLAB – STOCKHOLM (SE)

Openlab is an **open innovation platform** and a **physical hub** jointly established by the city, the County Council and four universities – located in a renovated building of the Royal Institute of Technology Campus. The facility includes a café, a co-working space, offices and meeting rooms. It is not just a building, though: it also runs a **master’s course** in which **students** from the partner universities **work on real life challenges presented by the county or the city**. It also operates a **“Develop Your City” digital platform**. Students working on the challenges get to know the city better, develop bonds to the place and expand their local professional network.





## CESENALAB (ITALY)

Cesena is a medium-sized Italian town not far from Bologna. The city is home to several faculties of the prestigious University of Bologna, attracting students from all over Italy. After graduation, however, most of them move to other countries, or to big cities in Italy, in search of more exciting career opportunities.

As a response, the local authority collaborated with the university and the Chamber of Commerce and the Bank Association to open a **startup incubator**.

The Bank Association provided the space (free) in an unused building, the municipality provides the annual budget of operation, while the university contributes with its network, access to its research facilities and capacities, and with aspiring startupperers from the university.

Cesenalab provides its residents with a **desk, broadband internet access, use of facilities 24/7, mentorship support to create a business plan and business model, support to build a network and contact base, events to link the startups with other companies, training courses – all this for free**. In return, when a company leaves CesenaLab after 9 months (usually as a fully functional enterprise), it must stay in Cesena.



## TECNOCAMPUS – MATARO (ES)

Mataro is a medium-sized town North of Barcelona. Tecnocampus – and affiliated centre of Pompeu Fabra University – defines itself as *“an ecosystem where students, entrepreneurs, businesses, researchers, academics and local government interact to share knowledge, contribute to regional economic development and build successful futures”*.

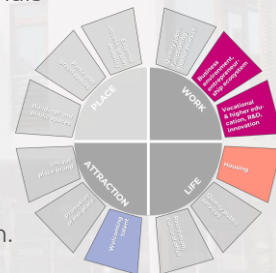
It is built on the foundation offered by the 3 faculties: Polytechnic, Economics and Health. Tecnocampus occupies 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> on the seafont, and it **co-locates teaching facilities, a startup incubator, a conference centre, and a 18,000 m<sup>2</sup> business park** hosting both established local companies and those growing out of the incubator. This enables **informal interactions and easy movement** for students, staff, and entrepreneurs across all campus elements.



## TALENT HOUSE PROGRAMME – SAN SEBASTIAN (ES)

The Talent House of San Sebastian is a **complex programme to attract and integrate talented researchers and people working in the R&D sector**. The programme has three main pillars:

1. The **Talent House** is a physical building where talented researchers can rent one of the 80 apartments/facilities for work or living at an affordable price. Local R&D professionals can also rent conference/meeting rooms and other facilities – and this facilitates networking between local and international talent.
2. The **Welcome Service** offers expat researchers hands-on support to integrate in the city.
3. The **job-seeking guidance** helps international researchers to find jobs in San Sebastian.



## YOUTH DATABASE – NYÍREGYHÁZA (HU)

**TalentMagnet** was a transnational cooperation project of small- and medium-sized cities in the Danube Region to develop tools helping cities to fight against brain-drain.

As part of the project, a **Model of Talent Attraction and Retention Factors** (also used in this Baseline Study), a **Practical Guide**, and **training materials** have been developed to help cities to prepare a **Talent Attraction and Retention plan** and to build their **local governance structure**.

Nyíregyháza is a medium-sized town in Eastern Hungary (and the Lead Partner of C4TALENT). The city's educational institutions produce many talented young people, most of whom move elsewhere (other cities in Hungary or abroad) to continue their studies or work – and many of them never return. The city has found that after their departure these young people lose touch with the city, and their strong bond gradually fades away. In response – and as a spinoff of the TalentMagnet project – the city has developed a **web-based voluntary youth database where graduates can register themselves – and the city can continue keeping in touch**, inviting them to events, informing them about developments, plans of the city and even offering them specific job opportunities.



## TechTown URBACT APN (2015-2018)

*„By exploring how small- and medium-sized cities can maximise the job creation potential of the digital economy, this Action Planning network examined whether there is potential for spillover from stronger city level digital economies; how clusters can work at city level and look collaboratively at what cities can do to support businesses to access the digital skills and innovations they need to start, grow and compete. The city partners further explored the role and viability of digital, content creation and technology clusters and how benefit may be gained from major city or national initiatives to benefit job creation and growth in small- and medium-sized cities.”*

This network was led by Barnsley, UK – C4TALENT's LP, Nyíregyháza was a partner.



## TechRevolution AND TechRevolution 2.0

These networks focused on the transfer of a good practice from Barnsley, UK. It has 2 main pillars:

- 1. Enterprising Barnsley** – a successful business support programme (startup support – “Launchpad”, Access to Finance; Recruitment & Training; Supply chain & Export; Accessing Council Services; Property Finder; Local events; Inward investment)
- 2. Digital Media Centre (DMC)** – a landmark hub for creative and digital business in the town centre (open door access; regular local events, community offer & networking; coffee cart, pizza and beer).

From C4TALENT, Nyíregyháza, Vilanova and Piraeus were partners in TechRevolution – Roeselare, Rzeszów and Alytus in 2.0.





## GEN-Y CITY URBACT APN (2015-2018)

*"Over the last decades... the impact of wage levels and different unemployment rates across Europe has led youngsters to move mainly to big cities... this Action Planning network aimed on developing, attracting and retaining young local talent, particularly the creative talent from Generation Y – people... born between 1980 and 2000..."*

The goal of Gen-Y Network was to **promote a stronger co-operation among local government, science, businesses, and citizens** to improve the development, attraction and retention of young talent, particularly **creative and tech entrepreneurs**.

## RESIDENTS OF THE FUTURE URBAN APN (2023- )

Residents of the Future intends to **address urban depopulation** in small- and medium-sized cities. By **focusing on digital transformation, economic diversification and city branding**, the network will explore innovative approaches towards **evolving trends in work, lifestyle and communication**, to enhance the cities' attractiveness for prospective investments and inhabitants. The network enables cities to **redefine their advantages in comparison to larger metropolitan areas**, and develop holistic, citizen-centric solutions that support demographic revitalisation.



## WELCOMING INTERNATIONAL TALENT (2018-2021)

The key question behind Welcoming International Talent was how medium-sized cities can use **policies to attract, integrate and keep international talent economically active**.

The network focused on the following specific themes:

- Branding & marketing**
- Access to facilities:** providing effective access to housing, medical services, amenities, help with bureaucracy
- Social & cultural integration:** making internationals feel welcome, promoting integration in the social and cultural life of the city
- Labour market integration**
- Governance**

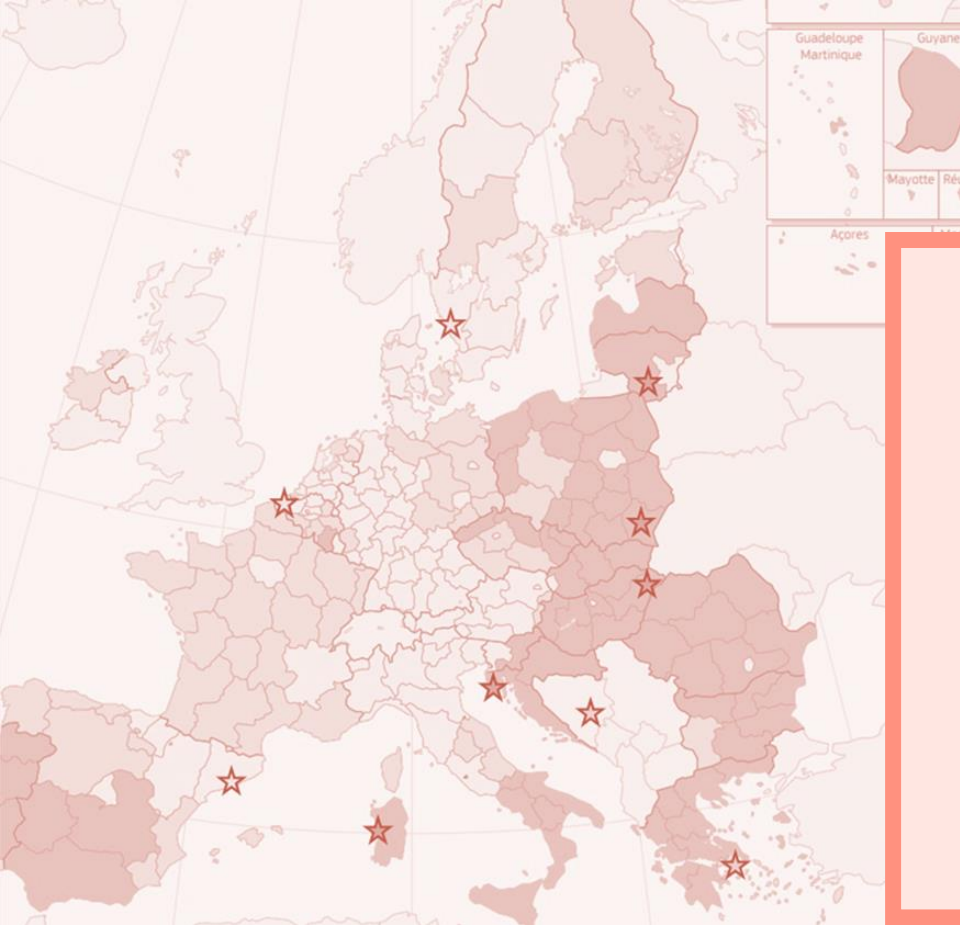






# PARTNER PROFILES

Overview of the partnership  
Individual partner profiles



# PARTNER PROFILES

Overview of the partnership

Individual partner profiles

# THE NETWORK PARTNERS

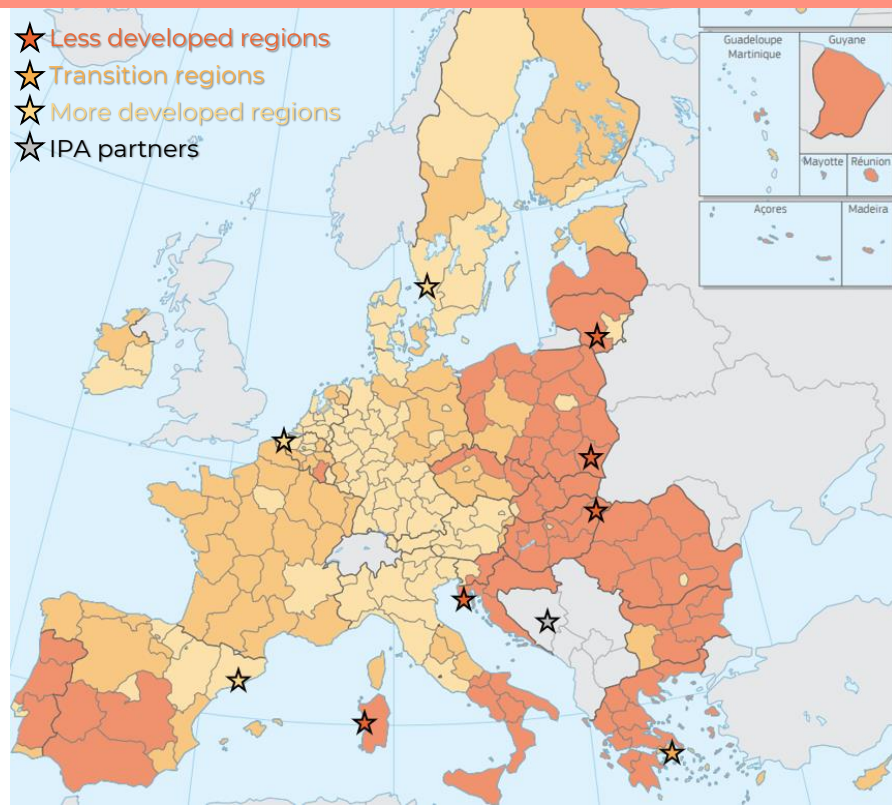
Building a partnership for C4TALENT was a long process. Involving a group of **cities from previous URBACT networks** (Nyíregyháza, Vilanova i la Geltrú and Piraeus\* from TechRevolution; Alytus, Roeselare and Rzeszów from TechRevolution 2.0) was an important starting point – having people who are already familiar with each other builds trust.

Finding the remaining number of partners was done in line with several guiding principles:

- ❑ **Geographical balance** – the core group wanted members from all over Europe to effectively compare approaches.
- ❑ URBACT has rules about the partner distribution of **more developed, transition, and less developed regions** within a network, narrowing down the search.
- ❑ Involving **partners funded by IPA** – added as possible beneficiaries in URBACT IV – was also a factor.
- ❑ Another consideration was to invite partners who are completely **new to URBACT**.

**The partners have a wide range of experience in the network topic** – some of them are at the beginning of their journey, relatively speaking (e.g., in the process of creating an innovation hub or co-working spaces), but others had already made some progress in some sub-areas of the main topic, even if not directly related to talent attraction and retention or generating start-ups.

- ★ **Less developed regions**
- ★ **Transition regions**
- ★ **More developed regions**
- ★ **IPA partners**



**LP: Nyíregyháza (HU)** Piraeus (EL)  
Alytus (LT) Roeselare (BE)  
Pula (HR) Vilanova (ES)  
Rzeszów (PL) Varberg (SE)  
Alghero (IT) Centar Sarajevo (BA)

\* Piraeus joined the network during the Activation Stage after Kessariani (EL) had to unexpectedly withdraw their Letter of Commitment.



# **PARTNER PROFILES**

**Overview of the partnership**

**Individual partner profiles**

# CENTAR SARAJEVO – ABOUT THE CITY

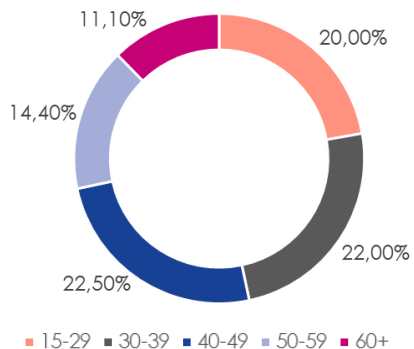


33 km<sup>2</sup>



55 181 citizens

## AGE DISTRIBUTION (unemployed)



## MAIN SECTORS



ICT



Tourism



Pharma



Metal



Wood



Agriculture & food



## IMPORTANT FACTS



Administrative, trade, touristic, educational and cultural centre of the state



Home to many highly rated IT companies with quality work conditions



Respected university with 6-7,000 students annually



Cheapest housing prices compared to other capitals in the region



Strategy design of entrepreneurship development based on a participatory approach through LEEP<sup>1</sup>, with over 40 member institutions



Models of action through CEE<sup>2</sup>, resulting in the support of over 100 new businesses

<sup>1</sup> Local Entrepreneurship and Employment Partnership

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Excellence in Entrepreneurship

# CENTAR SARAJEVO – CONTEXT



## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION – WORK

Although the local university makes Sarajevo a steady source of a highly educated workforce, many of the alumni are **leaving abroad in search for better paid jobs and a higher level of security** (especially in the new geopolitical climate). Even if they stay, there is a **mismatch between the available jobs and the qualifications of the workforce**. Cultural habits further complicate the situation – women often remain unemployed.

There are a great number of initiatives from both public and private actors with the goal of supporting start-ups. However, smaller cities around Sarajevo have more entrepreneurial-minded citizens comparatively – **in Sarajevo most young people still rather choose to work for public institutions**.

Having complex **institutional systems** means that sometimes they are **not aligned in their efforts** – this is also true for general governance (i.e., strategic planning) and work-related education.

Other significant challenges:

- ❑ Sarajevo is a very car-oriented city, leading to air pollution and various mobility problems.
- ❑ Satisfying the need for more living – and other – space without endangering outdoor public spaces (green areas, parks, etc.) is not easy.



## BUSINESS/START-UP SUPPORT – POLICY LEVEL

Strategies and action plans aimed at the support of entrepreneurs are developed by the municipality and several other actors, but these **initiatives** are often **created parallel with each other, without any serious coordination**.



## ACCESS TO FINANCE

Lack of financial resources is certainly not a problem in Centar Sarajevo: there are **many opportunities provided by different levels of the government and the private sector** as well – several network partners indicated that they are interested in the know-how behind this.



## ACCESS TO HUMAN CAPITAL

Despite the previous statement about the local labour market imbalance, **more data on this topic would be immensely valuable to get a clearer picture** of the nature and severity of the challenge. Regardless, **this factor is seen as the most underdeveloped within Centar Sarajevo** (based on the city self-assessment survey).

# CENTAR SARAJEVO – CONTEXT



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT

**Problems with coordination** are present in the case of business support services as well – not surprising considering the lack of coordination on higher governance levels like policy making and action planning.

The *Centre of Excellence for Entrepreneurship* in Sarajevo is fully owned by the municipality, and it functions as the operational arm of the *Local Partnership for Employment and Entrepreneurship*. It has a dedicated building, which operates as a headquarter but can also host enterprises and has rooms for training, advisory and mentoring sessions. The Centre runs a start-up support system based on ILO methodology. It involves a 1-month training for the applicants, then they pitch their business idea. The selected applicants receive a grant, mentorship and physical space (free for a limited period).

This programme is a good foundation, but needs revision, improvement and expansion (using learnings from the network). Based on an interview with a young entrepreneur who participated in the programme, it would also be more apt to call it a support programme for starting enterprises – it seems that the next step, supporting the development and scaling up of businesses, is missing.

The *International Burch University* offers a start-up support programme as well, proving the point about **parallel initiatives without proper coordination**. It would be useful to **assess the two initiatives and evaluate the possibility of combining them into a single, integrated programme**.

Despite the wide range of available services, **many young people don't know about them** – they should somehow be brought closer to their target group.



## ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SPACES

There are a few hubs offering affordable physical space for start-ups (free for the first year of use, and very affordable prices for the rest). However, **start-ups needing an attractive location for sales** or similar activities **do not have access to affordable locations** in Centar Sarajevo.



## ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY

Meeting with the talent group during the city visit unearthed a need for **building a community of young businesses by organizing regular events to help them develop specific cooperations** (e.g., provide opportunities to meet with more established businesses occasionally, or build thematic/sectoral networks of enterprises like a community of businesses working in the fashion industry).

# CENTAR SARAJEVO – IAP FOCUS

Centar Sarajevo has a relatively developed enterprise support system. Many important elements are already in place – various organizations support (mainly starting) businesses. However, there is also room for improvement.

**Better coordination would be needed to ensure the efficient use of resources and avoid overlaps** – by eliminating these overlaps, some of the resources could be redirected to provide services that are currently lacking.

There are a range of possible questions to guide the selection of IAP focus areas:

- ❑ How can the existing support services and the work of various institutions in this field be better coordinated to improve efficiency, save resources, avoid overlaps and offer an **integrated package to help all important phases of the development and growth of businesses?**
- ❑ How can the new premises of the CEE be turned into an **enterprise support hub** that concentrates a wide range of support services?
- ❑ How can a **unique research facility** be developed that combines infrastructure and services and attracts back to Sarajevo talented young researchers who currently work at prestigious universities, research institutions, and major tech companies abroad?
- ❑ How can a **better environment** be developed **for real start-ups** – businesses with extraordinary growth potential?

Other areas where there may be scope for improvement are as follows:

- ❑ **Developing the local business community** (thematic/sectoral networks, cooperation between more established businesses and starting businesses, etc.)
- ❑ Revisiting **existing business support services** and **adjusting them based on the feedback of businesses**

## ULG MEMBERS

<b>SERDA</b>	Development Agency of Canton Sarajevo
<b>Association “Bit Alliance”</b>	Association of BiH ICT companies
<b>International Burch University</b>	Offers mentorship to businesses in creative industries
<b>Association Vertex</b>	Provides expertise in project and financial management as well as inclusive support to marginalized groups
<b>Public Employment Institute of the Sarajevo Canton</b>	Activates & integrates unemployed to the labour market
<b>Association of CEFE Trainers in BiH</b>	Involved in managing the CEE, providing business trainings and coaching
<b>Ministry of Economics</b>	Higher level institution



# PULA – ABOUT THE CITY

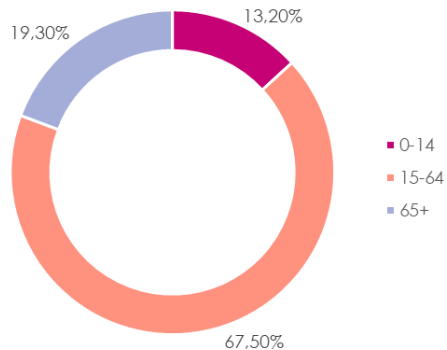


≈54 km<sup>2</sup>



52 220 citizens

## AGE DISTRIBUTION (population)



## MAIN ENTERPRISES (by employment)



Tourism



Construction



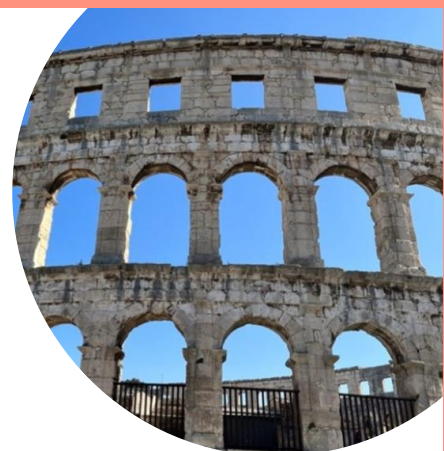
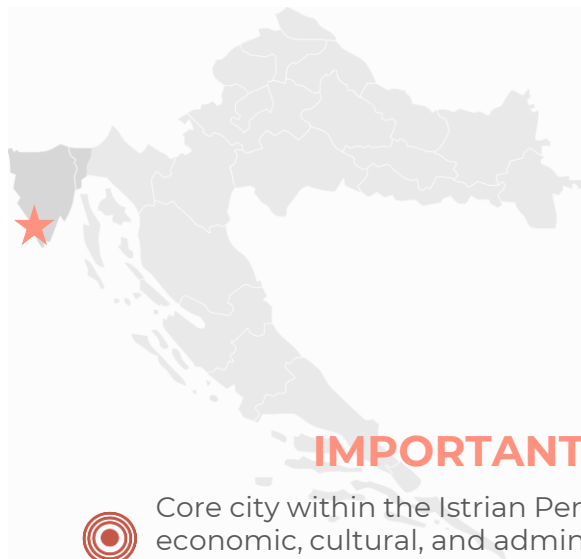
Naval engineering



Glass



Furniture



## IMPORTANT FACTS



Core city within the Istrian Peninsula, serving as a hub for economic, cultural, and administrative activities, a key tourism destination



Its urban area includes seven local government units



Integrates ancient Roman structures (amphitheater Arena) into the natural landscape



Heavy focus on the service industries (due to the impact of tourism)



Four active entrepreneurial support institutions: IDA, Technological Incubator, METRIS and Challenge



Recently built Coworking Pula entrepreneurship centre with the aim of creating a conducive environment for business development

# PULA – CONTEXT



## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION – WORK

As a regional employment hub, Pula offers numerous job opportunities, but **trade and hospitality** undeniably occupies the highest proportion in the overall gross value added. The majority of businesses also fall under the category of **micro-enterprises** with up to 10 employees.

**The city doesn't have a conventional entrepreneurial zone** with the necessary infrastructure, only locations where multiple businesses are concentrated. There is a shared vision to **transform Pula into a tech hub** and address the loss of its historical industrial identity.

Other significant challenges:

- Influx of tourists driving up the demand for housing and property investment
- 10% reduction in the number of students in higher education institutions between 2015 and 2021
- Low involvement of young people in cultural programs
- Limited use of public transport for urban mobility



## BUSINESS/START-UP SUPPORT – POLICY LEVEL

**Limited financial resources** make effective strategic planning harder which is exacerbated by a certain **resignation from the public** regarding participation in decision-making, acting as a barrier of true stakeholder-led planning.

In terms of regulations, **bureaucratic challenges** are prevalent: there is a significant gap between how businesses operate and how the administrative services function.

**Simplifying business setup procedures** can make it easier for entrepreneurs to establish companies in Pula.



## ACCESS TO FINANCE

Startups require more and **more diverse financial support**, not just seed money – there's a need for acceleration programmes and angel investors.



## ACCESS TO HUMAN CAPITAL

The *Croatian Employment Service* offers a "job retention programme" aimed at retaining workers in sectors facing economic challenges due to special circumstances, but there is still a **mismatch between supply and demand in terms of education and the labour market**, with a significant **focus on the service industries** (due to the impact of tourism).

**Attracting more digital nomads** to Pula could be achieved through co-working spaces, affordable housing, and a vibrant community – the issue of **affordable housing for students and workers** is a major concern.

# PULA – CONTEXT



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Croatian Chamber of Commerce (HGK) – Pula County Chamber, the Istrian Development Agency (IDA), the Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (HBOR), and the Craftsmen Chamber (OK) provide support services for the business sector, actively assisting companies in enhancing and developing all facets of their operations.

IDA manages two business incubators in Pula and has seen notable success stories (e.g., InfoBip). However, multiple organizations provide support services, leading to **overlapping efforts – improved coordination is necessary.**



## ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SPACES

The *Coworking Pula* entrepreneurship centre was built with the aim of creating a conducive environment for business in the urban area of Pula. There are still **several brownfield areas suitable for new functions** (e.g., Vallelunga) in the proximity of the city centre, but many of these are in state ownership, hindering their revitalization process.



## ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY

The resigned public attitude regarding participation in decision-making manifests in this factor as well:

- ❑ Limited number of collaboration programs and joint projects involving stakeholders from the public, private, and civil sector
- ❑ Insufficient level of networking among associations at the city level
- ❑ Limited citizen awareness about social innovations, social entrepreneurship, volunteering and activism (although *DC Rojc*, a unique civil society centre, acts as a cultural hub and a source of social innovations in the city)

The **connection between the academic and private sector** needs improvement as well, as it currently remains mostly declarative. **Collaboration with the local university's IT faculty** and offering incentives to investors could especially stimulate the startup ecosystem.

To support the growth of startups, **organizing entrepreneurial events and providing facilities for IT companies for teambuilding activities** can also be beneficial.

# PULA – IAP FOCUS

Pula stands at a pivotal point in its journey. There is a strong vision clearly shared by the urban development team (and at least partly by the local decision makers). The heart of this vision is to **transform the city into a thriving tech hub while preserving its unique identity** – revitalizing Pula and addressing the loss of its historical industrial character.

The possible first important milestones towards this vision is the **integrated development of a new neighbourhood** with the goal of creating a hub or campus that can (1) attract and be the home of ICT (and other) businesses; (2) concentrate world class services (support, education); (3) provide a unique physical environment; and (4) become a meeting point for businesses.

In the framework of the IAP, **using a space-based and participative approach** of preparing a plan **for the rehabilitation of the Vallelunga brownfield area and turning it into a tech/business hub** with a variety of functions (not just offices and workplaces, but also educational, R&D, and leisure facilities, with high quality public services, and even residential functions) could be a strong proposition. If Vallelunga is selected as the subject of the IAP, the testing action needs to focus on **testing a future function of the area, or activities to be implemented there in the future.**

There are several other necessary improvements as well:

- ❑ Addressing **over-tourism** and resulting issues like **housing availability and affordability**
- ❑ **“Upgrading” entrepreneurship and startup support** – deliver accelerator programmes, involve angel investors, improve coordination of support organisations
- ❑ Enhancing **academic and private sector collaboration**
- ❑ Streamlining public services to businesses, **reducing bureaucracy**

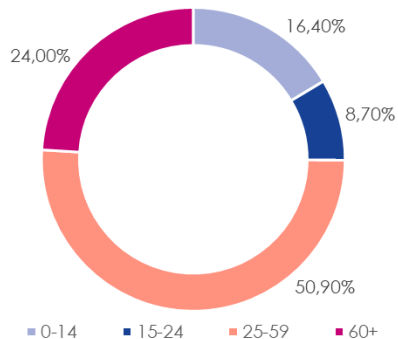
## ULG MEMBERS

<b>Croatian Academic and Research Network</b>	Public institution operating within the Ministry of Science and Education in the field of ICT and its application in education
<b>Society of Architects of Istria</b>	Developing and promoting architecture, spatial culture, and environmental protection
<b>Croatian Chamber of Commerce</b>	Helping companies in the development and improvement of all aspects of their business
<b>ICT Istra</b>	Association of experts and companies in the field of IT and software development
<b>Istrian Development Agency</b>	First regional development agency in Croatia, implementing county level programs
<b>Infobip</b>	Global leader in omnichannel communication
<b>Juraj Dobrila University of Pula</b>	Strengthening scientific and artistic research
<b>ZUM</b>	Providing employment opportunities for youth
<b>Tech City Pula</b>	Association fostering entrepreneurship in the IT sector, operating in a co-working space

# RZESZÓW – ABOUT THE CITY

 **128.5 km<sup>2</sup>**  **196 374 citizens**

## AGE DISTRIBUTION (population)



## MAIN SECTORS



Aviation



IT



Pharma  
& chemical



Construction



Automotive



## IMPORTANT FACTS

-  Largest city in southeast Poland – the capital of Podkarpackie Voivodeship, which forms the eastern border of the EU
-  Most rapidly developing advanced technology centre for the aviation industry in Central Europe
-  Third highest percentage of people with higher education in the country – 6 universities with nearly 40,000 students
-  Young people up to 34 years of age account for more than 40% of all the unemployed in the region
-  Consistently implements SMART urban solutions, e.g., first city in Poland to install smart bus shelters
-  Companies investing here can count on high income tax exemptions

# RZESZÓW – CONTEXT



## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION – WORK

Rzeszów – as the capital of Podkarpackie region – is an excellent location for logistics centres and production plants using innovative technologies. In recent years, the labour market has seen **growing demand for skilled workers**, with a simultaneous **low availability of specialists ready to work immediately**. Fitting to a large academic centre with 6 universities, 40% of people in Rzeszów have completed a higher education. Coordinating between companies and education institutions and providing specialists with good working conditions (high salaries, social conditions and bonus systems) may help retain and attract professionals to Rzeszów and the region from this existing talent pool.

There are **institutions** supporting startups in the city, but they **operate without coordinated activities/ pathways between them**.

Other significant challenges:

- ❑ High price of buying and renting apartments in Rzeszów, comparable to large metropolitan areas
- ❑ Rapidly growing city needs more facilities and places for the new generations (e.g., nurseries, kindergartens)
- ❑ Mobility: insufficient number of bicycle parking lots and parking spaces – large number of cars entering the city, causing traffic jams



## BUSINESS/START-UP SUPPORT – POLICY LEVEL

**Ensuring stability in the regulatory environment** is crucial to attract and retain talent and businesses. Institutions supporting the development of entrepreneurship in Rzeszów are subject to **various levels of government**: Rzeszów Regional Development Agency, AEROPOLIS (central government), Podkarpackie Innovation Center (government of voivodeship), Urban Lab (local authority). Locally, the **Rzeszów Entrepreneurship Foundation** was established in 2023 to support the economic development of the city as holistically as possible (i.e., including educational activities in the field of entrepreneurship, the promotion of entrepreneurship, building a startup ecosystem, supporting the development of SMEs and innovation, etc.).



## ACCESS TO FINANCE

This is one area where **the city looks for good practices** (e.g., examples from Centar Sarajevo). Smaller towns are seen as advantageous for startups due to less competition and, more importantly, potentially lower operating costs – funding is hard to find.

# RZESZÓW – CONTEXT



## ACCESS TO HUMAN CAPITAL

As mentioned before, Rzeszów has a well-developed vocational education system and a high percentage of citizens with higher education – but not necessarily in the most needed professions, or ready for work in the city (instead of somewhere else). However, this translates into a **large number of ideas and the potential to establish startups**. Programs which **connects students** (from high schools) **with entrepreneurs** can be useful for an early exposure to local job opportunities and even for career development. **Raising the quality of job conditions** also creates a crucial pull factor.



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT

Business support services in the city are **fragmented** and carried out by various organizations. **Streamlining** these services could be beneficial.



## ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SPACES

Rzeszów is an important office hub but **lacks an urban office zone** – office buildings are scattered throughout the city. The market started to develop after 2006 – around 55% of the existing space is younger than 10 years. **Creating the city's own physical space/place for startups** is a priority.



## ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY

The city plans the creation of **accelerator programs** in which experienced experts and mentors help startups grow their business faster by providing advice on management, marketing, and finance. A **series of business meetings** were carried out in 2022 by the Centre for Urban Innovation-Urban Lab of Rzeszów City Hall (titled "Rzeszów StartUP MIX") – a total of 4 events ("Connect & Scale-Up", "With Business for Business", etc.) related to the startup environment, ending with the Final Gala, undertaken with several partners (i.e., the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, the Polish Information Technology Association, the Rzeszów branch of the National Clearing House, and the ISSA Poland Association). Continuing this initiative can build up a **cooperative – but still competitive – business culture** in the long term.

**Networking between universities and companies**, which allows the transfer of knowledge and technology from academia to business (which in turn can lead to the creation of startups based on the results of research), is another avenue towards **building a supporting community**.

# RZESZÓW – IAP FOCUS

To create an IAP for Rzeszów, it is essential to leverage the **insights gained from the TechRevolution 2.0 URBACT Transfer Network** – the plan should be viewed as an "evolution". Fortunately, the city already possesses valuable resources, such as the Centre for Urban Innovation Urban Lab and the Rzeszów Entrepreneurship Foundation. These existing assets should play a central role in developing the startup ecosystem.

Some possible focus areas are:

## ❑ **Collaboration and ecosystem building**

Foster collaboration between the various organizations offering business support services, develop an easy to access package for businesses, eliminate overlaps to use resources more efficiently

## ❑ **Regulatory and policy support**

Develop a startup friendly regulatory environment, streamlining procedures and reducing barriers to entrepreneurship

## ❑ **Physical hub for startups**

Support the Rzeszów Entrepreneurship Foundation in establishing a dedicated urban space for startups and creative industries, serving as a hub for innovation and collaboration

## ❑ **Pathway for startup development**

Create and manage a comprehensive support program for young entrepreneurs, offering mentorship, access to funding, and vital resources for business development

## ❑ **Talent attraction and retention**

Actively market Rzeszów as an attractive destination for talented individuals, highlighting its quality of life, cultural amenities, and professional opportunities

## ULG MEMBERS

<b>WSPiA University of Rzeszów</b> (Teresa Kubas-Hul)	
<b>Rzeszow University of Technology</b> (Jarosław Sęp)	
<b>Urban Innovation Center – Urban Lab</b> (Tomasz Skoczylas)	
<b>Department of City Brand, Economic Cooperation and Tourism</b> (Wojciech Jarosz)	
<b>University of Rzeszów</b> (Julia Rozmus)	Has a club for language startups
<b>Rzeszów Smart City</b> (Ewa Kubejko-Polańska)	Association promoting smart solutions
<b>Rzeszów FUA</b> (Damian Kosiarski)	Cooperation with municipalities nearby
<b>Rzeszów Regional Development Agency</b> (Mariusz Bednarz)	Supporting business development, organizer of the Carpathian Startup Fest
<b>Economic Development and Entrepreneurship</b> (Robert Homicki)	Building local business net and attracting new companies to the city
<b>Rafał Cencora</b>	URBACT TechRevolution 2.0 alumni
<b>Kamila Korab</b>	Lawyer helping NGOs with copyrights, etc.



# VARBERG – ABOUT THE CITY

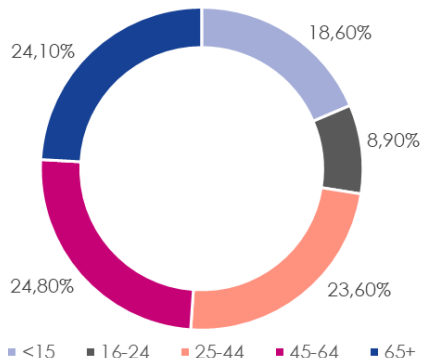


869 km<sup>2</sup>  
(24.61 km<sup>2</sup>)



67 800 citizens

## AGE DISTRIBUTION (population)



## MAIN SECTORS/INDUSTRIES



Tourism



Bicycles



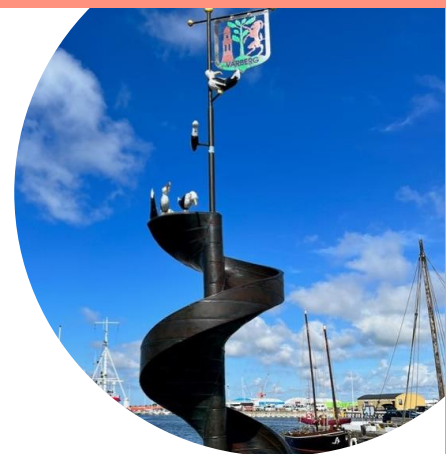
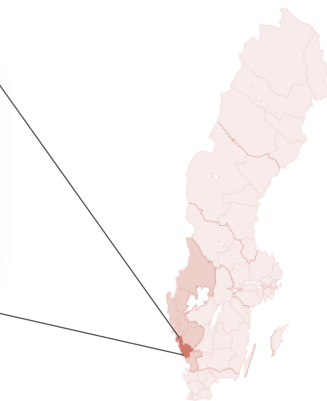
Shoes



Wood



Energy



## IMPORTANT FACTS



Super municipality of 2023 – awarded based on a national survey of Swedish municipalities



"Mecca" for surfers from all over the world – also famous for being a spa city



Lunarstorm, the first social media platform was invented here



Has the largest educational provider in the northern part of Halland: Campus Varberg (1,500-1,800 students)



High housing prices, but affordable student housing is available (during off-season)



Support for businesses and startups is present (i.e., incubator, business support organisations), but not intertwined

# VARBERG – CONTEXT

## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION – WORK

Varberg is a great city to live in and would therefore be an attractive city to work in if there were more jobs and/or companies that are considered attractive for a younger talent pool. The salaries and quality of jobs depends very much on sectors – private or public. There *are* working opportunities, but **Gothenburg has a wider range of jobs and companies.**

Other significant challenges:

- ❑ There are plenty of **accommodations** for students to rent during the off-season period, but since Varberg is considered a “summer city”, they usually have to move out **during the season** which makes it difficult to “build” a stable life there.
- ❑ The municipality struggles to keep in pace with the **rapid population growth** and the fact that the majority of those moving to the city are **65+ and retired**, affecting the welfare sector significantly.
- ❑ The value of Swedish krona and the **economic crisis** caused by the pandemic and the Russian-Ukraine war put a lot of tension **on the municipality’s development projects.**
- ❑ The **cultural offer** is very **seasonal**, with plenty of festivals, concerts, pop-up restaurants, etc. in the summer. The common opinion from students is that Varberg is a “dead” city in the winter, increasing the pull factor of Gothenburg even more.
- ❑ The **green areas** are mostly located outside the city centre; therefore, they can be **challenging to reach without a car.**

## BUSINESS/START-UP SUPPORT – POLICY LEVEL

The city went through an intense development phase which has led to a **“fat cat phenomenon”** – a feeling that there is no need to make any more effort. Also, there is **no true vision** for the city’s future – Varberg is characterized by **narrow perspectives**, a local outlook.

Nevertheless, a **flourishing business climate** is a prioritized focus area in the municipality’s strategic plan, but with **no local policies to support it.** Initiatives that support new entrepreneurs are scattered across organisations and there is **no common plan/policy coming from the city** to guide them.

The Lead Expert interview has also suggested that the **decision-makers are (1) not aware of the weaknesses** of the city when it comes to talent attraction and retention, or (2) simply **hesitant to publicly admit and talk about them.**

## ACCESS TO FINANCE

Varberg’s support system includes a few actors that can provide finance and capital to start-ups and companies that are planning on further growth. However, **young talents** in general **do not know where to turn to for finance and investment options for a business idea** – they lack awareness of the relevant local actors.

# VARBERG – CONTEXT



## ACCESS TO HUMAN CAPITAL

There is a common perception that it is **difficult to find competence in the area, especially in sectors such as IT** – many companies recruit new employees from abroad or from other regions. Universities that provide advanced education within this field are located in bigger cities and the graduates usually find a job there after finishing their studies.

The upper secondary school *Peder Skrivare* has a strong focus on entrepreneurship – the students can come up with a business idea and start a company, which is then liquidated after the school year. However, there is no system or plan in place for the students who would like to continue their work with their business or choose a career path as an entrepreneur – this is also applicable to the students at Campus Varberg.

There's a **great need to engage students in entrepreneurial activities during their studies** as well as to **strengthen the city's role as a mediator between businesses and students**.



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT

There are a lot of different actors to turn to for business support, however, their **communication efforts** to reach the target group might **not** be the most **efficient**. There is also a **gap between different parts of the support system and whom they target**. This gap needs to be bridged to provide a seamless experience.



## ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SPACES

Varberg has an **incubator** but **missing an arena for students to ideate and develop business ideas**. **Campus Varberg** has a unique and excellent location in the harbour, but it lacks the right environment and content to be relevant for both students after lessons and non-students (students usually leave the campus once their lecture is over). Moreover, the place **isn't considered an attractive meeting point**, many students mentioning it as a "dead spot" where they usually do not want to spend more time than necessary.



## ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY

There is an entrepreneurial spirit in the city, but younger talents might not know what possibilities and support are available to them. Students would especially **need a local arena/platform for ideation and business development**, and there are plenty of actors in Varberg who would like to be a part of creating this. However, this effort should not be a competition for other initiatives in the city, such as *Impact house* which has a clear focus on social entrepreneurship and is more of a co-working space than a fablab or maker space.

# VARBERG – IAP FOCUS

Varberg is a unique small town that offers excellent quality of life for its residents, but there is a range of challenges that need to be considered.

- ❑ Various **support services** are offered to prospective and existing entrepreneurs. However, this support system is fragmented, with some overlaps – it is important to have **better coordination** to offer services to businesses as a **coordinated package**.
- ❑ Varberg Campus is a great stop-gap solution for the lack of a higher education institute, but how can the city **compensate for the missing academic and science traditions and facilities**?
- ❑ How can an **enterprise hub** be created (linked to the Campus), that involves attractive physical space(s), events, support services that can function as a platform, bring closer entrepreneurs, small businesses and bigger companies, students, scientists and businesses to create a blooming entrepreneurial ecosystem?
- ❑ There is already an excellent entrepreneurial education, especially in the upper secondary school. How can the city build on this and **develop a clear pathway for students to continue and create their own real businesses**?

In addition to the entrepreneurial ecosystem, there are other aspects of talent attraction and retention the IAP needs to explore:

- ❑ How can **year-long** (not just off-season) **affordable housing** be offered to young people (students, entrepreneurs)?
- ❑ How can the negative impacts of **extreme seasonality** be mitigated?

As a **testing action**, Varberg organizes a **3-day coding hackathon** in cooperation with the local energy company. The challenge is to explore how the available data can be used to nudge a more sustainable lifestyle and reduce energy consumption. If successful, introduction of a regular programme will be considered.

## ULG MEMBERS

<b>Jon Skoglund</b>	Interested in building a co-working space for businesses in the city
<b>Jonas Gabrielsson</b>	Researcher at Halmstad University with the focus area of entrepreneurship and innovation
<b>Henrik Willstedt</b>	Local entrepreneur
<b>Johan Thorsson</b>	Local entrepreneur
<b>Linn Sidahl</b>	Manager at the local incubator
<b>Anders Hultén</b>	Project leader at Alexanderson institute
<b>Filip Zackrisson</b>	Chairman of Education & Labour Management Committee
<b>Johanna Schottenius</b>	Investor

## Students

# ALGHERO – ABOUT THE CITY

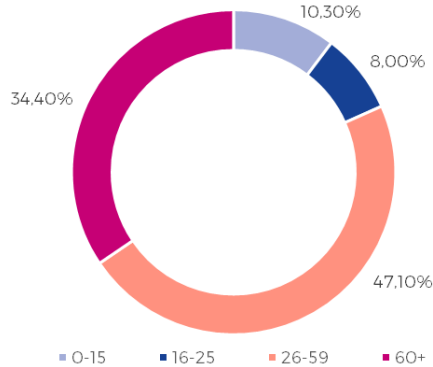


225.4 km<sup>2</sup>



43 534 citizens

## AGE DISTRIBUTION (population)



## MAIN SECTORS



Tourism



Culture



Agriculture  
& food



Forestry



Fishing



Construction



## IMPORTANT FACTS



Often called the "California of the Med"



"Easy access, connection to nature, and direct interaction with the sea."



3<sup>rd</sup> largest university town in Sardinia



Boasts educational institutions like the University of Sassari, the Academy of Fine Arts, and the University of Third Age



One of the main tourist destinations on the island, connected to the Italian mainland by the Fertilias airport



Sardinia (incl. Alghero) has the most pronounced growth of accommodation facilities in Italy

# ALGHERO – CONTEXT



## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION – WORK

Alghero's status as a **well-established tourist destination** – with the right strategy – can be leveraged to stimulate economic growth, creating new job opportunities.

However, the greatest challenge regarding the local labour market and economy is the **development of businesses that are not tourism-related and can last** outside the "holiday" season. Currently, the labour market is strongly affected by **seasonality**, dominated by seasonal contracts, and **wages are not competitive**.

The city – and the region – also **struggles with attracting investors**. Collaboration with higher (regional and national) levels is essential to position Alghero as an attractive investment destination. This entails the need to diversify the local economy, promote innovation, and create a business-friendly environment to draw investors.

Alghero boasts **educational institutions** like the University of Sassari and the Academy of Fine Arts. These institutions serve as **centres for knowledge, creativity, and talent development**.

Other significant challenges:

- ❑ Disproportionately high number of elderly residents, creating a demand for specialized services
- ❑ Infrastructure predominantly designed to accommodate cars, leading to traffic congestion and environmental concerns
- ❑ Unaffordable housing due to seasonality (i.e., tourism)



## BUSINESS/START-UP SUPPORT – POLICY LEVEL

A **shared strategic vision** of the city's growth and **promotion objectives** in making the city a welcoming ecosystem for start-ups and young companies is missing (excluding the field of tourism and related services). The city should develop a **comprehensive, long-term** vision for its future – **not excluding tourism** (and agriculture) **but still going beyond** those sectors.



## ACCESS TO FINANCE

There are **restrictions** that make the path to access funding **complicated**, and even when funding is obtained, there's **limited follow-up and support**, leading to struggles to survive and grow. **Ad hoc incentives** exist, focusing on young people, women, and disadvantaged groups.



## ACCESS TO HUMAN CAPITAL

Alghero should explore strategies to make the city more appealing to young professionals, including **addressing low salaries and the high cost of living** (offering competitive wages and affordable housing options). There's also an issue of **poor communication between supply and demand**, and a **misuse of available opportunities** (e.g., a lot of unpaid traineeship contracts that might be exploitative).

# [ALGHERO – CONTEXT



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT

Only a few institutions are active in this field.

- ❑ **Rumundu** – An incubator specialized in training responsible leaders by giving them the tools to be promoters of change and by supporting them in the development of sustainable projects
- ❑ **Training school for sustainable development and business creation** – A training school for young people aged between 18 and 30

There are several directions in which the city can move forward in the future with targeted business support.

- ❑ Encouraging the **development of modern industries that align with local values**, potentially focusing on niche markets that highlight the city's unique culture and heritage
- ❑ Exploring innovative service design concepts that **move beyond conventional tourism offerings** (e.g., establishing an "Airbnb of experiences").
- ❑ Supporting the establishment of new enterprises, potentially leveraging **special legislation for innovative startups**
- ❑ Collaborating with educational institutions to **promote arts & crafts in the context of entrepreneurship** (e.g., through co-working centres and maker spaces)



## ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SPACES

Very few public and private spaces in the city are dedicated to the incubation of ideas and social gathering. Fortunately, several re-development projects are currently ongoing to **make previously inaccessible spaces accessible** (e.g., the former cotton mill, the former Carabinieri barracks).

Developing spaces (and support systems) for young residents, students, and entrepreneurs is crucial to a thriving business ecosystem – **creating co-working spaces and innovation hubs** nurture a sense of community and encourage collaboration among locals and newcomers.



## ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY

There are public, private, academic and social institutions and enterprises active in the area, but it has proven to be very complicated to involve them in networking. To foster a thriving cultural scene and a dynamic community, the city should encourage community development and create **more events and networking opportunities for young entrepreneurs and artists**. These initiatives can create a vibrant and inclusive local entrepreneurial culture.

# [ALGHERO – IAP FOCUS

Based on the city visit and the self-assessment survey, the list below contains topics that are worthy to be explored further within the network and the IAP.

## ❑ **Creating an economic development vision of the city**

This process should involve participation from all stakeholders, including local authorities, residents, and businesses.

## ❑ **Organisational development** to create a:

❑ **Body** dedicated to supporting economic development and entrepreneurship (expanding the role of the Alghero Foundation, turning it from a tourism promotion organisation into a local economic development agency)

❑ **Group** of committed stakeholders working closely with the new agency to create the vision, develop the local economy and entrepreneurship

## ❑ **"Placemaking"**

There are various spaces owned by the city that could be (with modest investments) turned into places (e.g., incubators, co-working places, business support centres) that can be used by aspiring entrepreneurs and the local business community.

## ❑ **Reinventing and modernising traditional local activities** (tourism, agriculture, arts & crafts) using modern technologies, **while** still **maintaining the traditional values**

## ULG MEMBERS

City Council of Alghero – Strategic Planning and Programming Office	
<b>Youth Council of the Municipality</b>	Communication channel between youth and local institutions
<b>Aspal Sardinian Agency for Active Employment Policies</b>	Provision of employment services and the management of related policies
<b>Sassari Chamber of Commerce</b>	Supporting the competitiveness of enterprises
<b>University of Sassari</b>	Educational institution of high-quality
<b>Tamalacà</b>	Spin-off company supported by the University of Sassari
<b>Betools</b>	Consulting company with a focus on building integrated ecosystems
<b>Rumundu</b>	First permanent school in the Mediterranean for the innovators of the future



# ALYTUS – ABOUT THE CITY

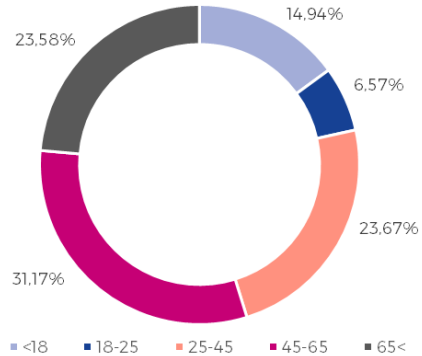


48 km<sup>2</sup>



53 478 citizens

## AGE DISTRIBUTION (population)



## MAIN SECTORS



Furniture



Textile



Rubber & plastic



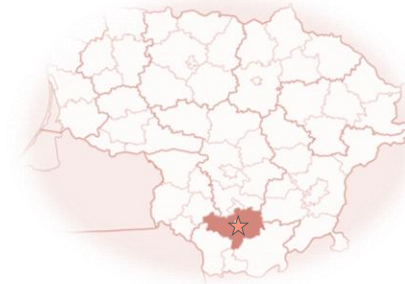
Chemicals



Electric equipment



Food & beverage



## IMPORTANT FACTS



Largest city in Dzūkija, considered the informal capital of the ethnographic region



More than a third of its urban area is occupied by green areas



Was named the "Sportiest City of the Country" in 2016



Family-oriented city, offering 35 educational institutions (15 kindergartens, 17 primary and high schools, 2 vocational schools and one college)



Almost 500 cultural events per year



Its URBACT TechRevolution 2.0 Transfer Plan was about the establishment of a one-stop shop & hub for business

# ALYTUS – CONTEXT



## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION – WORK

Alytus is characterized by a range of industries, from traditional sectors like glass manufacturing to modern ones like IT, ensuring economic resilience. **Low value-added businesses still dominate**, leading to low productivity, lack of quality jobs, and uncompetitive salaries.

The city's **commitment to STEAM education and entrepreneurship programs** in schools is commendable, including competitions and an expo of student companies (in which 100-150 students participate every year), exemplified by Junior Achievement. This reflects a **forward-thinking approach to skill development**.

However, Alytus **doesn't have a higher education institution**. Kaunas with an excellent Technology University is only one hour away, so young people from Alytus typically choose to study either there or in Vilnius – unfortunately, **many of them decide not to return after finishing their education**.

Other significant challenges:

- ❑ Not enough opportunities for recreation – no large shopping centres, high-quality restaurants, etc.
- ❑ Bad condition of commercial, public and residential buildings, needing renovation
- ❑ Complicated train connections with other parts of the country



## BUSINESS/START-UP SUPPORT – POLICY LEVEL

There is a strong political support behind both talent attraction & retention and business/startup support.

- ❑ 5 municipalities of the Alytus region prepared a **functional zone strategy for 2023-2029**, aiming to solve the problem of underutilized economic potential, low investment rates and low proportion of businesses with higher added value, with the ultimate goal of **increasing the number of better-paid and more diverse jobs** (among others).
- ❑ The **Alytus City Municipality Strategic Action Plan for 2023-2025** includes a specific goal (Goal 33.3) which is “*increasing the investment attractiveness of the city, promoting business development and international cooperation*”.



## ACCESS TO FINANCE

Banks (i.e., loans) and the available EU funds are **focused on already operating businesses**, not starting a new enterprise of startup.

# ALYTUS – CONTEXT



## ACCESS TO HUMAN CAPITAL

Education and training providers are flexible and responsive to the needs of businesses in the city.

In terms of encouraging entrepreneurship, there is exceptional entrepreneurial education in secondary schools, but **the city does not capitalize on the presence of talented young people with entrepreneurial skills and knowledge** – very few student entrepreneurs decide to continue their entrepreneurial career after school.



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT

There are **initiatives in place** to promote entrepreneurship in the city – most prominently the **establishment of an enterprise hub with relevant services** (see the upper section on the right).

Though the city has plans for economic diversification and enterprise development, many of the necessary conditions are either not in place yet or need improvement. The city's Transfer Plan prepared during the **URBACT TechRevolution 2.0** project has already mentioned a **need for a one-stop shop for businesses** – the city intends to follow up on the learnings from that network and continue the more **integrated structuring of locally available business support services**.



## ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SPACES

The city's Transfer Plan prepared during the URBACT TechRevolution 2.0 project also included **plans for a hub** in Alytus – the main purpose of which is providing **a co-working space that promotes talent attraction, networking, the creation of startups, and cooperation**.

In line with the **Alytus City Sustainable Development Strategy 2023-2029** (1.2. "Create and develop a favourable environment for business development" – 1.2.5. "Encouraging business development" through a reconstruction of a building, adapting co-working spaces for activities and providing services to businesses on a one-stop basis), the city secured funding and plans for an **Entrepreneurial Hub for innovation**, with the aim of offering opportunities for local businesses (new and old) to thrive in the future.



## ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY

Stakeholders perceive that **starting a business is not encouraged or promoted** – there is no strong entrepreneurial culture or network. They also miss more opportunities for existing businesses to have a **meaningful dialogue with local decision-makers about the city's future**.

# ALYTUS – IAP FOCUS

The following are preliminary recommendations for testing actions and focus areas:

## ❑ Entrepreneurship ecosystem building

The **future Entrepreneurial Hub** will provide a great starting point, a physical space, but the city needs to be more active in creating other aspects of a functional ecosystem – a network of local businesses, for example.

## ❑ Branding

Positioning Alytus as an attractive destination to work and live in requires the development of a **comprehensive branding strategy built on its unique offering**: an industrial city with excellent quality of life, especially for young families.

## ❑ Youth engagement

Young people in the city are open to voice their opinion/ideas, as well as to be part of shaping the city's future. **More** youth-oriented **events**, community gatherings, and **actively marketing existing events to enhance participation** would be important to facilitate their involvement while also increase their attachment to the local community.

## ❑ Talent attraction

Local decision-makers are committed to attracting and retaining talent. Yet, interventions are mostly one-off and not part of an integrated action plan. **Using a participatory approach to formulating a dedicated action plan for TAR** could offer an opportunity to mobilise and involve stakeholders more actively – especially young people.

## ❑ Expanding and diversifying cultural offerings

Providing **communal spaces** for various interest-based communities and encourage their operation would strengthen the local community.

## ❑ Remote work opportunities

An interesting option would be to explore the potential of Alytus as an **attractive hub for remote workers**, capitalizing on its exceptional quality of life and affordability. This would entail creating conditions conducive to remote work and promoting Alytus as an appealing residence for professionals employed in larger cities or even internationally.

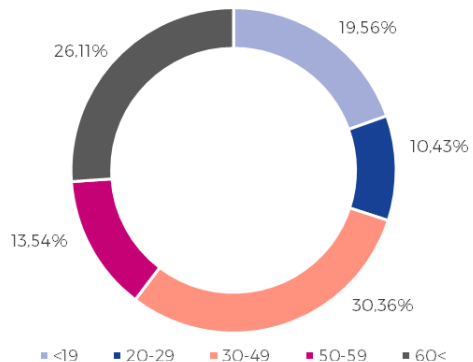
## ULG MEMBERS

<b>Alytus Municipality</b>	Mayor, Council, Business Development and Finance & Investment Departments
<b>Alytus Region Development Council</b>	Planning and coordinating the implementation of national regional policy
<b>Vilnius Chamber of Commerce (Alytus Branch)</b>	Improves the business environment
<b>Labour Force Institution</b>	Assesses and manages the situation of the Alytus workforce
<b>BNI Alytis</b>	Local business cooperation network
<b>“Spiecius” Cooperation Centre</b>	Co-working space with a package of services for start-ups
<b>Alytus College</b>	Regional higher education institution, a centre of applied research and culture
<b>Alytus Professional Training Centre</b>	Public institution providing vocational education and training
<b>Youth Council</b>	Deals with issues related to youth policy in the municipality

# NYÍREGYHÁZA – ABOUT THE CITY

 **274.5 km<sup>2</sup>**  **116 282 citizens**








## AGE DISTRIBUTION (population)



## MAIN SECTORS/PRODUCTS



## IMPORTANT FACTS

-  County capital of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg – 12 other settlements (5 cities and 7 villages) are adjacent to it
-  Its Sóstó forest is a Natura 2000 area, often called the "lungs of the city"
-  Average salaries and per capita GDP are lower than national average
-  Strong presence of multinational companies, including LEGO, MICHELIN, Hübner, Eissmann, and Contitech
-  Dynamic economic development is foreseen thanks to major new FDI projects in the automotive (EV) industry
-  Strong public-private partnership to improve employment and strengthen the local economy
-  Has a *Plan for the Attraction and Retention of Talented Young People* (developed within the framework of the *Interreg Danube TalentMagnet* project)

# NYÍREGYHÁZA – CONTEXT



## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION – WORK

Although unemployment in the city is at an all-time low (some sectors even face labour shortage), there are structural imbalances and job quality issues. Sectors with **low added-value activities** (e.g., food processing, plastic and rubber industry) dominate the economy, **limiting career opportunities**.

The proportion of jobseekers with a higher education degree is significantly higher in Nyíregyháza, than in the country or even the county. Additionally, the **average net salary** in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg is **significantly lower than the national average**.

A wide range of vocational training programmes are available in the city, including “dual” training courses (which provide both theoretical knowledge and practical job experience).

The city has a **university**, but currently it **does not offer sufficiently attractive opportunities**, so young people move to other cities – or even abroad – to study. The university does not have any programme and facilities to promote entrepreneurship.

On a more positive note, **businesses** (especially multinationals) **are open to the idea of improving the quality of jobs and developing a common place employer brand**.

Other significant challenges:

- ❑ Housing prices have increased drastically recently, leading to affordability problems for young people starting their career.
- ❑ Despite significant efforts, the city is not as vibrant as young people would expect, the supply of quality restaurants, bars, and shops is limited.



## BUSINESS/START-UP SUPPORT – POLICY LEVEL

Decision-makers (the Mayor, vice-mayors and the council) have long been **committed to local economic development and employment** – this is reflected in a range of initiatives and projects delivered in recent years (implementing an investment promotion strategy, setting up an economic development agency, etc.). A slow **shift from a sole focus on FDI promotion towards supporting local SMEs, building an entrepreneurship ecosystem and attracting/retaining talent** can also be experienced in the past 2 years. Now the challenge is to **translate this commitment into specific policies and actions**.



## ACCESS TO FINANCE

**“Traditional” funding options** are available (like bank loans, microloans, and EU grants). The **Nyíregyháza City Fund** provides capital between 30 million and 1 billion HUF for 12 years for business development (with an overall limit of 5 billion), but **the municipality hasn’t got sufficient budget to provide truly diversified options for multiple target groups** (existing businesses, startups, new companies, etc.). Overall, access to finance is inadequate and there are **no valid options for the more “risk-averse” entrepreneurs** (e.g., non-refundable loans and other guarantees to lower the chances of bankruptcy – and increase survival rate).

# NYÍREGYHÁZA – CONTEXT



## ACCESS TO HUMAN CAPITAL

In addition to the decreasing attractiveness of the local university (leading to labour shortages in certain high-level professions), entrepreneurship education is at an early stage in the city – **initiatives are usually ad-hoc and don't last/continue**. Young people lack confidence in their ability to succeed, but also lack the necessary knowledge (e.g., business planning) and skills (e.g., risk-taking) to undertake self-employment (or even regular employment) confidently.



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT

Nyíregyháza has made significant progress in promoting economic development in recent years. Thanks to learnings and inspirations from previous URBACT projects, the city now has a dedicated economic development agency – the **Nyíregyháza Urban Development and Industrial Park Nonprofit Ltd.** This organization has been extremely **successful in attracting FDI**, and now they intend to **dedicate more capacities to supporting SMEs** and starting entrepreneurs.

Although there are other organisations offering business support services (e.g., the Chamber of Commerce), such **services are fragmented**, not coordinated and often **fail to address the real challenges** most businesses face.

Any **dedicated support** for startup enterprises is **absent** in the city. Overall, despite recent improvements Nyíregyháza is still a long way from having a vibrant business – and especially startup – ecosystem.



## ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SPACES

Nyíregyháza has a **Technology Transfer Centre** (established by renovating the former command building of abandoned army barracks.) The nearly 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, 2-storey building offers the opportunity for organizing events and trainings but **does not function as a hub for local businesses**. The city also has a business incubator established in the 90s, but today it functions as a simple office building. **Absent are facilities dedicated to starting businesses**, offering a combination of space and support.



## ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY

The local economy is characterized by an interesting **duality**: there are a small number of **multinational businesses using modern practices**, building attractive company culture, and there are numerous **traditional SMEs that fail to adapt to the changing environment**. There is an urgent **need to help the modernization of these SMEs**. Equally **absent** are meaningful professional **networks – community – of businesses**. There are some initiatives, but **more emphasis should be put on content, exchange, and mutual learning**.

# NYÍREGYHÁZA – IAP FOCUS

Nyíregyháza has gone through a remarkable journey in terms of business support and investment promotion measures in the last 10 years, but – based on the stakeholder interviews during the city visit and the self-assessment survey – there's still a lot to do.

## ❑ Promote entrepreneurship culture by developing a program of networking events, meetups, and information sessions

Existing businesses have regular community events, but testing the possibility of an **event series** that are truly open to not just long-standing, but also new businesses and entrepreneurs would enable their mutual dialogue and possibly even cooperation – developing the concept and organizing the first events could be small scale testing actions within C4TALENT.

## ❑ Create a detailed concept of a startup incubator

The Technology Transfer Centre and the Industrial Park organization operating in it made significant progress in terms of attracting large investors to Nyíregyháza – **catalysing the creation of new businesses, especially startups**, and working as a **hub for knowledge, innovation and meetings** is the next step forward.

## ❑ Design and launch an entrepreneurship program (training and support) at the university

Turning the ad-hoc events that have been implemented already (design thinking trainings for business planning, hackathons, pitch competitions, etc.) into actual **curriculum** (either a course that is mandatory – at least for certain fields of study – or one that students can be signed up on for extra credit)

## ❑ Develop and promote an employer place brand for the city

Combining the promotion of Nyíregyháza as an **attractive place to live and work** (similarly to the *Co-branding Talent Attraction Toolbox* good practice of Copenhagen), building a common employer brand of local businesses

## ULG MEMBERS

Municipality of Nyíregyháza	
Nyíregyháza Industrial Park Nonprofit Ltd	Local investment promotion & business support activities
Nyíregyháza Employment Pact	Partnership of regional actors
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Government Office – Department for Employment	
University of Nyíregyháza, Vocational Education Centre	Input regarding entrepreneurship education
Chamber of Commerce and Industry	County level self-government organisation of the entrepreneur community
PRIMOM Business Development Foundation	County level business support organization
Digital Makerspace	Educational space, open workshop
National Association of Young Entrepreneurs	Internationally recognized expert organization, trading in know-how
MUSTÁRHÁZ Youth Information and Counselling Office	Contact point between the network and talents
Student Mayor's Office	
Youth Roundtable	Interest group and conciliation forum

Local businesses



# PIRAEUS – ABOUT THE CITY

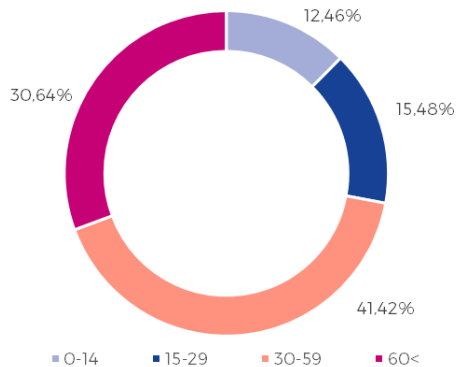


10.9 km<sup>2</sup>



168 151 citizens

## AGE DISTRIBUTION (population)



## MAIN SECTORS/INDUSTRIES



Engineering



Maritime



Chemicals



Automotive



## IMPORTANT FACTS



6<sup>th</sup> largest city in the country, situated approximately 12 kilometres southwest of Athens



Sometimes called the "Greek Manchester"



University of Piraeus includes the country's 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest business school and the oldest academic department dedicated to the study of finance



Its port is the largest in Greece – the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest passenger port in Europe



Hosted events in the 1896 and 2004 Summer Olympics (held in Athens)



*Blue Growth Piraeus* – an EU level innovation competition for the maritime economy – was selected as an URBACT Good Practice

# PIRAEUS – CONTEXT



## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION – WORK

Piraeus has been undergoing significant developments in recent years. The municipality has established **Piraeus Plus**, the Development Company of Piraeus, responsible for planning and implementing urban development projects – this enables the city to act faster, be more flexible and more effective. Besides planning, fund-raising and management support for infrastructure projects, Piraeus Plus has important activities related to tourism as well, with the main goal of diversifying the local economy.

The city has a **prestigious university** with 2 campuses, offering European studies, Informatics, Tourism, Banking and Finance courses in high quality due to the competence of tutors. The university also has a cooperation and placement programme with businesses.

In terms of income, **the only industry that provides competitive salaries is shipping.**

Other significant challenges:

- ❑ The city's local mobility system is still excessively car-oriented (which also affects air quality negatively).
- ❑ The building stock is old and needs renovation. This, combined with the fact that Piraeus is land-(and sea-)locked and has limited space for expansion, negatively affects housing availability – costs are high and increasing.
- ❑ Green spaces, parks are very scarce: most residents don't have easy access to greenery in the proximity of their home.



## BUSINESS/START-UP SUPPORT – POLICY LEVEL

Piraeus' **Integrated Territorial Development Strategy** (funded by EU Structural funds) includes several actions aimed at developing the local business ecosystem, e.g., supporting start-ups and innovation entrepreneurship (supporting local businesses by improving their operations, helping their growth and enhancing their competitiveness); establishing a Business Support Centre (providing information and useful tools for business planning, marketing, and networking).



## ACCESS TO FINANCE

Piraeus has a **powerful Chamber of Commerce** and helps entrepreneurs to find financial help from banks or other institutions (e.g., ones financed by the state) as well. In addition, the city has offered **non-refundable grants** for businesses during the height of COVID to aid their survival. There are also more **targeted funds for specific business operation areas** (e.g., providing funds for shops to build their own websites).

# PIRAEUS – CONTEXT



## ACCESS TO HUMAN CAPITAL

There is a good relationship between the municipality and the University of Piraeus. In addition, a lot of businesses send applications to acquire students from there for internships. However, it seems that the **university** is slightly **disconnected from the local community** and positions itself more as an independent academic organisation, and less as a part of the local ecosystem. While it could be a great source of potential entrepreneurs (especially considering the current training offer), there is a notable **absence of entrepreneurship training**, with only a formal process to support start-up ideas.



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT

The city is home to the **Blue Lab** (run by Piraeus Plus), a hub offering a range of services, including seminars on how can businesses improve their everyday operations with digital technologies. The **StartUPiraeus Support Centre** was launched in 2021, aiming to set up an official organization that offers consulting services for accelerating “blue innovation” in the city.

However, the **results are not yet visible** – there are no inspiring success stories, good examples, or even a simple system of tracking and measuring results. The Development Company also faces a **challenge in engaging local businesses**, particularly family-owned enterprises, in utilizing support services due to their **reluctance to adopt modern advisory services**.

Although the local business support organisations know of each other and communicate regularly, there is **no clear distribution of work/responsibilities** – sometimes **services overlap**.



## ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SPACES

The previously mentioned **Support Centre** has a relatively central location, covering 400 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, offering meeting rooms, workstations with full office equipment, and a reception area to startup businesses. There is also a **Circular Economy Maker Space** in one of the less developed neighbourhoods of Piraeus, supported by the Horizon 2020 Pop Machina programme – they want to turn the whole area into mixed-use, incorporating residential functions, factories, small businesses, etc. (based on the 15-minute city concept).



## ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY

A significant challenge highlighted here is the **perceived lack of innovative ideas within the community**. This cultural and community problem poses a barrier to the growth of a vibrant startup ecosystem in Piraeus.

Additionally, there is a **need for a stronger connection between different stakeholders**, including banks, startups, the Chamber of Commerce, and the university. Facilitating collaboration and communication among these entities could enhance the overall entrepreneurial community.

# PIRAEUS – IAP FOCUS

## Nurturing entrepreneurial culture/cultural shift

Piraeus has a cultural challenge when it comes to entrepreneurship development. There is a need to **inspire people** with ideas **to** take some informed risks and **pursue a career as entrepreneurs**. On the other hand, while the city has many **traditional** small (family-owned) **businesses**, many of these have not changed their ways of running a business for decades. While keeping traditional values is important, not using innovative solutions will inevitably lead to their drastic decline. **Helping them to implement a cultural shift** offers a great potential and can save many of them from eventual failure.

## Integrating the university in the local entrepreneurship ecosystem more effectively

The university has a real potential to become a hub for startups. However, this requires the introduction of **entrepreneurship education in the curricula**, moreover, the university should actively **encourage the creation of startups**. This could be built on a stronger cooperation with the already existing business support organisations in the city: together, they could **build a pathway for entrepreneurial-minded students and lecturers**.

## Bridging stakeholders

Establishing a platform or initiative to bridge different stakeholders and service providers by creating a network that facilitates collaboration might be a good idea, with the ultimate goal of encouraging dialogue and partnerships, eliminating overlaps, and increasing efficiency.

## Engaging the community more effectively

This means continuing the efforts to enhance community engagement through the Blue Lab and Maker Space, but also promoting collaboration with local businesses, schools, and residents to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

## Tracking and promoting achievements

This can be achieved by building a system of tracking individual entrepreneurial successes as well as city-wide results of economic development and business support, followed by their **promotion through storytelling**. The target groups here should be decision-makers to increase their commitment, and potential entrepreneurs to inspire and encourage them.

## ULG MEMBERS

University of Piraeus	Contributes to the research and development of innovative solutions
University of West Attica	
Maritime Cluster	Represents companies related to the shipping industry
Representatives of the government and the authorities	Governance
Residents and Communities	Help identify and develop local talent by shaping environments
Businesses (startups & SMEs)	Linked to the creation of an enabling environment
Trade Associations	Enhance the competitiveness of local businesses
AOPSI Group of Companies	Providing services to businesses and organizations in the private & public sector
Worldwide Industrial & Marine Association	Innovative network of certified maritime companies
Piraeus Port Authority	Information about the entrepreneurship of shipping industry

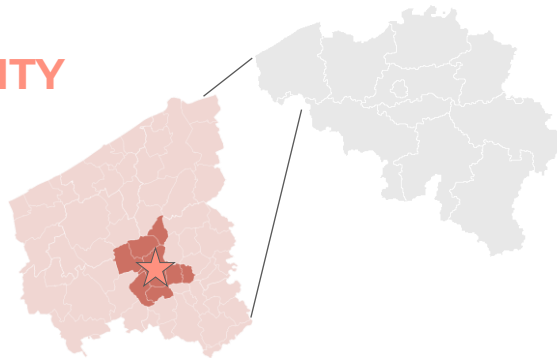
# ROESELARE – ABOUT THE CITY



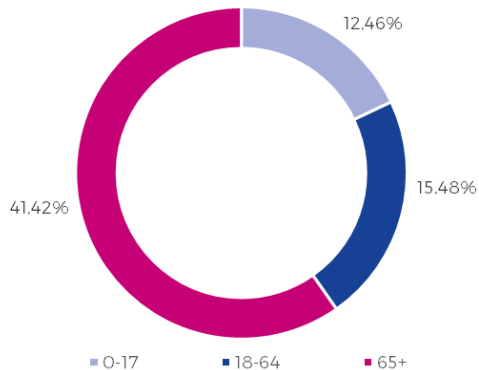
60.4 km<sup>2</sup>



65 381 citizens



## AGE DISTRIBUTION (population)



## MAIN SECTORS/PRODUCTS



Metal



Construction



Buses



Snacks



Cereals



Pasta

**F O O D**

## IMPORTANT FACTS

- Located in the heart of West-Flanders province, a region with 250,000 inhabitants
- Leading partner within the intercommunal cooperation called *Midwest*
- Proportion of residents with a non-Belgian origin is 20.5%
- Home to the Rodenbach brewery, noted for its barrel-aged sour beers in the Flemish red style
- Its city hall, market hall, and belfry are classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site
- Houses a campus of the University of Applied Sciences Vives which organizes nursery, agro- and biotechnology courses

# ROESELARE – CONTEXT



## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION – WORK

Roeselare's agri-food ecosystem – including the Food Valley initiative, Auction House, Agrotopia, and the Rodenbach Brewery – offers **economic diversity** and innovation opportunities related to the **food industry**, while the private hospital located in Roeselare – with its strong R&D and innovation capacity – offers great potential for developments and entrepreneurial activities in the **healthcare sector**.

Startups in the city have a **high surviving rate**.

Overall, **quality jobs** are available, but the **salaries are lower** than in Leuven and Mechelen, for example.

Roeselare houses a campus of the University of Applied Sciences Vives which organizes agro- and biotechnology education (among others), but **the city does not have a general university**. Therefore, Roeselare faces **challenges in retaining individuals who leave for education**, impacting the pool of local talent.

Other significant challenges:

- ❑ Although actual criminality is low, there's a perceived decrease in safety, influencing the city's appeal.
- ❑ Direct train connections with the rest of the country are underdeveloped.
- ❑ Recreation and entertainment options for youth are limited.



## BUSINESS/START-UP SUPPORT – POLICY LEVEL

There is **awareness about the topic** since it is mentioned in the (recently actualized) PRO-plan, Plan Roeselare Entrepreneurship. This includes goals, and small steps are made but there is still a lot of work to do, however, right now this topic is **not high on the municipality's agenda**.

The **lack of an integral approach** in collaborating with innovative businesses to create conditions in which entrepreneurs can flourish is also a prevalent problem.



## ACCESS TO FINANCE

Currently, entrepreneurs in Roeselare can find finance opportunities quite easily, mainly via the "usual", traditional ways (e.g., bank loans, grants). However, **innovative ways of investments** – like the availability of angel investors – **are missing**.



## ACCESS TO HUMAN CAPITAL

The pool of local talent/skilled labour is limited in Roeselare – there is **labour shortage** in general and even more in the case of highly skilled people. The city and the intermunicipal community are highly aware of this problem.

# ROESELARE – CONTEXT



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT

There are a lot of options regarding business support in the city by different organisations, but **the overall support system is fragmented**. Startups express a **need for a more cohesive and clearer offer** to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship, and for **one-on-one advice** (something like a one-stop-shop).



## ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SPACES

There is a limited number of "classic" co-working spaces, and even those lack a strong community within. However, the facilities are there: in particular, **Huis vd Voeding** has a lot of potential (including a restaurant) – it could be **scaled up and combined with a start-up hub and co-working spaces** (with or without a sectoral focus like the food industry). Overall, there is a need for both **space and a programme in which the city can integrate existing offers** (as per the previous paragraph).

Small retailers especially struggle with surviving – **co-housing shops** and **getting inspiration from shopping street examples from other cities** might be a worthwhile direction to explore during the C4TALENT project.



## ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY

Initiatives like the **RSL Post** (a community and maker space), the **Huis van de Voeding** (a co-working space), and the **ARHus Knowledge Centre** are all full of innovative practices that demonstrate a commitment to fostering community engagement and offering support to businesses. These provide great foundations for future initiatives aimed at attracting and retaining talent.

Roeselare has recently started a process to **develop a comprehensive city brand**, emphasizing the unique blend of historical significance and potential for innovation. This process and its results could effectively support/complement the talent attraction and retention efforts, as well as the development of a start-up support ecosystem and community.

# ROESELARE – IAP FOCUS

Roeselare is quite advanced as a local authority – having a vision, clear plans for thematic strategy, and a branding initiative.

Key conclusions and recommendations are the following:

## ❑ Startup Support Hub

- ❑ Establish a **centralized startup support hub**, integrating existing initiatives like the PRO Plan and the Start&Go program. This hub could provide **a one-stop-shop** for startups, offering networking events, mentorship, and resources.
- ❑ **Leverage existing platforms** like the Smart City Community and the Community of Entrepreneurs to build a robust entrepreneurial community

## ❑ Revitalize spaces

- ❑ **Transform Huis van de Voeding into a vibrant hub** for startups and growing businesses by addressing location challenges and offering more targeted support
- ❑ Encourage **creative use of spaces**, potentially exploring partnerships with businesses for utilizing meeting rooms and event spaces

## ❑ Education and talent retention

- ❑ Develop **programs to encourage students who leave for education to return**, emphasizing the unique period of development the city is undergoing
- ❑ Foster partnerships with educational institutions to **better align curriculum with the city's economic priorities**, encouraging students to see Roeselare as a place for career growth

## ULG MEMBERS

University of Applied Sciences Vives	Small campus
University of Applied Sciences Howest	Has its own start-up school
Intermunicipal Cooperation Midwest	Cooperation of multiple municipalities with a socio-economic action plan
Intermunicipal Cooperation WVI	Cooperation of 54 municipalities
POM West-Vlaanderen	Provincial agency of West-Flanders
Student associations	Map the needs and feelings of students
High schools	Contact with the young talents who are about to leave the city to go study somewhere else
ARhus	Centre for knowledge, innovation and meeting

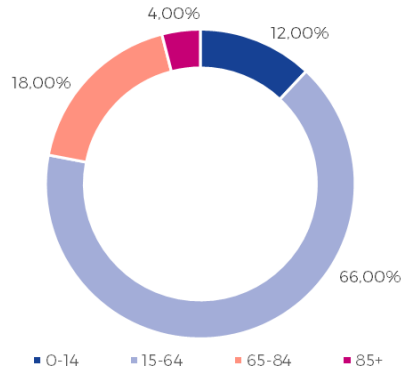
(Young) entrepreneurs



# VILANOVA – ABOUT THE CITY

 **33.99 km<sup>2</sup>**  **69 439 citizens**

## AGE DISTRIBUTION (population)



## MAIN SECTORS/INDUSTRIES



Metal



Textile



Tourism



Chemicals



Fishing



## IMPORTANT FACTS

-  Capital city of Garraf comarca, situated 40 km south-west of Barcelona
-  Joined the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy in 2016
-  3<sup>rd</sup> largest port of Catalonia – a major fishing port as well
-  30.37% of employed people are between 30 and 44 years of age
-  Famous for embracing new technologies – has both a vocational and traditional university
-  Has a Public Innovation Agency for ICT, the multimedia sector, creativity, and entrepreneurship (called Neàpolis) – part of the European Network of Living Labs

# VILANOVA – CONTEXT

## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION – WORK

Vilanova faces significant challenges in the realm of quality employment. The city's **focus on low-quality sectors**, primarily tourism and services, limits the availability of jobs with a higher added value.

The city boasts a **supportive business/start-up environment** with disruptive elements promoting alternative economic sectors such as digital and creative industries – the presence of Neàpolis (a public innovation agency) facilitates this.

A variety of **educational and training options** exist in the city, though they **tend to be low in specialization and not aligned with the knowledge-based economy**.

High-quality, specialized training is often followed by an exodus of skilled individuals from the city – efforts are needed to retain local talent and foster lifelong learning.

Other significant challenges:

- ❑ High living costs due to proximity to Barcelona – access to housing, especially for young professionals, has become a pressing issue in the city
- ❑ Shortcomings concerning train services, primarily due to reliability issues
- ❑ Green spaces lack the quality they deserve - there's need for a more determined policy aimed at improving maintenance and, most importantly, establishing a comprehensive plan for deploying an interconnected green network.

## BUSINESS/START-UP SUPPORT – POLICY LEVEL

The city is making significant strides in fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, including specific programs and initiatives, such as the **Campus of Disruptive Entrepreneurship** for advanced digital entrepreneurship and the **VNGInnova** program for the digital transformation of businesses. However, the city lacks a **clear strategy** and a **structured methodology** to support businesses/startups.

## ACCESS TO FINANCE

Neàpolis is actively addressing this issue, but the city currently lacks a **specific support program or accompanying measures to facilitate access to financing** through the local administration. Retaining entrepreneurs and startups can be challenging due to the initial **bureaucratic burden and lack of support for new companies**.

## ACCESS TO HUMAN CAPITAL

The **University** Polytechnic of Catalonia (UPC) does not yet have a **clear vision** for the future, or a **strong identity/USP** – it cannot compete with the higher education institutions in Barcelona. **Building stronger links between academia, industry, and talent** is a crucial priority.

# VILANOVA – CONTEXT



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT

Currently, there is **no specific municipal program** addressing this. However, Neàpolis is actively spearheading initiatives like the previously mentioned Campus for Disruptive Entrepreneurship and VNGInnova.

These dedicated efforts are designed to equip businesses with the latest advancements, such as AI, cybersecurity, and IoT, through collaborations with key local partners like the Garraf Business Federation and the Node Garraf Agency. By providing advice, mentoring, training, and technical support, the goal is to nurture a vibrant environment for business growth and innovation.

While these endeavours are promising, there is room for the city to **develop more comprehensive and dedicated programs** to bolster business support services, offering practical training, mentoring, and other crucial resources for aspiring entrepreneurs and established enterprises.

Moreover, young entrepreneurs need **more integrated ecosystems, human connections, and support systems**, including **access to expensive equipment, specialized knowledge, and networking opportunities**.



## ACCESS TO PHYSICAL SPACES

**Neàpolis**, the city's primary hub for promoting entrepreneurship and business innovation, plays a crucial role in providing access to physical workspaces. However, while a great and unique asset, it **lost focus and became disconnected from the local community**, as well as from the local decision-makers. It also has a slight “identity crisis” and suffers from **shortage of human resources**. The team has too many things to do, and a pressure to get funding, which sometimes prevents them from focusing on what's really important. There is **no capacity for developing the local business community**.



## ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY

The city of Vilanova, as well as the Garraf region, has a rich ecosystem of entities related to young talent, innovative business, and disruptive entrepreneurship. Despite this “wealth”, there are **coordination gaps** and potential resource loss due to each entity pursuing its interests **without a systemic perspective**. Neàpolis is actively **promoting the training of thematic working groups** to further enhance a sense of community and cooperation.

# VILANOVA – IAP FOCUS

Vilanova's strengths lie in its location, tourism appeal, cultural heritage, and the presence of Neàpolis, promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. Its main challenges include education, talent attraction, competition from larger cities, and a lack of a clear vision for the future.

## Recommendations

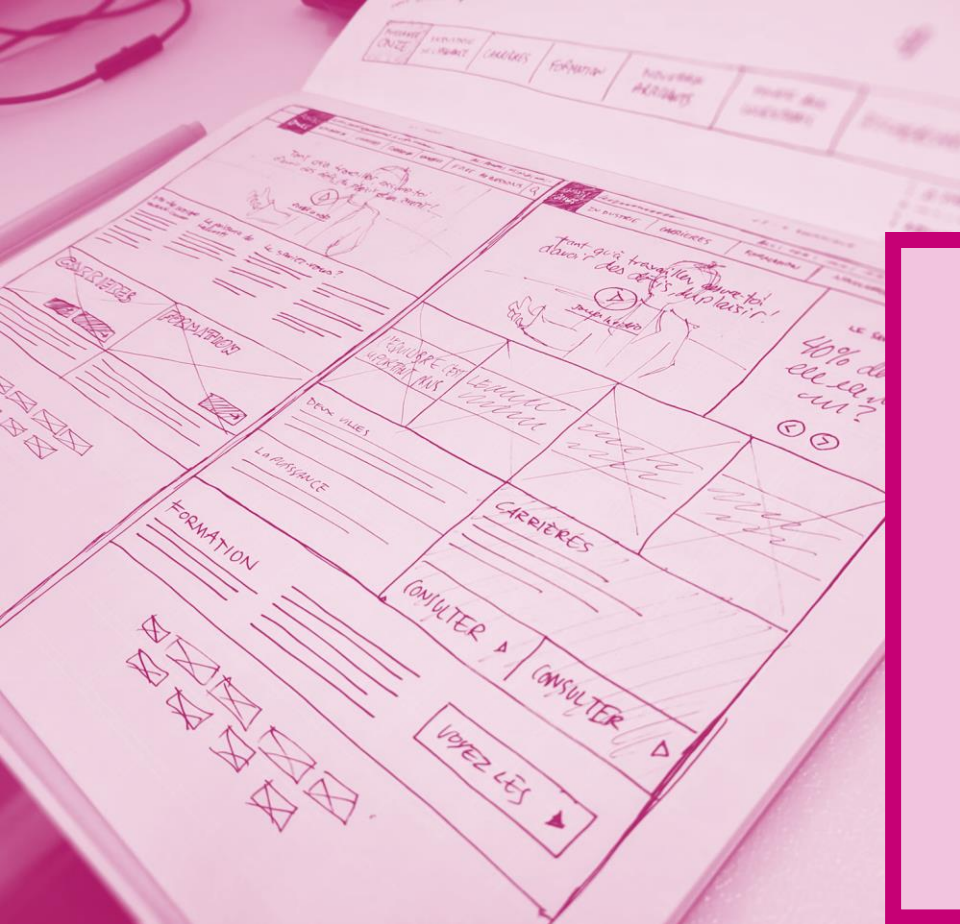
- ❑ Promote educational opportunities and retain young talent through improved pay and support for research groups
- ❑ Encourage local businesses and entrepreneurs by reducing bureaucratic hurdles and providing support, especially in the early stages
- ❑ Support the University Polytechnic of Catalonia in developing a clear vision and stronger relationships with companies
- ❑ Develop more comprehensive resources and networks for young entrepreneurs, such as entrepreneurship programs, financing, mentoring, and specialized knowledge
- ❑ Foster an integrated ecosystem for startups, offering access to resources, space, and networking opportunities to facilitate growth and collaboration

Based on these, **possible focus areas** for the IAP development are centred around **the evolution of Neàpolis:**

- ❑ Sharpen the **vision and focus**
- ❑ **Creative uses of available spaces** – establishing new functions, bringing it closer to the local community (inviting residents, children, people), **making it a vibrant meeting point** for the local (entrepreneurial and wider) community
- ❑ **Create a narrative and stories** around it that are more accessible for the local community and decision-makers
- ❑ **Establish a clear path/journey** for aspiring entrepreneurs to support their development at different stages

## ULG MEMBERS

<b>Polytechnic School of Vilanova i la Geltrú, Polytechnic University of Catalonia</b>	Part of the local creative and technology community
<b>Business Federation of the Great Penedès</b>	Grassroots organization representing the business community
<b>Development Agency NODE GARRAF</b>	Consortium of public administrations and social agents for economic activity
<b>Garraf County Council</b>	Regional council to implement projects to revitalize the labour market
<b>Municipal Institute of Education and Work (IMET)</b>	Public organization in charge of the management and training of professional education and work
<b>Municipal School of Art and Design (EMAID)</b>	Public organization for arts and design education, specializes in video games and media
<b>Immersive Experience Lab, Creative Lab and 5G Lab</b>	Collaborating with Neàpolis in AI, IoT, XR, etc.
<b>Startups from the Campus of Disruptive Entrepreneurship</b>	Ongoing program for creating startups
<b>Youth Office Garraf (TOC)</b>	Supports the creation of youth associations and groups



# WORKPLAN

Synthesis

Methodology

Roadmap



# WORKPLAN

Synthesis

Methodology

Roadmap

# COMPLEX THEMATIC FOCUS

The C4TALENT project has a unique combination of policy themes. On the one hand, our partners are dedicated to improving the entrepreneurship ecosystem and fostering optimal conditions for starting and growing businesses. Consequently, their journey is a **deep dive into understanding the fundamental components of a thriving entrepreneurial environment**. This includes a **critical assessment** of their local context in relation to these components, **pinpointing key obstacles, and formulating targeted strategies** to overcome these obstacles.

This is a very specific thematic focus. Ultimately, though, all C4TALENT partners share the **overarching objective of combatting brain drain and nurturing the attraction and retention of talent** within their cities. This provides a broader context and means that by cultivating a competitive entrepreneurship ecosystem, they aspire to contribute to talent attraction and retention.

However, in the realm of talent attraction and retention,

*an exceptional entrepreneurship ecosystem, though very important, represents only one vital ingredient of a “talent-friendly” city.*

As outlined in Section 1 of the Baseline Study, there is a range of diverse factors at play. Even if a city builds the world’s best entrepreneurship ecosystem, the absence of other attraction factors will likely impede the retention of talented individuals and/or their willingness to return.

This complex thematic focus carries a number of implications for the network methodology and project implementation:

- ❑ It makes the APN journey even more **intense** – partners need to **consider a range of different aspects at each step** of the learning and action planning process.
- ❑ The **exchange and learning activities** need to be designed in a way that they provide valuable insights, knowledge and useful good **practices across both network sub-themes**.
- ❑ This complexity ensures that the **integrated approach** is not just an afterthought, but an integral aspect that is “automatically” present from the very first moment of the project.

# CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS

As partner cities collaborate on shared policy themes, the diverse nature of their specific local challenges calls for tailored solutions, as **there is no one-size-fits-all approach**. To gain a comprehensive understanding of both commonalities and distinctions, and to establish a practical work plan, we employed a **standardized questionnaire** to collect information from our partners.

Section 1 of this survey – *Key general data and information* – included questions about the cities' geography and location, demography (population size and changes over time, age and gender distribution), economy and labour market (main sectors and their performance, number of enterprises, unemployment rate, youth unemployment, average annual income, etc.), and environment (climate goals).

Section 2 covered local strategies and actions specific to the network's themes – attracting and retaining talent, and developing the local business/startup ecosystem.

In addition to providing data about the city context in the first two sections, partners undertook a **detailed self-assessment**, evaluating various aspects on a scale of 1 to 6 (1 being very poor, and 6 being excellent). Each score was accompanied by a succinct narrative justification.

Subsequently, the Lead Expert reviewed these assessments, making slight adjustments if deemed necessary, based on insights gathered during city visits.

The assessment covered the following thematic aspects:

- ❑ The current status of the city **regarding the main talent attraction and retention factors** (based on the frame of reference presented earlier);
- ❑ The current status of **the city's entrepreneurship ecosystem** (based on the model presented in Section 1).

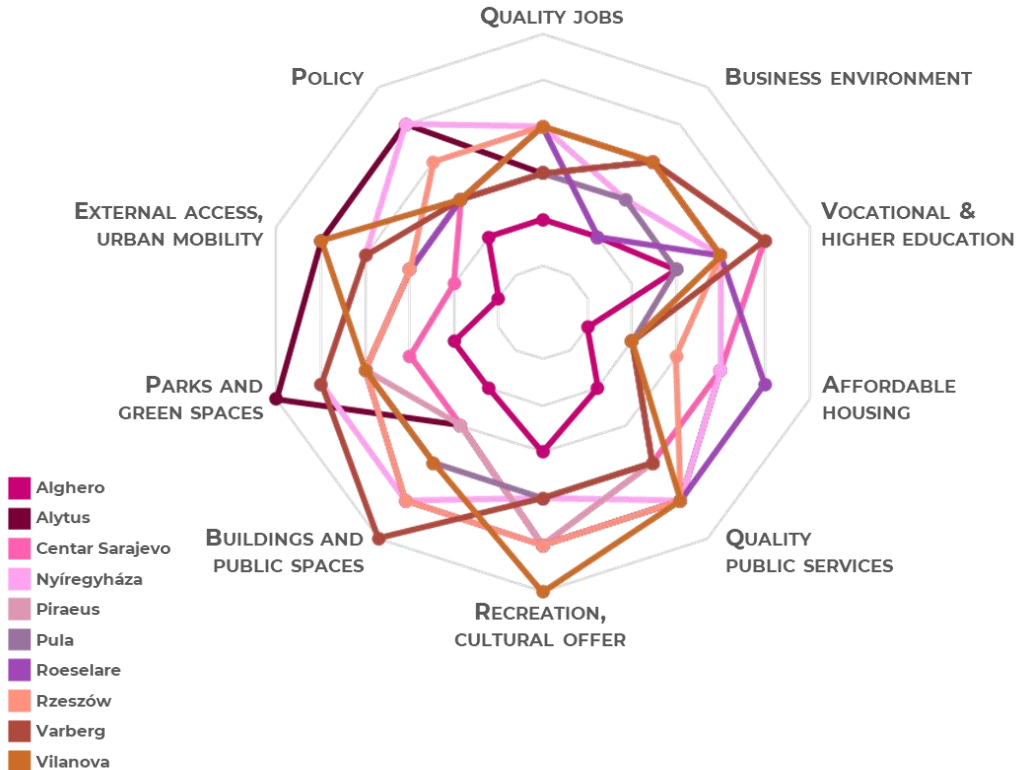
While acknowledging that these results do not constitute definitive evidence, they offer a valuable snapshot of each partner's perception of the current situation, highlighting main challenge areas. This information is instrumental in identifying opportunities for collaboration and fostering bilateral or trilateral learning.

Overall, these assessments provide essential inputs for crafting a work plan that not only addresses shared challenges but also tackles the distinctive local issues faced by each partner.

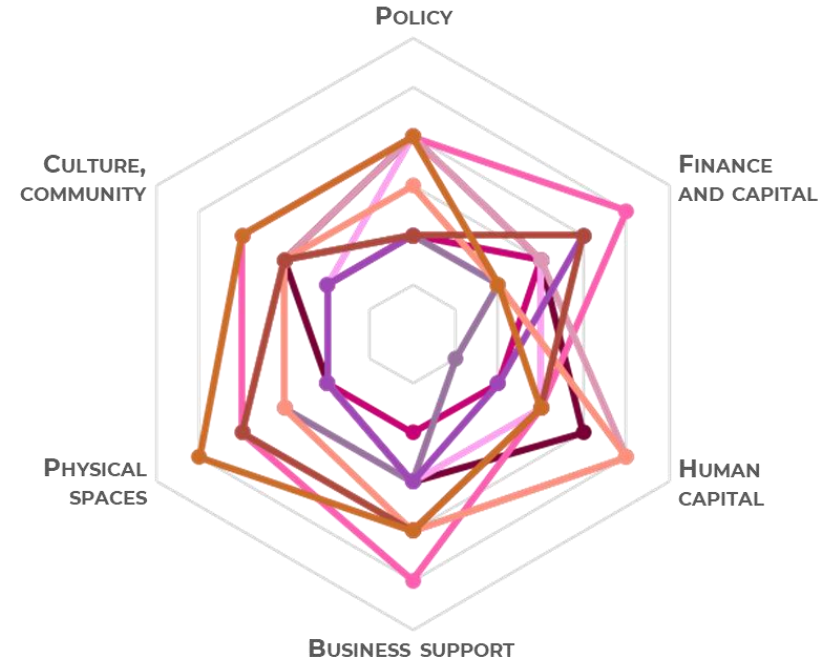


# CITY SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION



## BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM



# TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

Reviewing the summary table of TAR factors, several key conclusions emerge:

- ❑ **Overall:** Partner cities generally stand out as desirable places to live, offering an attractive environment and many important conditions for a high quality of life.
- ❑ **WORK:** While the job quality and labour market situation is not dire, there is definitely room for improvement. Issues include **lower salaries** compared to neighbouring economic centres or even to national average (most partners), a **mismatch between labour market demand and supply, talent shortages** in knowledge economy businesses, prevalence of **lower-value jobs**, and **seasonality** in employment (particularly in more tourist-centric cities). Vocational and higher education are generally deemed good, although most partners mentioned that **the educational system is slow to react** to the quickly changing labour market needs. Apparently, smaller towns and less prestigious universities also struggle to attract top lecturers, which impacts their competitiveness and attractiveness.
- ❑ **LIFE:** Most cities excel in factors such as quality public services, recreational offerings, and cultural amenities, making them appealing for families.

However, more tourist-oriented cities (mainly Alghero, Pula and Varberg) face challenges due to strong **seasonality** in cultural and recreational offerings. Affordable **housing**, usually an advantage for smaller towns, is a concern for many of the partners; especially in the cities with strong tourism, prohibitive prices and rents pose potential obstacles to talent attraction and retention and call for a solution.

- ❑ **PLACE:** Cities generally perform well in terms of physical environment, including buildings, public spaces, and greenery, and can provide quality conditions for their residents. However, certain partners face challenges in mobility, either due to **imperfect external accessibility** (Roeselare, Pula and Alghero) or an excessive focus on **car-oriented urban mobility** (Alghero, Centar-Sarajevo, Piraeus, to a certain extent even Rzeszów).
- ❑ **Governance:** the overall governance score is relatively low for most partners (with the exception of Alytus and Nyíregyháza). **For most partners, talent attraction and retention is not (yet) a strategic focus for decision-makers.** Raising their awareness of the importance of this topic and the potential risks of not addressing the challenge is needed – that is the basic pre-condition of delivering more active policies and implement measures to more efficiently attract and retain talent.

City self-assessment  
**TAR FACTORS**

		Alghero	Alytus	Centar Sarajevo	Nyíregyháza	Piraeus	Pula	Roeselare	Rzeszów	Varberg	Vilanova	AVERAGE
WORK	Quality jobs, functioning labour market											3.4
	Business environment, entrepreneurship ecosystem											3.4
	Vocational & higher education, R&D, innovation											4
LIFE	Affordable housing											2.9
	Quality public services											4.4
	Recreation, cultural offer											4.6
PLACE	Buildings and public spaces											4.1
	Parks and green spaces											4.1
	External access, urban mobility											3.4
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>												3.4

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM

The assessment results indicate that, overall, most partners face significant challenges in establishing a supportive entrepreneurship ecosystem conducive to the initiation and growth of businesses, particularly startups.



## POLICY

While individual differences exist, the majority of our partners **lack clear policies**, and notably, **specific strategies** dedicated to entrepreneurship development.



## ACCESS to FINANCE

On a more positive note, access to various types of finance for businesses is generally available in most cities. However, the **management of these funds is often dispersed among different organizations**, sometimes even **across administrative levels**, leading to **limited or no coordination** and occasional **competition**. Startups usually find seed funding accessible, but as they grow, **obtaining acceleration and scale-up funding becomes more challenging**.



## ACCESS to HUMAN CAPITAL

Businesses, particularly those in the **knowledge economy**, encounter difficulties in recruiting individuals with the right competencies. This challenge is exacerbated when **seeking professionals with highly specialized skills**, as the local labour market in smaller towns within the partnership is too limited. Talent shortage poses a potential obstacle, compelling growing businesses to relocate to larger economic centres.



## ACCESS to BUSINESS SUPPORT

The average score for access to business support is slightly higher than for other factors. While some form of basic business support (like information, advice, training and mentoring) is available in all partner cities – usually through regional or national programs/organizations –, the initiatives often lack adaptation to local circumstances, suffer from **coordination gaps**, exhibit **overlaps**, and **lack a clear pathway for businesses**. Additionally, some cities note that **businesses are not always aware of these opportunities**.

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM



## ACCESS to PHYSICAL SPACES

Many partner cities already have some form of business hub (incubator, co-working space), but these often fail to address the genuine needs of local businesses. Moreover, smaller hubs are scattered across the city (with few exceptions), **lacking a concentrated center** with the appropriate density of businesses and services.

- ❑ *Vilanova i la Geltrú* already has an excellent hub – **Neàpolis** – but over the years it became slightly disconnected from the local community and they **need** to have **an evolution to better serve businesses**.
- ❑ In *Alytus*, there is no hub yet, but the funding is secured, and their main challenge is to **design and build a space together with the local business community** that can become the centre of a well-functioning ecosystem.
- ❑ *Varberg* definitely wants to develop a place for enterprises and ambitious student entrepreneurs at the **Varberg Campus**, but this project is still at an early stage.

- ❑ In *Pula*, there is an **initiative driven by an ambitious IT community** and supported by the local authority to **develop a world-class business hub** with a range of functions and exceptional lifestyle factors that can attract IT businesses from all over Europe and even beyond.
- ❑ In other partner cities, the **coordination of the services of different spaces** is the most important challenge.



## CULTURE and COMMUNITY

**Scoring the lowest average**, though not by a significant margin, the category of culture and community underscores the need for substantial efforts across all partners to create conditions supporting the development of a local business community.

## BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

	Alghero	Alytus	Centar Sarajevo	Nyíregyháza	Piraeus	Pula	Roeselare	Rzeszów	Varberg	Vilanova	AVERAGE
Policy											3.1
Access to finance and capital											3.1
Access to human capital											3.1
Access to business support											3.5
Access to physical spaces											3.1
Culture, community											2.9

# TRAINING/CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

In the questionnaire, we also looked into the training and capacity development needs of C4TALENT partners. Specifically, we inquired about partners' perceived levels of knowledge and experience in topics related to the network themes, the importance of these topics, and their preferred learning formats.

Here's a concise summary of the key insights:

- ❑ The average level of knowledge and experience in topics linked to the network themes is generally fair (exceeding 3 on a scale of 1 to 6) in all but one area – *Encouraging/nurturing women entrepreneurship*.
- ❑ Significant **differences exist in knowledge and experience** among individual partners across almost all topics, presenting a **valuable opportunity for peer learning**.
- ❑ On average, partners rate most topics as highly important (scoring above 5 on a scale of 1 to 6). Even the three topics with the lowest scores – *Access to finance and capital* (4.56), *Access to physical spaces* (4.78) and *Encouraging/nurturing women entrepreneurship* (4.76) – are still deemed very important by most partners.
- ❑ Across the board, the overwhelmingly preferred learning format for all topics is the **presentation of good practices**.

- ❑ Partners identify **study visits** as the most useful format for gaining knowledge, experience, and practical examples related to four specific topics: *Access to physical spaces*, *Attracting and retaining talent in cities...*, *Key conditions for a startup-friendly city*, and *Building a thriving business community*.
- ❑ **Dedicated masterclasses** are slightly less popular learning formats based on the questionnaire, but at the “Ready for Action” meetings, partners expressed their wish to use this format **to cover the two main network themes**.

In addition to topic-related inquiries, partners were questioned about their experience, skills, and knowledge concerning the main building blocks of the action planning process. Overall, the partnership demonstrates a strong foundation for the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience required for preparing Integrated Action Plans. However, there are areas, such as the concept of **results framework** and **intervention logic**, as well as **monitoring and assessing progress**, where the average value is lower. More emphasis should be placed on these topics. In addition, in most areas, there are significant **individual differences** between partners – this provides a **good basis for peer learning and sharing experiences** between partners during the action planning process.







# INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF IAP FOCUS

Here, we outline potential focus areas for the Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) of partner cities. These preliminary recommendations are primarily derived from city visits and interactive sessions during the "Ready for Action" network meeting. They serve as a solid foundation for partners to further explore, develop, narrow and refine as they progress with the planning process.

## Alghero

- ❑ Develop a **comprehensive economic development vision** for the city
- ❑ Establish a **local agency** dedicated to supporting economic development and entrepreneurship
- ❑ Utilize currently unused city-owned buildings to create a **hub or meeting point for businesses**

## Alytus

- ❑ Develop a viable **business model, service portfolio, and business plan for the new enterprise hub**
- ❑ Capitalize on excellent entrepreneurship education in secondary schools, **supporting students** to turn their best ideas into real businesses
- ❑ Brand and promote the city as a **remote work destination**

- ❑ Explore the possibility of a dedicated **program to support aspiring Ukrainian refugees** in starting their own enterprises

## Centar Sarajevo

- ❑ Enhance **coordination** among business support organizations for improved service portfolio and efficient resource utilization
- ❑ Transform the new premises of the CEE into a **vibrant business hub**
- ❑ Create a conducive **environment for real startups**
- ❑ **Attract talented young researchers** currently working abroad back to the city

## Nyíregyháza

- ❑ Promote entrepreneurship culture by developing a program of **networking events, meetups, and information sessions**
- ❑ Create a detailed **concept of a startup incubator**
- ❑ Design and launch an **entrepreneurship program** (training and support) **at the university**
- ❑ Develop and promote an **employer place brand for the city**

# INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF IAP FOCUS

## Piraeus

- ❑ Improve **coordination** between business support organizations/services, considering stronger physical concentration
- ❑ Develop a **clear pathway for the development of new enterprises**
- ❑ Build a **stronger community** of entrepreneurs
- ❑ Develop a **program for promoting entrepreneurship culture**

## Pula

- ❑ Create a concept for **transforming** the former military base, **Valllunga brownfield area**, owned by the national government, **into a world-class tech campus/hub** to attract ICT businesses and talent
- ❑ Address **over-tourism** and improve **housing** affordability

## Roeselare

- ❑ Improve **coordination** between business support organizations
- ❑ Explore the possibility of **reinventing** and scaling up the existing space **"Huis vd Voeding"**, adding new functions, and turning it **into a vibrant hub**
- ❑ Develop a **program for food industry startups**
- ❑ Design **programs to support small retailers**

## Rzeszów

- ❑ Enhance **collaboration** between support organizations and businesses to create a vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystem
- ❑ **Streamline local procedures** and reduce barriers to entrepreneurship
- ❑ Launch a **comprehensive startup program**
- ❑ Brand and promote Rzeszów as a **destination for talent**

## Varberg

- ❑ Improve **coordination** among various business support organizations
- ❑ Develop a **vibrant enterprise hub** as an integral part of Varberg Campus
- ❑ Establish a **clear pathway for ambitious students** to develop their own businesses
- ❑ Mitigate the negative impacts of extreme **seasonality**

## Vilanova

- ❑ **Evolution of Neàpolis:** strengthen vision & focus, explore new ways of using existing spaces, bring it closer to the wider community, turning it into a vibrant meeting point
- ❑ Establish a **clear path/journey for aspiring entrepreneurs** to support their development at different stages



# WORKPLAN

Synthesis

**Methodology**

Roadmap

# OVERALL APPROACH

The Baseline Study concludes the Activation Stage and outlines the roadmap for the 3 consecutive stages of the URBACT journey: Planning Actions (Stage 2), Preparing Implementation (Stage 3) and Network Finale (Stage 4).

The purpose of the upcoming 2-year journey is to *enable partners to launch and implement an impactful change process in their cities to address the policy challenges identified.*

Given the complexity and the scale of the task, our methodological approach builds on the following main principles:

- ❑ **Careful planning:** This section of the Baseline Study provides a detailed plan and roadmap outlining the activities to be delivered and the outcomes to produce.
- ❑ **Flexibility:** While planning is crucial, it must be complemented by a high level of flexibility. Considering the project's timescale, the size of the partnership, and the complexity of the network theme, the network must remain open to changes and be prepared to adapt flexibly to unforeseen developments.

- ❑ **Work/activity-based learning:** The core element of the network's journey is the learning process that all partners undergo. Our approach to learning emphasizes that it must be work-based and directly linked to the specific challenges partners face. Instead of generic learning sessions, partners will consistently be required to identify and bring forth their specific issues before designing the learning sessions.
- ❑ **Combining organizational learning with personal development:** While the main goal is to facilitate organizational learning/capacity development at the partner cities (local authorities or other organisations) as well as among local stakeholders, we believe that personal development of the individuals representing the partners is equally important. It is an additional benefit and opportunity to develop and inspire local champions/ambassadors who can be instrumental in the successful implementation of the IAP and the associated change process. This aspect will always be considered when training sessions are designed/delivered or other network level activities are organized.
- ❑ **Emphasis on peer-to-peer support:** Having non-expert feedback from a peer is a powerful way of enhancing the quality of deliverables. Therefore, peer-to-peer learning, exchange between partners will be a central element of our methodology.

# NETWORK METHODOLOGY

In designing a roadmap of specific activities, it is important to clearly define the key elements of our methodology that enable partners to effectively address their local challenges.

Here, we outline the most important aspects of the two-year URBACT journey of C4TALENT partners.

## ❑ **Improved knowledge and understanding of the network themes**

If partner cities intend to address the brain drain process by developing an entrepreneurship ecosystem, they need to have a good understanding of the policy challenges, the concepts of talent attraction and retention and entrepreneurship ecosystem development, as well as proven solutions and good practices.

## ❑ **Knowledge and skills necessary to preparing Integrated Action Plans using participative methods**

Each partner city is expected to produce an Integrated Action Plan as the primary outcome of their URBACT journey.

Equipping them with a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, and specific methodological tools is crucial for facilitating integrated and participatory planning.

## ❑ **Capturing knowledge**

Central to the URBACT journey is the collection, creation, and sharing of knowledge. This knowledge should be systematically captured in a structured, easily understandable format, made accessible to partners, and shared with other cities facing similar challenges.

## ❑ **Successful engagement of stakeholders in the ULGs**

The process emphasizes the significant aspect of engaging key stakeholders in a sustainable manner. All partners must identify & involve these stakeholders effectively in their respective cities.

## ❑ **Embedding transnational learning on local level**

While learning primarily occurs at the network level, applying this learning locally is crucial for addressing local challenges. Hence, embedding transnational learning on the local level is essential, requiring established protocols and measures to ensure successful knowledge transfer.

## ❑ **Tracking progress**

Consistently tracking progress is vital for the entire partnership, the URBACT Secretariat, and individual partners. This practice enables the timely identification of problem areas, allowing interventions before issues escalate.

## ❑ **Integrating cross-cutting themes**

Three cross-cutting dimensions have been identified and need to be integrated in partner's local activities: *Digital transformation*, *Gender equality* and *Green transition*.

It's essential to support partners in understanding specific ways to incorporate these dimensions into their plans and activities.

## ❑ **Troubleshooting and problem-solving**

Unforeseen problems are inevitable during the URBACT journey. Changes in the local context, strategies, or political landscape may lead to challenges. The network methodology must be designed to react effectively to such situations, providing support to partners in problem-solving.

# SPECIFIC METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS

In this section, we provide a brief description of the specific tools the C4TALENT network plans to utilize.

## Transnational meetings

Transnational meetings are the central elements of the URBACT journey. Each network must deliver **at least 6** (core) network meetings, preferably with all partners present. Below are the *key attributes of C4TALENT TN meetings*

**Purpose:** facilitating knowledge sharing, progress review, problem discussion, and collaborative support

### Key features

- ❑ Co-designed by the entire partnership, with an active role from the hosting partner, Lead Partner, and Lead Expert
- ❑ The meeting content is designed using a detailed meeting script, including a breakdown of all activities, their timing, content and related responsibilities.
- ❑ Partners receive a preparation package before each meeting, detailing the host city, travel options, agenda, and preparation steps.
- ❑ Tailored to the focus and needs of partners, featuring official welcomes, knowledge-sharing, capacity development, peer discussions, progress reviews, and cultural engagement
- ❑ Facilitated by the Lead Expert, with hosting city representatives contributing actively

### Typical content elements of TN meetings

- ❑ Official welcome by the host city, short discussion with local leaders linked to the topic, if possible
- ❑ Information provision on local context, including also site visits if possible/relevant
- ❑ Knowledge-sharing related to the network theme(s)
- ❑ Capacity development related to the URBACT method
- ❑ Opportunities for peer discussion
- ❑ Session to share/review partner and network level progress since the previous meeting, including the review of the learning grid from previous meeting
- ❑ Marketplace for sharing ideas, methods, tools, tips, tricks
- ❑ Sessions dedicated to review and discuss IAP-related issues and progress
- ❑ Dedicated sessions on project administration and management, C&D
- ❑ Meeting with the ULG, local stakeholders, target groups
- ❑ Session to identify key learnings, take-home lessons, and planned activities based on them (using the learning grid)
- ❑ Consultation with the LP & LE
- ❑ Fun activity to familiarize with local culture, art, traditions, etc.

# SPECIFIC METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS

## Webinars

The learning content exceeds the capacity of relatively short in-person transnational meetings. Therefore, webinars are organised in-between TN meetings. Webinars are relatively **short online learning sessions dedicated to** specific topics either linked to **the network themes** (subthemes) **or to the building blocks of the URBACT method**. Depending on the content, webinars are typically delivered by Ad-hoc Experts, the LE or a representative of a partner city. Some webinars are already planned in the Roadmap, but this is a flexible tool to respond to learning needs that may emerge along the learning journey.

**Purpose:** Online learning sessions to supplement in-person transnational meetings

### Key features

- ❑ Designed based on specific questions and requests from partners
- ❑ Involve interactive elements and tool-teaching
- ❑ Pre-webinar invitations with key details sent to partners
- ❑ During delivery, information provision (presentation) with interactive elements are alternated. Involves teaching the use of specific tools and giving homework to partners (to test the tool in their local context).
- ❑ The use of visual collaboration tools (MURAL or Miro) is encouraged throughout the entire process.
- ❑ Post-webinar documentation includes key learning points, trainer slides, and interactive results.

## Masterclasses/deep-dive sessions

Masterclasses are planned to deep-dive in the **intricate details of selected topics**. Masterclasses are **longer sessions** providing partners with deeper knowledge and more details and are co-designed by Ad-hoc Expert(s) and the LE – delivery is also shared.

**Purpose:** In-depth sessions diving into selected topics

### Key features

- ❑ Preceded by the collection of partner-specific questions and requests, these are incorporated during design.
- ❑ Invitations sent to partners with session details and preparation steps.
- ❑ Integrated into the first 2 core network meetings for the two main themes (entrepreneurship ecosystem, talent attraction and retention), plus likely an additional session on branding at the 3<sup>rd</sup> core network meeting and an online deep-dive session on affordable housing.
- ❑ During delivery, information provision and interactive elements are alternated. Masterclasses should support partners in designing specific actions for the IAP.
- ❑ Post-session documentation includes key learnings, trainer slides, interactive results, tools, good practices, and recommended reading.
- ❑ Concludes with an online consultation session for partners to share experiences and ask questions.



# SPECIFIC METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS

## Study tours

Organizing study tours is the best way not only to obtain knowledge, but also to better **understand more complex issues, see specific tools, methods, concepts in action and, above all, be inspired and motivated.** Study tours are also the preferred tool of partners at certain topics.

The disadvantage of study tours is that they require additional resources (time, financial) as well as extra travel (that leads to CO<sup>2</sup> emissions). To eliminate some of those disadvantages, we plan to **integrate study tours in transnational meetings.** To do that, **the duration of selected TN meetings is extended** (3 days instead of 2), and study tours are organized to places in the proximity of the hosting city where inspiring practices can be visited. This way the study tours can be arranged with minimal additional travel, time and expenses.

**Purpose:** Obtain practical knowledge, understand complex issues, and be inspired

### Key features

- ❑ Integrated into extended transnational meetings to minimize additional travel
- ❑ Organized and prepared by the hosting city in collaboration with the Lead Partner and Lead Expert
- ❑ Follows the same preparation, delivery, and documentation logic as other meeting types

## Regular online check-in calls

**Helping partners to keep on track** and implement all necessary activities (as well as solving unexpected difficulties and problems), we plan to deliver regular check-in calls. Preferably all partners participate in all check-in calls, but it can happen that occasionally one or two partners cannot attend.

**Purpose:** Monthly calls to keep partners on track, address difficulties, and discuss progress

### Agenda

- ❑ Overview of network progress (Lead Partner and Lead Expert)
- ❑ Overview of partner progress (each partner)
- ❑ Tasks and planned activities for the next period
- ❑ Discussion of problems and challenges at both network and individual partner levels
- ❑ Documentation include a screenshot and a regularly updated progress table.

# SPECIFIC METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS

## City pairs

Some of the cities already have more experience in integrated and participatory planning methods (either because they already participated in an URBACT project or simply because they have already used similar methods in local planning processes). Therefore, a **“buddy programme”** is proposed to partners, where a more experienced partner supports a partner with less experience. (The support is still mutual.)

**Purpose:** Informal mentoring program where experienced partners support those with slightly less experience

**Pairs:** Alghero – Vilanova i la Geltrú; Rzeszów – Nyíregyháza; Piraeus – Centar Sarajevo; Alytus – Roeselare; Pula – Varberg

## Peer learning

Peer learning and sharing experiences between cities will be encouraged not only within the city pairs, but such sessions will be **integrated in all transnational meetings and learning occasions**.

## Presentation and collection of good practices

The results of the training needs analysis clearly demonstrates that learning from (good) practices, specific city examples is a format preferred by most partners. Therefore, the C4TALENT methodology includes the use of good practices in various contexts.

**Purpose:** Utilize examples and good practices for effective learning

## Key features

- ❑ Integrated in training content at all learning activities where relevant (presentation at a meeting, webinar, masterclass...)
- ❑ Collected in a database with a standard template, continuously updated
- ❑ Also covers practices beyond talent attraction and retention and entrepreneurship ecosystem, fostering bilateral peer-learning and future collaboration initiatives.

## Infographics

Infographics are great media to effectively capture and present information/knowledge in a condensed and visual way. During the network journey, a series of infographics will be prepared and made available to partners (as well as eventually to other cities outside the partnership).

**Purpose:** Condense and visually present information and knowledge effectively

## Preparation

- ❑ Based on literature, good practice descriptions, and training sessions
- ❑ Infographics prepared in English, with an option for partners to translate for local communication/inspiration

## Content

- ❑ C4TALENT network and themes (*one*)
- ❑ 4 main talent attraction and retention factors (*four*)
- ❑ Key ingredients of a successful entrepreneurship ecosystem (*one or more*)

# SUMMARY METHODOLOGY TABLE

	Trans-national meetings	Webinars	Master-classes/deep-dive sessions	Study tours	Regular online check-in calls	City pairs	Peer learning	Good practices	Info-graphics
<b>Improved knowledge and understanding of the network themes</b>	Sessions at TN meetings dedicated to selected topics	Webinars focusing on selected topics	Masterclasses (2), each focusing on one of the network themes	Study tours (linked to TN meetings)			Sharing experience between partners	Good practices linked to aspects of network themes	
<b>Enhanced knowledge and skills necessary to preparing Integrated Action Plans using participative methods</b>		Series of webinars focusing on the methods				Continuously sharing and exchanging experiences		Good practices highlighting aspects of participatory planning	
<b>Successful engagement of stakeholders in the ULGs</b>	Participation of selected/interested ULG members								
<b>Capturing knowledge</b>	Documentation, summary reports, slide decks, recording (where appropriate)							Good practice collection	Adaptable infographics on network themes
<b>Embedding transnational learning on local level</b>	Reporting back to ULG on learnings, summary presentations, discussions at ULG meetings							Access to GP catalogue for ULG members	Access to infographics, possibility to translate
<b>Tracking progress</b>	Dedicated slots to review network & partner progress				Fully dedicated to review progress				
<b>Integrating cross-cutting themes</b>	As part of the learning occasions, covering the importance and ways of integrating cross-cutting themes; dedicated session(s) to selected cross-cutting theme(s) (women entrepreneurship)					Continuously sharing and exchanging experiences	Sharing experience between partners	Incorporating GPs to illustrate the integration of cross-cutting themes	
<b>Troubleshooting and problem-solving</b>	Possibility for LP/LE consultation				Possibility to raise and discuss problems	Partner support in solving emerging problems			

# MTR, AD-HOC EXPERTS, TESTING ACTIONS

**Mid-term reflection** is an important milestone of the partners' action-planning journey. It is a moment at the end of Stage 2 (Planning stage) to stop, look back and reflect on the journey, with the objective to review network and individual progress, assess the effectiveness of the approach and methods used and see if changes are necessary. An honest and meaningful MTR process helps to **adjust methodology, address problems** and provides a **solid foundation for reprogramming**.

The C4TALENT MTR methodology has 4 key elements:

- ❑ Questionnaire survey among partners
- ❑ One-on-one calls with each partner
- ❑ Interactive session to present and discuss results and conclusions (at a TN meeting or dedicated online session)
- ❑ Summary MTR Report

The MTR process will be **“launched” at the third core TN meeting** (taking place in Alghero, Italy, on October 1-2, 2024).

The C4TALENT partnership plans to build on **ad-hoc expertise** as an important capacity to partners' IAP journey. Flexibility is a key element, but a preliminary concept (subject to minor changes, adjustments and additions as needs arise) has already been designed for the use of Ad-hoc Experts, presented in the summary table below.

Although some of the partners have already considered possible **testing actions**, those are **only early initial ideas**, which will definitely be modified, changed or at least fine-tuned as they progress with the IAP process. However, the LP and LE will encourage partners to think about testing actions relatively early and do not leave their delivery to the last moments, so that the lessons from the tests can provide meaningful contribution to the draft IAP and influence the content.

The C4TALENT testing methodology involves 4 main elements:

- ❑ Design the testing action using a standard network template
- ❑ Deliver and document the action, collect as much experience, learning and evidence as possible
- ❑ Evaluate experiences and results, and their implications for the IAP
- ❑ Integrate the findings in the draft IAP

To support partners, a *C4TALENT Quick Guide for Testing Actions* will be developed and made available in the first quarter of 2024.

WHEN	WHY	DELIVERABLE
Feb-March 2024	Support partners in stakeholder engagement and participatory planning	Webinar on stakeholder engagement and participatory planning + relevant URBACT tools
May 2024	Support partners in building their entrepreneurship ecosystem	Masterclass in building an entrepreneurship ecosystem at the Vilanova i la Geltrú core network meeting
Sep-Oct 2024	Support partners in designing and implementing talent attraction & retention interventions	Masterclass in building an entrepreneurship ecosystem at the Alghero core network meeting
Nov-Dec 2024	Support relevant partners in addressing housing challenges	Oline deep-dive session on housing, with a special focus on touristic cities
Jan 2025	Support partners to in funding IAP implementation	Webinar on funding IAP implementation
From June 2024	Additional support to partners in IAP development	Advice and consultancy to partners to IAP development



# WORKPLAN

Synthesis

Methodology

**Roadmap**

# INTRODUCTION

Here, we present the C4TALENT Roadmap, a dynamic and adaptable workplan that guides the entire partnership and individual partners through the integrated action planning (IAP) process. Leveraging the main conclusions from the **Synthesis** and the proposed **Methodology**, the Roadmap serves as a **visual overview of all key activities and deliverables** within the network journey.

The Roadmap is a flexible and living tool designed to be regularly reviewed, modified, and adapted at core network meetings and, if necessary, in between. It acts as a timeline for crucial network journey milestones, offering specific information without overwhelming users. It has been developed in MURAL for easy modification and updating.

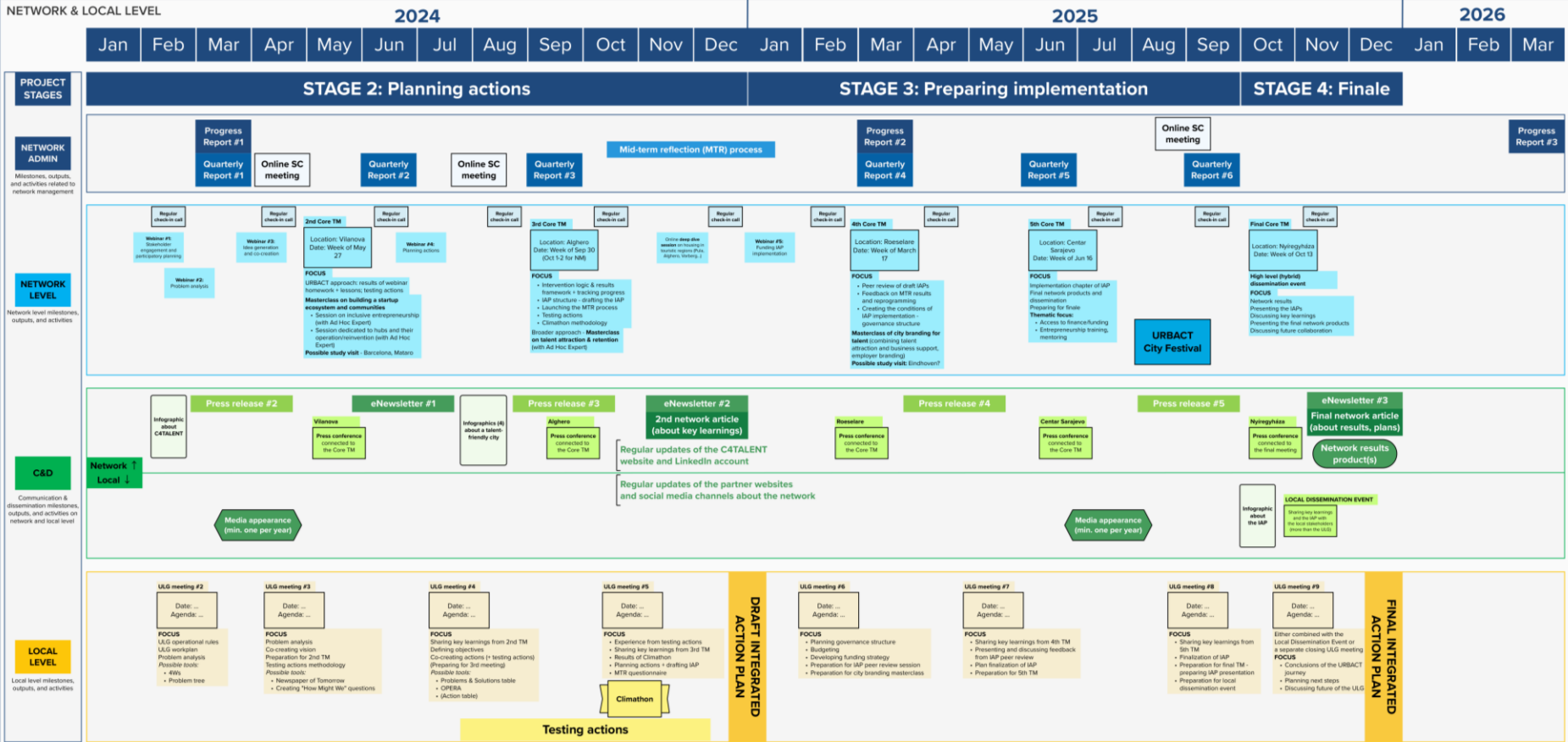
The main elements of the Roadmap are as follows:

- ❑ Overview and timeline of **network administration** deliverables: highlights key network administration milestones and their timing
- ❑ Presentation of **network level activities**
  - ❑ **Learning events:** outlines schedule and topics for webinars, masterclasses, and deep-dive sessions
  - ❑ **Check-in calls:** the timing of the regular (bi-monthly) check-in calls with partners
  - ❑ **Core network meetings:** for each meeting, the host city, the focus areas and the timing are defined.

- ❑ Overview of **local level activities**
  - ❑ Provides partners with a blueprint for detailed planning of local activities
  - ❑ Identifies essential local deliverables, their timing, and proposes ULG meeting schedules
  - ❑ Aligns ULG meetings with the main steps of the IAP development process and considers the timing of transnational meetings, enabling partners to prepare for and capitalize on TN meetings locally
- ❑ **Communication & Dissemination** activities
  - ❑ Dedicated section for both network and local level communication and dissemination activities
  - ❑ Outlines key communication deliverables and activities for effective outreach

The C4TALENT Roadmap ensures that the partnership remains on track, aligning local and network-level activities seamlessly. With a focus on adaptability and clarity, it serves as a comprehensive guide for the successful execution of the network journey.

# C4TALENT NETWORK ROADMAP



# CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF NETWORK LEVEL EVENTS

Below, we present a summary chronological list of all network level events. This allows for a quick overview of main network level activities.

2024	EVENT(S)
Feb	<b>1<sup>st</sup> regular check-in call</b>
Feb - Mar	Webinar #1: Stakeholder engagement and participatory planning
March - Apr	Webinar #2: Problem analysis
Apr - May	Webinar #3: Idea generation and co-creation
Apr	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> regular check-in call</b>
May	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> core Network Meeting in Vilanova</b> <b>Masterclass</b> on building a start-up ecosystem and communities + possible study visit
Jun	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> regular check-in call</b>
Jun-Jul	Webinar #4: Planning actions
Aug	<b>4<sup>th</sup> regular check-in call</b>
Sept	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> core Network Meeting in Alghero</b> <b>Masterclass</b> on talent attraction & retention
Oct	<b>5<sup>th</sup> regular check-in call</b>
Nov	Online deep-dive session – housing in touristic regions
Dec	<b>6<sup>th</sup> regular check-in call</b>

2025	EVENT(S)
Jan	Webinar #5: Funding IAP implementation
Feb	<b>8<sup>th</sup> regular check-in call</b>
Mar	<b>4<sup>th</sup> core Network Meeting in Roeselare</b> <b>Masterclass</b> on city branding for talent
Apr	<b>9<sup>th</sup> regular check-in call</b>
May	
June	<b>5<sup>th</sup> core Network Meeting in Centar Sarajevo</b>
July	<b>10<sup>th</sup> regular check-in call</b>
Aug	URBACT City Festival
Sept	<b>11<sup>th</sup> regular check-in call</b>
Oct	<b>Final (6<sup>th</sup>) core Network Meeting in Nyíregyháza</b>
Nov	<b>12<sup>th</sup> regular check-in call</b>
Dec	



# LIST OF REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Addressing brain drain: The local and regional dimension (European Committee of the Regions, 2018)

<sup>2</sup> Armando J Garcia Pires: Brain Drain and Brain Waste (Journal of Economic Development, 2015)

<sup>3</sup> Marcus Andersson, Morten King-Grubert and Nikolaj Lubanski: Innovating Talent Attraction – A Practitioner’s Guide for Cities, Regions and Countries (U Press, 2016)

<sup>4,6,7</sup> Alison Partridge: Entrepreneurship Ecosystems cannot be created from the top down (Techplace.online, 2020)

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Isenberg: What an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Actually is (Harvard Business Review, 2014)

<sup>8</sup> Brad Feld: Startup Communities – Building an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Your City (Wiley, 2012)

Annual Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility 2022 (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2023)

Brad Feld & Ian Hathaway: The startup community way – evolving an entrepreneurial ecosystem (Wiley, 2020)

Manuela Samek Lodovici: The Geography of New Employment Dynamics in Europe - Key Findings and Policy Suggestions (ESPON, 2018)

Attracting International Talent to Lithuania – International Best Practices and Approaches (ICMPD, 2021)

Pärtel-Peeter Pere: Talent Beyond Capitals (Future Place Leadership, 2018)

Philip T. Roundy: “Small town” entrepreneurial ecosystems – Implications for developed and emerging economies (Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies, 2017)

Richard Florida: The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited (Basic Books, 2012)

**URBACT**



Co-funded by  
the European Union  
Interreg

**MORE INFORMATION AT  
[urbact.eu]**