

CITIES@HEART

TOWARDS A BALANCED CITY CENTRE

4th QUARTERLY NETWORK REPORT

September 2024
December 2024



URBACT



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♥ 1. Cities@Heart

Cities@Heart mobilises ten European urban areas. Led by The Greater Paris Metropolis (a public entity with a sound track record in downtown revitalisation policy), network partners work together to understand the way **city centres** function and create a new framework to be used in city centre improvement initiatives.

- Quadrilátero Urbano** (Portugal)
- Granada** (Spain)
- Sligo** (Ireland)
- Greater Paris Métropolis** (France)
- Fleurus** (Belgium)
- Cesena** (Italy)
- Celje** (Slovenia)
- Osijek** (Croatia)
- Krakow Métropolis** (Poland)
- Amfiktyonies** (Greece)



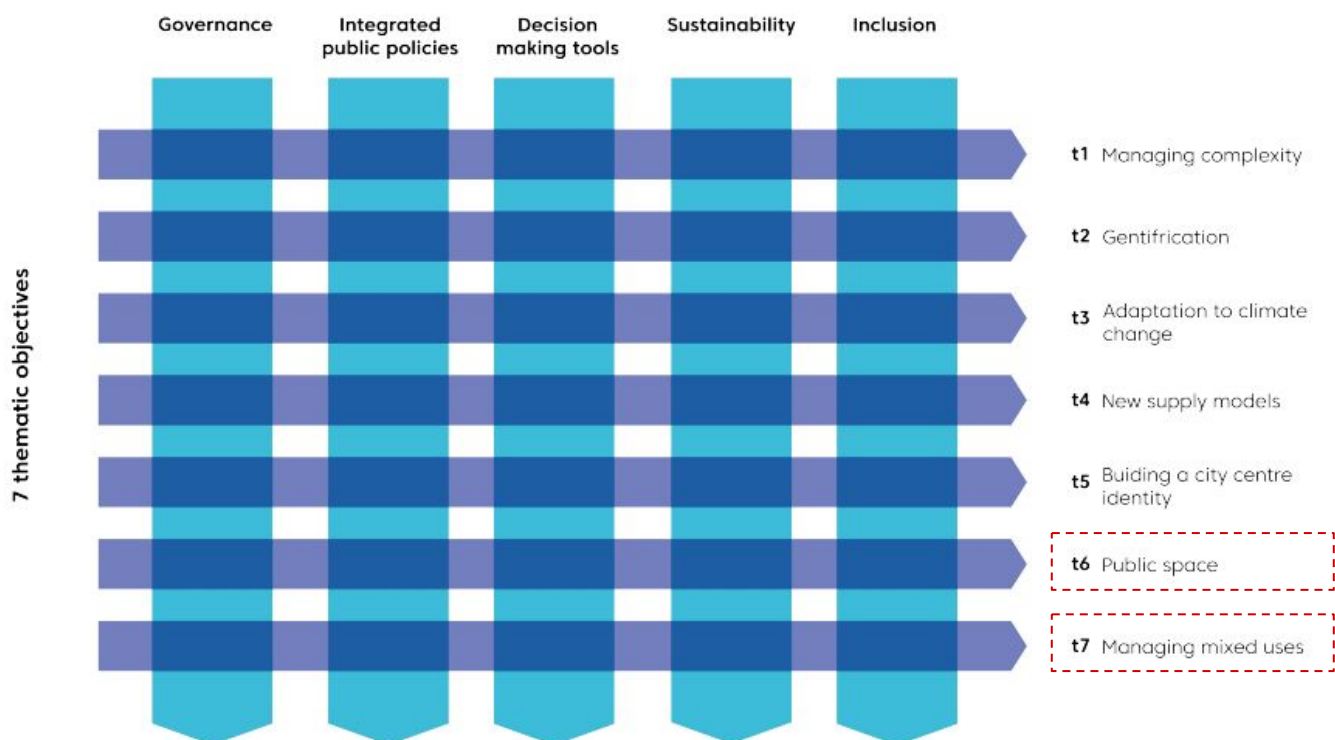
♥ 2. Where are we in our pathway to the City Centre toolbox?

Our roadmap proposes to exchange best practices and define indicators for public policies deployed in the city centre to generate a series of thematic objectives.

After more than one year of network activity, through meetings and dedicated workshops, we have explored all the topics. **This quarter, we have developed topics 6 and 7**, focusing on Public Space and Managing Mixed Uses. Governance, integration, decision-making tools, sustainability, and inclusion have been transversal drivers of our learning pathway.

Highlights!

- 4 Transnational meetings
- 7 strategic objectives
- 4 online webinars



♥ 3. What is going on in the network?

Throughout this final quarter of the year, the URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) in each city have been deeply involved in a series of collaborative meetings. These sessions have served as a valuable forum for co-creating IAP visions and objectives and defining the Small Scale Actions (implemented already in some cities like Krakow and Granada).

ULGs seek to drive meaningful progress that aligns with the overarching objectives of the network while addressing the unique challenges and opportunities within their respective cities.

Developing partnerships involving local authorities, beneficiaries/ users, NGOs, public agencies, the private sector and the civil society has proven to be a key component in the design and implementation of efficient urban policies.





Quadrilatero Urbano



Osijek



Cesena



Il progetto europeo Move 21, in partnership con **Roma Servizi per la Mobilità** offrono ai nostri clienti e ai nuovi iscritti **12 mesi di gratuità del noleggio di n°03 cargo bike a pedalata assistita utilizzabili per il trasporto merci, per utilizzo privato e aziendale.**



La Città di Ginevra trasforma i parcheggi in micro-foreste

Le **tiny forest** possono essere realizzate in qualunque matrice ambientale (urbana, extraurbana, agricola, etc.), sono caratterizzate da una serie di specifiche tecniche specialmente a livello di gestione del suolo e del soprassuolo, che le piantagioni "tradizionali" normalmente non prevedono.



Il parklet è un'estensione del marciapiede che offre più spazio e servizi per i cittadini che usano la strada. Solitamente sono installati su corsie di parcheggio, utilizzando diversi posti auto, dal livello del marciapiede fino alla larghezza del parcheggio adiacente.

Simposio internazionale di parklet a Bologna 18-20 settembre 2024



MaaS Mobility as a Service for Italy

MaaS è un concetto globale di mobilità che prevede l'integrazione di molteplici servizi di trasporto pubblico e privato accessibili grazie ad un unico canale digitale, fornendo diverse alternative di viaggio - dal trasporto pubblico al car sharing, dal bike sharing ai taxi. Così gli utenti possono pianificare, prenotare e pagare più servizi in base alle proprie esigenze facendo però un'unica esperienza di viaggio intermodale.



CITTA' APERTE E SPAZI IBRIDI SOCIOCULTURALI

Gli **spazi ibridi** sono luoghi compartecipati e coprogettati da più attori: sono infrastrutture che contribuiscono al "welfare generativo" (che è la rigenerazione delle risorse disponibile come, appunto, lo spazio), e il tutto con una spiccata attenzione alle loro prossimità e di conseguenza alla progettazione di servizi territoriali e autorganizzati.



Un tetto verde è un tetto ricoperto da uno strato di terreno e di specie vegetali. Si definisce verde "estensivo" nel caso in cui si tratti di specie (per es. erba, sedum o piante basse) che richiedono uno strato di terra tra gli 8 e i 15 cm e interventi di manutenzione ridotta (1 o 2 / anno). Il peso è generalmente inferiore a 150 kg/m².



Cesena



Krakow

The Krakow Metropolitan Area carried out this action in autumn 2024 with the redesigning of a commuting oval providing access to one elementary school in the city centre.





Within the European Mobility Week, this pilot experience aims to promote neighbourhood coexistence in the area of San Juan de Dios with workshops and participatory games for residents, and prizes associated with them

♥ 4. The fourth Transnational meeting: Cesena

Day 1

The day began at City Hall with Mayor Enzo Lattuca, Councillors Giorgia Macrelli and Francesca Lucchi, and Nora Kebel from the URBACT Secretariat highlighting Cesena's commitment to sustainable development. At the Malatestiana Library, participants learned about key city center projects, including a new market brand, a coordinated events calendar, the Abacus of public space, the sustainable transport strategies, insights into the Tre Piazze regeneration, Casa Bufalini, and the From Space to Place hackathon.

Cities@Heart organised the fourth URBACT transnational network meeting in Cesena, delving into city's initiatives aimed at enhancing the livability and identity of its historic centre.



The day began with a collective promenade to the city centre, providing an opportunity to observe the vibrant local culture.



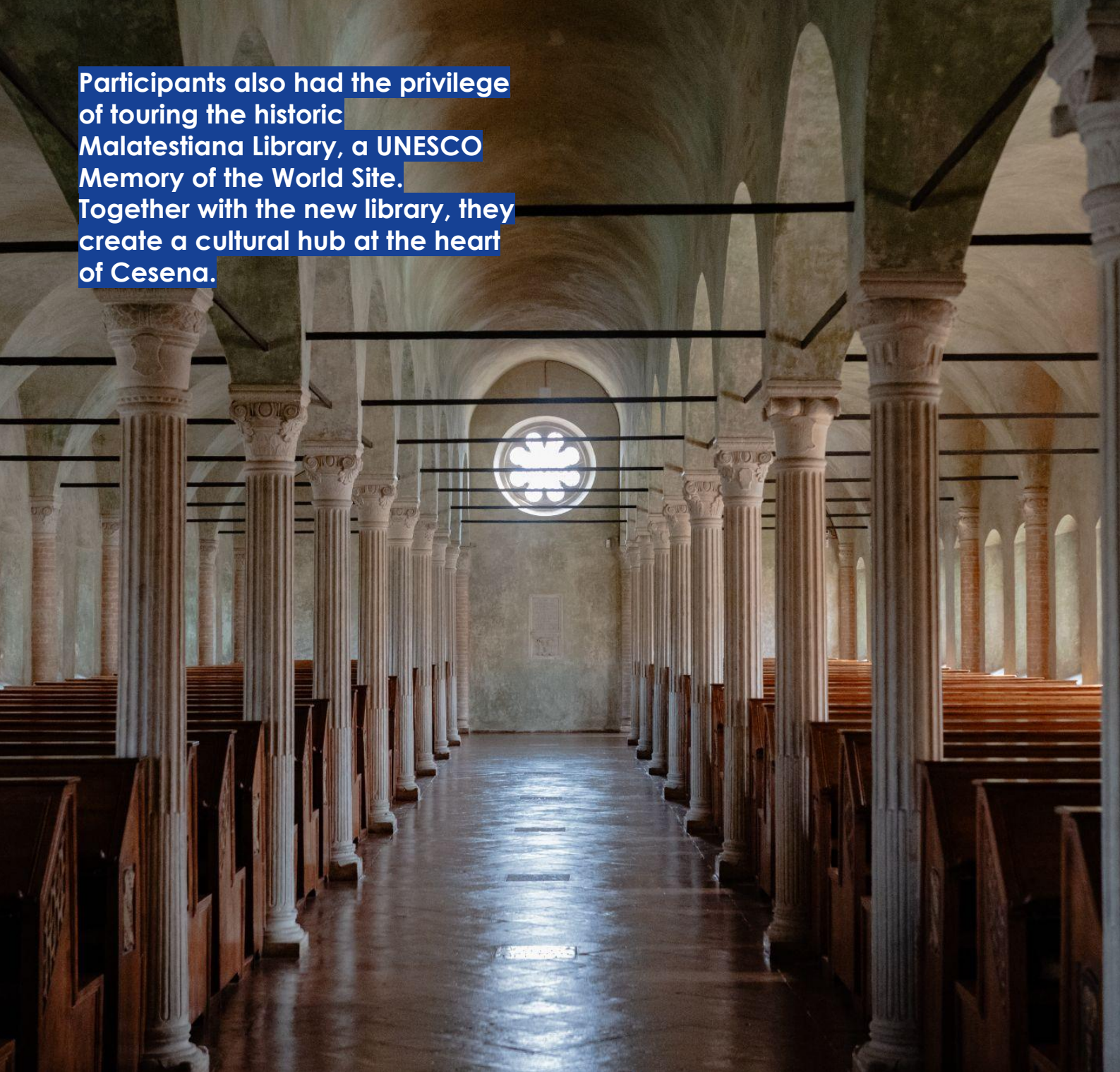


The partners visited the open-air market, that allows for spontaneity and intergenerational exchange where everyone can come and go, seek advice about the products available and enjoy informal exchanges with neighbours.





Participants also had the privilege of touring the historic Malatestiana Library, a UNESCO Memory of the World Site. Together with the new library, they create a cultural hub at the heart of Cesena.



At the Malatestiana Library, participants learned about key city centre projects like a new market brand, a coordinated events calendar, and the Abacus of public space furnishings.



In the afternoon, a site visit provided hands-on exploration of key projects. Highlights included discussions with the informal citizens' group *Chi non ha contrada non ha casa* about fostering community pride.



Day 2

The second day of the Transnational Meeting began with the Mid-Term Review Session, providing an opportunity for partners to reflect on the project progress, legacy and future milestones. This was followed by an engaging workshop focused on reviewing the Integrated Action Plans initial structures and Small Scale Actions implementation.

In the afternoon, participants benefited from insightful presentations by experts. Silvia Marredu from the Bologna City Council's Department of Statistics introduced the innovative Bologna Gender Plan, highlighting strategies to promote gender equity across urban policies. Raffaella Sacchetti from Cesena's Department for Urban Planning shared comprehensive guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of environmental compensations, offering a valuable framework for sustainable development. Andrea Violani, representing the Union of Municipalities of the Savio Valley, presented their Open Data website, showcasing how accessible data empowers communities and supports evidence-based decision-making.

The day concluded with visits to some of Cesena's most iconic cultural landmarks, including Teatro Bonci, Piazza del Popolo, and the Rocca Malatestiana.

Cities@Heart organised the fourth URBACT transnational network meeting in Cesena, delving into city's initiatives aimed at enhancing the livability and identity of its historic centre.

The visits provided a deeper appreciation of the city's rich heritage and its integration into the urban landscape, underscoring the importance of culture in fostering vibrant, inclusive communities.





The Rocca Malatestiana in Cesena is a majestic medieval fortress that offers panoramic views of the city and stands as a testament to the region's rich history and architectural heritage.

Our fourth transnational meeting in Cesena, Italy came to a close but we took all that inspiration back in our suitcases!



5. Our Quarterly best practices

The best practices of this period are summarized by those presented during the transnational meeting in Cesena, as well as those shared in the two thematic webinars held during this quarter.

5.1. Cesena's best practices

5.1.1 The market new brand

5.1.2 Events coordinated calendar

5.1.3 Abacus public places furnishings

5.1.4 Sustainable mobility

5.1.5 Open Data Portal

5.1.6 Bologna Gender Plan

5.1.7 Guidelines

5.2. Thematic webinars

5.2.1 Last-Mile Logistics webinar

5.2.2 City centers for All webinar

♥ 5.1.1 The Market new brand

The new graphic design and slogan "Where the city meets" is part of a project by the municipal administration and trade associations to renew street furniture, remove architectural barriers, and replace damaged pavements along Viale Mazzoni.

The goal is to revitalize the market's identity, ensuring it endures over time. This initiative aims to enhance the market's image, modernize the area, improve accessibility, and boost the visibility of services and products, increasing its appeal to operators, customers, residents, and tourists alike.

The Wednesday and Saturday street market, which is experiencing an important phase of renewal generated by the natural generational turnover, is at the center of a branding and marketing project.



♥ 5.1.2 Events Coordinated Calendar

In the municipality of Cesena, several events are coordinated through various public calls; in particular, the summer events call, the winter events call and the tourism call. These are public notices in which the municipality provides funding to businesses and associations that pass the selection process, which are responsible for organizing activities in both the historic center and the outskirts.

In addition to the funding, the municipality helps coordinate these events, the shared calendar across sectors provides a clear view of all events throughout the year, leading to better coordination and fewer overlaps.

By coordinating all these cultural, gastronomic, sports, and volunteer events, the goal is to develop a unified strategy for the animation of the historic center.



♥ 5.1.3. Abacus of public space furnishings

The manual integrates the Regulation of Public Land Occupation. Abaco identifies designated portions of squares, porches, and streets in the city center for bars' and restaurants' serving areas and specifies the required furniture, materials, and colors for each area.

It offers a comprehensive view of different areas, addresses post-COVID rebalancing of squares, aligns regulations with the national Code of Cultural Heritage, and simplifies the application process for restaurant and bar owners, extending permit duration from one year to five.

Abaco improves the quality of the city center by balancing public spaces between commercial use and citizens' needs while preserving cultural and architectural heritage.

gli arredi

ombrellone

dimensioni: max 600x600 cm, con supporto centrale o supporto laterale con ancoraggio
gli agganci possono essere in un misto ferro-legno

tavolo alto
tavolo basso

altezza: min 70cm - max 100cm

sedia A
sedia B

dimensioni definite dal prodotto selezionato

tenda
lunotto

fioriera A
fioriera B

fioriera A dimensioni: min 50x50cm - max 50x150cm; altezza: 50-100cm
fioriera B dimensioni: 50x50cm; altezza min 50cm - max 100cm

Degli otto colori proposti, quattro riprendono le tonalità del rosa e quattro del tortora.
Gli esercizi commerciali potranno scegliere un colore tra quelli indicati a condizione che tutte le attività presenti nell'area utilizzino il nuovo colore selezionato.
I codici RGB sono indicati. Il tessuto dovrà avvicinarsi il più possibile al colore scelto. In accordo con gli uffici comunali preposti.

I legni selezionati possono essere sostituiti da altre essenze che mantengono una simile resa cromatica.

approfondimento: fioriera

il fieno
bianco
grigio antracite
effetto corten

la fioriera si distingue in due tipologie:
- a dimensioni standard con altezza compresa tra 50 e 100cm
- a dimensioni standard con altezza compresa tra 50 e 100cm
La fioriera è un grande contenitore ad un unico abito made in aluminum
senza di colore tra gli esercizi che si trovano in prossimità della corsia
la fioriera è il primo regolamento ad uso come contenitore per piante.

Spiraea prunifolia Plena
fiore bianca alta fino a 150cm

Gillenia trifoliata
fiore bianca alta fino a 80cm

Nandina
fiore rosa alta fino a 85cm

Philirea fraseri nana
fiore rosa alta fino a 60cm

Umbrellone e Fioriera
In bianco in abito con il contenitore
dell'ombrellone realizzato con il nuovo
colore della fioriera che non necessita
di nessun tassello invecchiato per la
prevenzione.

♥ 5.1.4. Sustainable mobility

The plan focuses on optimizing parking to reclaim urban space and promote sustainable mobility. Key actions include converting angled parking to parallel spaces for protected bike lanes, reducing parking near intersections, and limiting on-street parking along main roads and transport hubs. In the city center, measures like dynamic pricing, extended paid hours, and reduced residential parking aim to increase turnover and encourage park-and-ride use.

Suburban areas will see expanded paid parking zones to improve turnover, especially where free parking dominates. These steps reflect long-term goals for efficient space use and improved urban accessibility.

Main actions are:

1. Improving On-Street Parking Efficiency to Reclaim Space for Other Uses

2. Overhauling Parking in the City Center to Encourage Use of Park-and-Ride Facilities and Increase Turnover

3. Revising Suburban Parking Systems to Promote Higher Turnover



♥ 5.1.5. Open data portal

The Open Data portal of the Unione dei Comuni Valle del Savio offers around **600 datasets**, including 110 on geographic data. Of these, 250 are updated annually and 50 daily. The municipality of Cesena contributes with 398 datasets.

Driving transparency and innovation with 600 datasets for data-driven urban planning and services.

The portal covers a range of topics such as **businesses, population demographics, vacant housing, and parking**. It promotes transparency by providing open data in accessible formats, supporting data-driven decisions through dynamic maps and dashboards, and encouraging the use of up-to-date information for urban planning and public services.



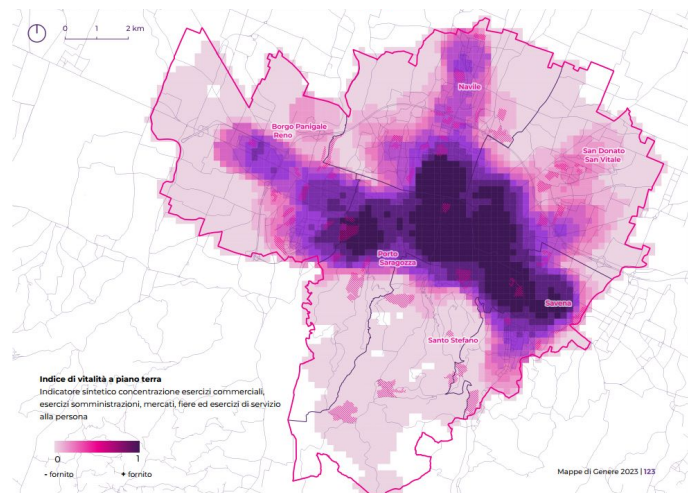
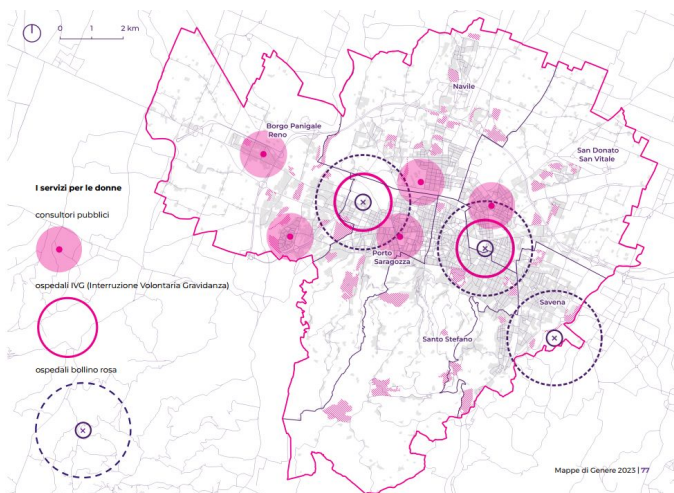
♥ 5.1.6. Bologna Gender Atlas

The Bologna Gender Atlas intended to help describe and disseminate the **different dimensions of gender inequality**.

It aims to be a tool that empowers citizens to understand the gender gap that coexists in their urban environment, allows technicians to develop new policies and allows the European Investment Bank to evaluate their future investments in the city to guarantee an integrated gender vision.

The atlas illustrates various aspects of citizens' well-being, needs, and overall quality of life, delving into the characteristics of public spaces, examining the **sense of security and the perceived quality** that our residents experience. Additionally, it offers insights into how **mobility systems function** within our urban landscape as well as their underpinning infrastructures.

The Atlas provides a comprehensive view of the gender gap in Bologna.



♥ 5.1.7 Sustainability Offset Guidelines

The guidelines (design and evaluation of environmental offsetting and ecological compensations) aim to **steer urban transformations towards high-quality, sustainable development**, focusing on both new urbanization and regeneration efforts.

They provide a framework for measuring and evaluating ecological and environmental sustainability, ensuring efficient use of natural resources.

Additionally, the guidelines offer practical directions for designing urban regeneration projects and public infrastructure. They also outline offset tools to reduce environmental, climate, and ecosystem impacts, fostering more sustainable urban growth and resilience.

The guidelines promote sustainable urban development by offering tools for measuring ecological impact, designing regenerative projects, and reducing environmental and climate impacts.



♥ 5.2.1 Last-Mile Logistics webinar

Laetitia Dabanc, Professor at Université Gustave Eiffel and Head of the Logistics City Chair presented best practices and lessons from European cities illustrating the role last-mile logistics play in integrated and sustainable urban development.

Our Last-Mile Logistics webinar was a great introduction to current urban logistics challenges and new innovations we need to live locally in globally-connected cities!

Martine Vazquez shared pioneering test actions coordinated by the Métropole du Grand Paris to introduce improved delivery tracking and the logistics potential of waterways. Lara Rachele Stellin explained how Vicenza turned the logistics game around for the better, introducing a public-private solution for green transport. In Barcelona, the question was addressed with complex and comprehensive regulations.



♥ Thematic Webinar #2

Cities@Heart Last-Mile Logistics

Wednesday, September 18th
10:00 - 11:30

Introduction

Laetitia Dabanc, Urban Planner and Head of the Logistics City Chair - Gustave Eiffel University

Presentation of Case Studies

Martine Vasquez, Greater Paris Metropolis
Lara Stellin, VELOCe Vicenza Logistic City Center
Mar Santamaría, Network Lead Expert

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The photograph shows a city street scene with a white delivery van parked on the right, a small truck on the left, and several bicycles parked in the foreground. The buildings in the background are multi-story, light-colored structures with ornate architectural details.



“We are demanding more logistics while conserving an environmental friendly city”



Angélique Crucilla



João Mirante - Braga, Portugal



Suzanne Pergal



Edel Sligo BID



Mar



Lara Rachele Stellin



Martine Vazquez



Ger Corbett



Joan Chéneau



Léonie Yang



Elena Giovannini - Cesena



Carlos Sousa Santos



Laëtitia DABLANC



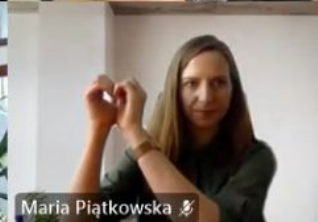
Cécile Savin



maria jose masnou



raffaella Gueze Comune Cese...



Maria Piatkowska



Julita Ewert - Stawowy

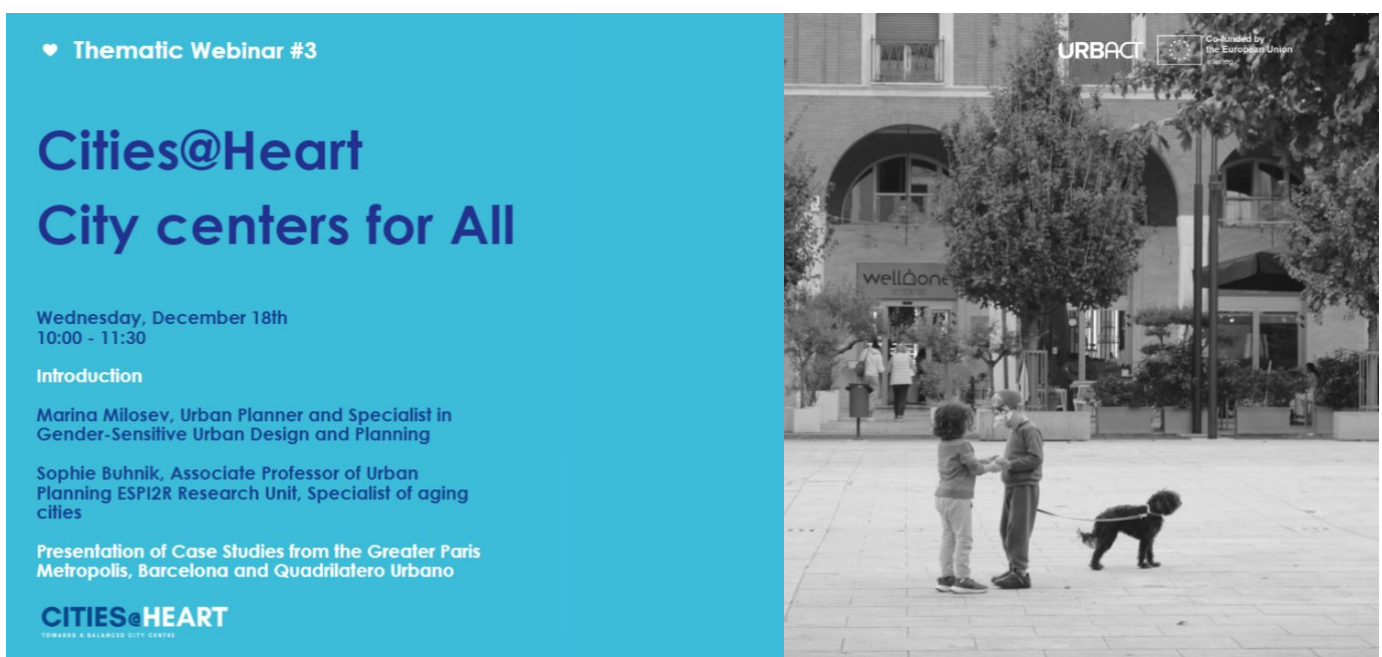


Lauren Hanlon

♥ 4.2.2 City Centers for All webinar

This webinar, focused on inclusion in the city, began with an enlightening presentation by Marina Milosev on strategies to tackle inclusion and create inclusive spaces that address gender-specific needs. Following this, three case studies were presented. The first explored how to design for children and incorporate them into the design process in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, Paris. The second focused on creating welcoming streets for older adults in Barcelona. Lastly, the third case study examined how to shift transportation modes to make schools healthier and more accessible for everyone in Braga. **Together, these expert contributions inspired us to envision and build cities that truly work for everyone.**

Our Cities@Heart Thematic Webinar provided a thought-provoking exploration of how cities can better serve the diverse needs of women, children, and the elderly!



♥ Thematic Webinar #3

Cities@Heart City centers for All

Wednesday, December 18th
10:00 - 11:30

Introduction

Marina Milosev, Urban Planner and Specialist in Gender-Sensitive Urban Design and Planning

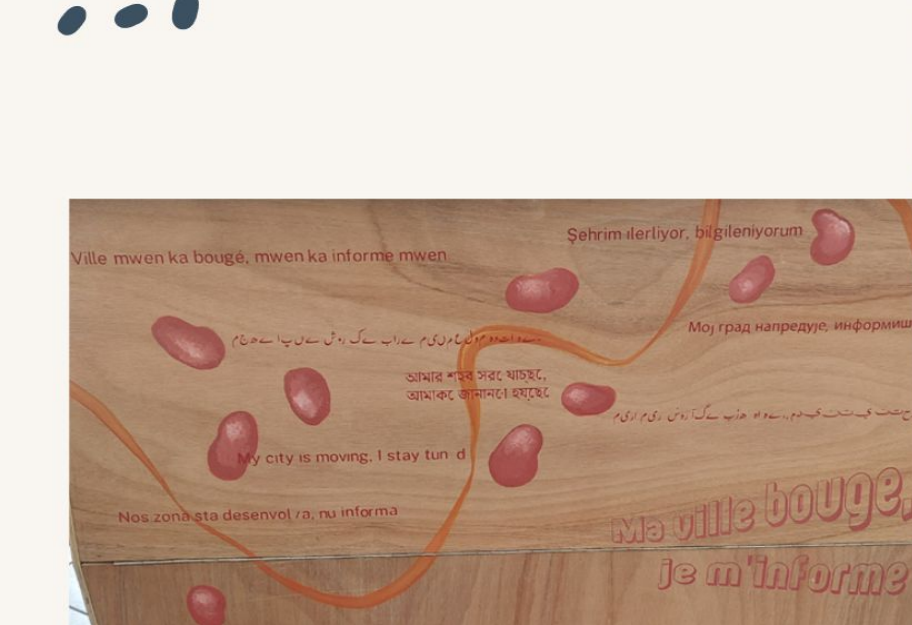
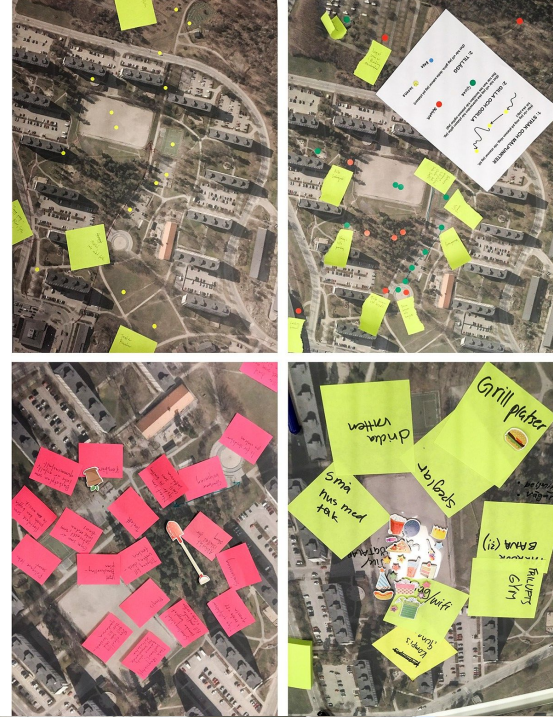
Sophie Buhnik, Associate Professor of Urban Planning ESPI2R Research Unit, Specialist of aging cities

Presentation of Case Studies from the Greater Paris Metropolis, Barcelona and Quadrilatero Urbano

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♥ 6. Mid-Term Review Process

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) highlights the network's progress, supported by the Lead Partner, Lead Expert and URBACT Secretariat. Despite partners' positive perceptions of the knowledge activities implemented so far, challenges such as bureaucracy, stakeholder engagement, and limited political backing risk delaying IAPs. To address this, the network is focusing on enhancing stakeholder involvement, political support, and capacity-building activities to overcome resource and coordination challenges.

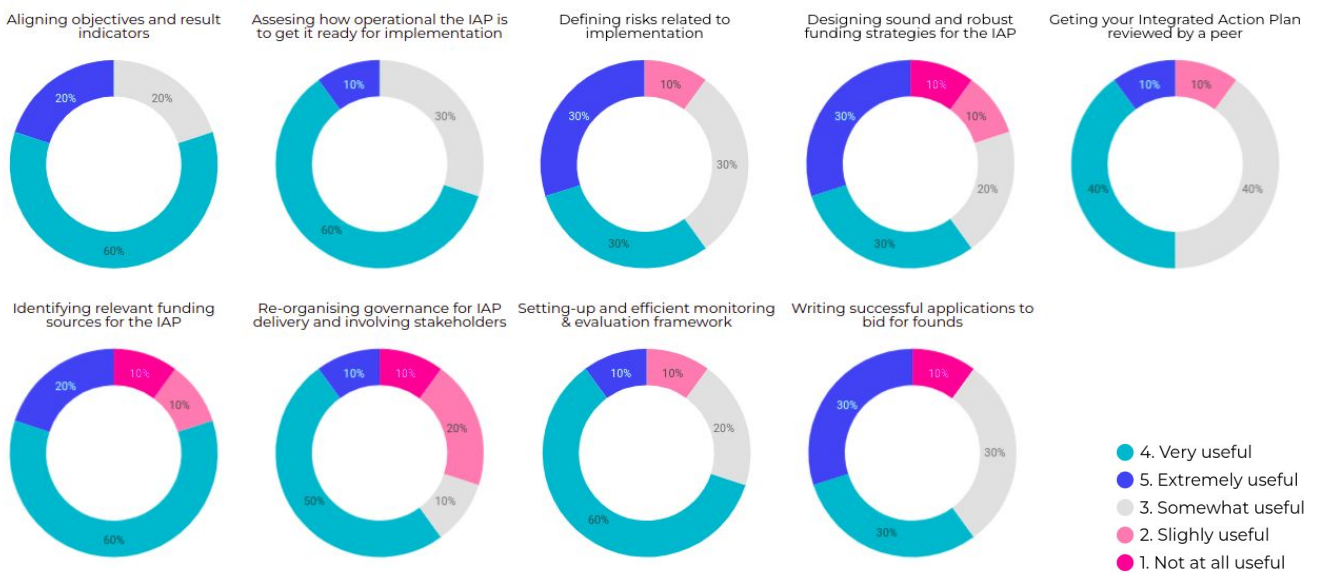
To prepare this Mid-Term Review, an online survey was carried out with participation from all the cities in the network. The MTR Session was conducted at the transnational meeting in Cesena.

Next year, the network will prioritize tailored knowledge-sharing products and improved monitoring frameworks to strengthen integrated urban development. Building on successful collaborations with peer networks, efforts will focus on creating synergies, enhancing digital tools, and fostering independent exchanges to deliver sustainable and inclusive city centre revitalization strategies.

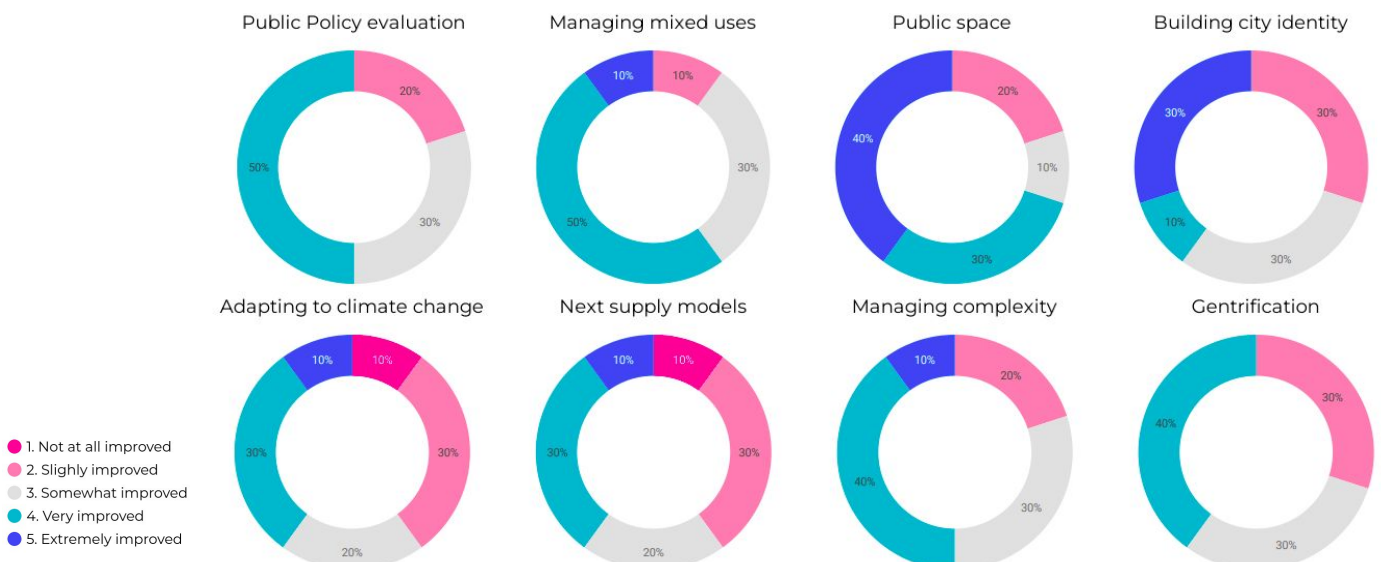


Mid-Term Review Survey Results

Future: What would help you now? What would you like to learn on the occasion of capacity building activities?



Thematic knowledge at network level: To what extent have you improved your knowledge and understanding of the urban challenges you are tackling?



Mid-Term Review Conclusions

Integrated Action Plan

Most of the cities are **achieving or exceeding the expected progress**.

Among the actions expected for the Midterm Review, **the Action Table and the Integration Check are the least prepared**.

Only **20% or fewer** of the sections expected after the Midterm Review **are fully prepared**.

Some partners are experiencing **severe delays because of external expertise contracting process**.

ULG

The ULG composition has evolved from the initial core group. Do we have a balance of stakeholders to achieve all levels of integration (for example, supra local integration?)

The evolution of ULG is heterogeneous: some partners report a positive engagement while others are facing difficulties to maintain stakeholders support.

Main challenges are related to matching priorities between partners/ULG and time management.

Testing actions

The municipalities aimed to implement the URBACT Method with the ULG, co-designing IAP sections informed by small-scale actions, gathering data on economic impacts and housing, involving external experts, exchanging public participation experiences, and preparing a draft or near-final IAP for the Cesena meeting.

More than half of the municipalities have yet to implement testing actions. 50% plan to implement one, and the other 50% expect to implement more than one, with these actions being seen as very or extremely helpful.

The municipalities' **biggest challenges in developing actions** include fostering ULG collaboration, promoting accessibility, engaging building owners and managers, managing external entities, collecting representative data, and coordinating stakeholder and citizen participation.

The municipalities **plan to evaluate the results of their testing actions** by analyzing the relationship between inputs and outputs, monitoring through sensors and questionnaires, conducting detailed analyses of data from festivals and events, assessing property refurbishment through government support schemes, commissioning evaluation studies for comparison, and collecting feedback through surveys, attendance records, and direct counting.

Mid-Term Review Conclusions

Thematic knowledge

- There is a positive perception of the proposed learning activities.
- The topics **Climate change, New models of supply and Public Policy evaluation** should be expanded.
- Even if the format of proposed activities has tangibly improved partners' knowledge, partners express the **need to have more peer to peer exchanges.**

Support

- In general, there is a positive perception of the support received within the network.
- The link with URBACT secretariat and National points needs to be more visible and active.

Final thoughts

Good practices

- Strong support from the Lead Partner and Lead expert
- Effective collaboration and positive working mindset within the consortium
- Productive transnational meetings
- Valuable use of data for monitoring
- Engagement in thematic webinars
- Rich, diverse and professional steering group

Future

- The **primary risks to delivering the IAP** have been identified as a **lack of resources and insufficient political support**, while the absence of key stakeholders poses a challenge to completing the IAP.
- The municipalities highlighted **key learning areas primarily focused on funding**—such as designing effective strategies, writing successful applications, and identifying relevant sources—alongside defining implementation-related risks, aligning objectives with result indicators, and assessing operational readiness.

Need to be improved

- Significant bureaucracy and extra tasks beyond the SSA and IAP
- Team-building activities and discussions on partner activities on-site visits
- Support for communication to general public.
- Enhance digital tools, including clarifying Drive for research and using Google Calendar for task organization
- Collaboration between the partners (independently of the lead expert)

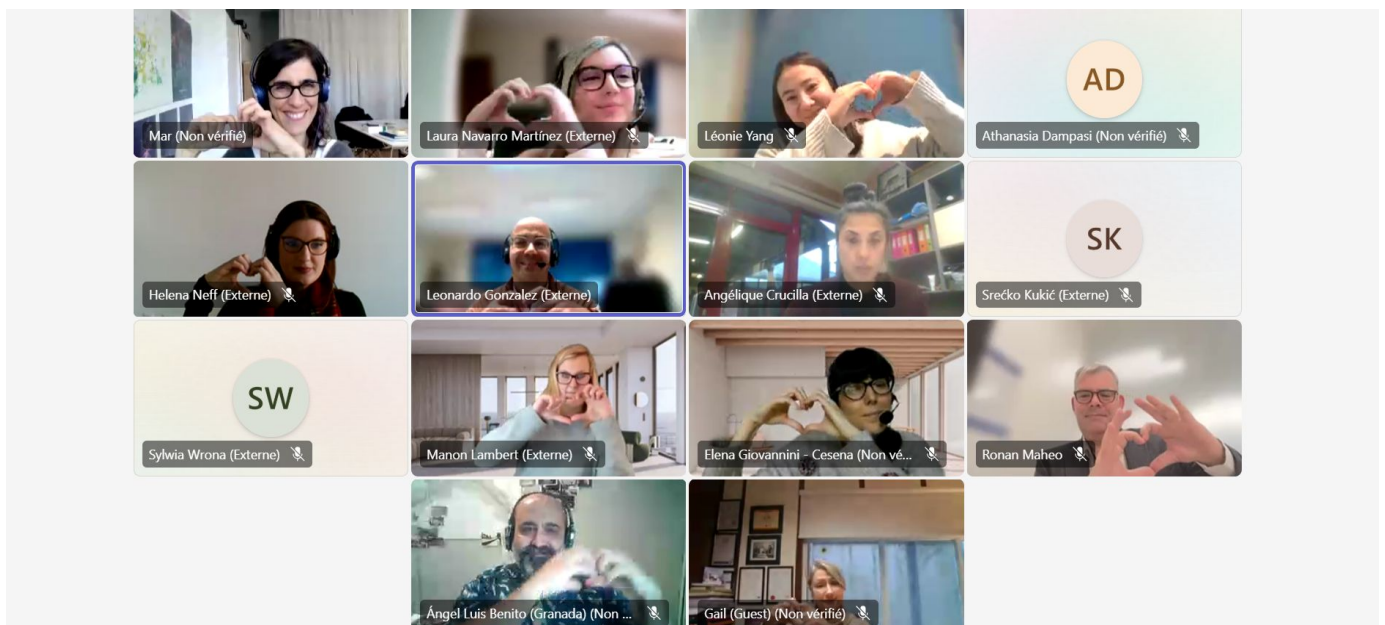
♥ 7. Integrated Action Plan Review

This quarter, the cities in the network prepared the first draft of their IAPs, refining their vision and objectives. These drafts were collectively reviewed in two key sessions.

At Cesena, participants received practical guidance and examples by Mar Santamaria (LE) to help design workshops and carry out self-assessments of their IAPs, ensuring a more structured and effective planning process.

During the second session, lead by Ed Thorpe (Ad-Hoc expert) and LE, partners conducted a thorough analysis of all IAP, focusing on the further development of Action Tables in relation to their visions and objectives.

The IAP framework is a future-oriented, context-driven tool designed to address specific urban policy challenges through a coherent and multi-layered approach.



♥ 8. Upcoming milestones

FIFTH TRANSNATIONAL MEETING Celje - March 2025

The fourth transnational meeting in Cesena marked the conclusion of the planning phase. The **upcoming transnational meeting in Celje** will begin the final phase, focusing on refining and testing activities (second round), defining and scaling actions, identifying resources, clarifying stakeholder responsibilities, and conducting risk analysis to ensure the effective implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP).

In Celje, we will **refine activities, scale actions, align resources, clarify responsibilities, conduct risk analysis, and co-create the Cities@Heart policy evaluation toolbox.**

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

In addition to the transnational meetings, we will be organising webinars on specific topics of interest to the partners.

**Thank you,
And stay posted for more!**



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