Remote-IT Baseline study and Network Roadmap

January 2024

URBACT

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1. About this report

This report summarizes the starting point for Remote-IT URBACT network in 2023, as captured by the URBACT Lead Expert assigned to the network. It also describes how the eight cities, partners in the network, are going to collaborate both at local and transnational levels during 2024-2025 in order to achieve the main milestones they committed to when they applied for URBACT funding. The main audience of this report are the network partners and the members of each URBACT Local Group established for Remote-It.

The structure of this report follows closely the guidance issued by the URBACT Secretariat. Thus :

Section 1- describes the European policy context for the main challenge tacked by the network;
Section 2- contains a partner profile for each network partner, highlighting their main local challenge and main expected learning areas especially connected to the URBACT method;
Section 3- sets out the work programme for the network in the next 2 years and refines the issues to be addressed (sub-themes) at both the transnational and each local partner levels.

Remote-IT is an URBACT Action Planning Network, financed through the URBACT IV (2021-2027) programme of the European Commission. Remote-IT network tackles the new challenges cities are experiencing connected to the future of work. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the transformation around how work is organised, with hybrid and remote work models significantly impacting the lives of citizens, as well as the organisational culture of major employers (public/private). Remote-IT partnerships of cities is collaboratively exploring this emerging topic in order to implement proactive policy making. Website https://urbact.eu/networks/remote-it;

The Network is led by the Dubrovnik's Development Agency (DURA), Croatia. Partner cities include: Brindisi (Italy), Bucharest District 6 (Romania), Camara de Lobos (Portugal), Heraklion (Greece), Murcia (Spain), Tartu (Estonia), Tirana Albania).

URBACT is the European Territorial Cooperation programme aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. It is an instrument of the Cohesion Policy, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the 27 Member States, Norway & Switzerland. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. More info: https://urbact.eu/

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2. Section 1: The Policy Context

This section offers a brief EU policy overview on main aspects linked to remote work preparedness, which represents the core thematic focus of the Remote-IT network. It features main reports and policy guidelines existing at EU level, as well as complementary projects and networks. The section summarizes the desk review conducted by the Lead Expert between July- September 2023. It aims to establish the existing base on which Remote-IT network will build its learning and exchange journey which is further described in Section 3 of the study.

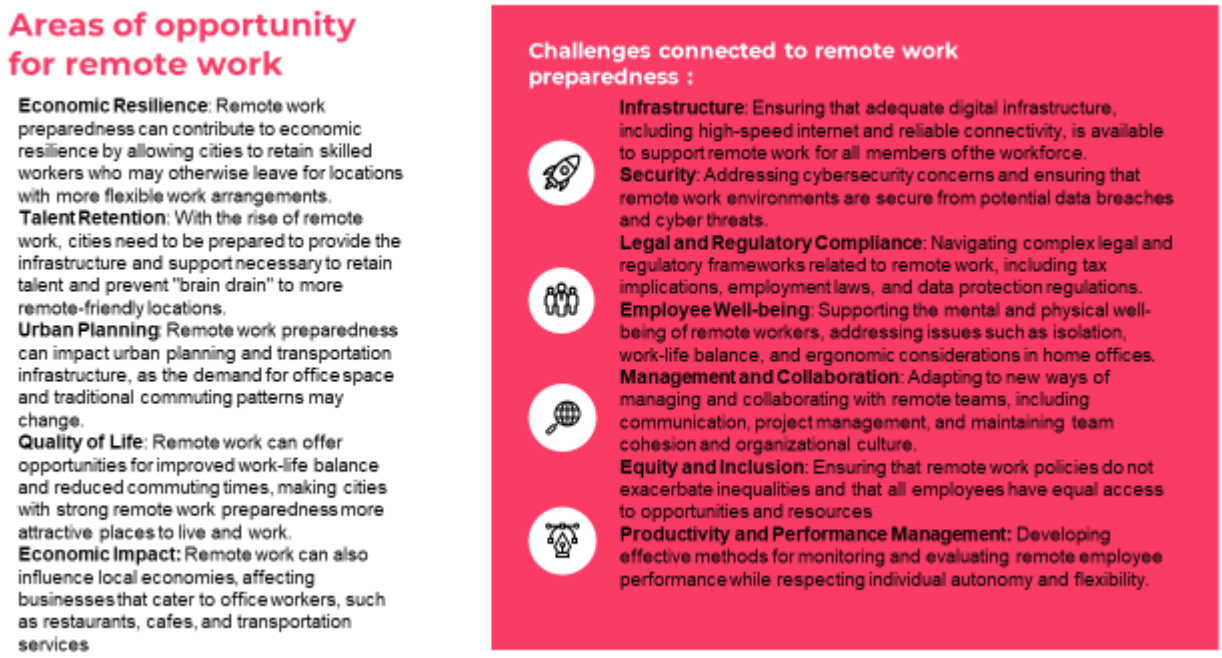
2.1 Remote work preparedness

Remote work preparedness can be defined as the state of readiness and ability of an individual, organization, or a country to effectively and efficiently conduct work, business, or professional activities outside of traditional office settings, utilizing remote communication and collaboration tools, and having the necessary infrastructure, policies, and procedures in place to support remote work[i] .

Remote-IT network will focus on what cities can proactively do in order to achieve remote work preparedness, addressing both emerging challenges, but also capitalising on possible areas of opportunity, as summarized in Figure 1. As the network focuses on urban scale and takes as starting point what the local municipal authority in collaboration with academia, business and NGOs (the URBACT Local Groups) can achieve, it works simultaneously on two important layers:

1. *External layer: remote workers*. Sometimes called “digital nomads” as further described in the following section, this new workforce has high mobility and can choose destinations based on different work-life balance considerations. Attracting remote workers has the potential of strengthening the local economy.
2. *Internal layer: public authority as a hybrid work space.* This captures the internal transformations of the public administrations, how their own employees can work remotely and the significant impacts on public services delivery.

Figure 1:



Thus, Remote-IT directly tackles the **European Commission's 2030 priority for a Europe fit for the digital age**, which aims to empower people with a new generation of technologies. More specifically, the European Commission's "Digital Europe" policy framework [ii], which encompasses policies such as the Digital Services Act, the European Data Strategy and the Digital Markets act, provide the legislative guidelines for many of the topics related to remote work preparedness.

Remote-It makes a substantial contribution to **Policy Objective 5 of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027**, which aims to bring Europe closer to its citizens. The initiative seeks to establish a strategic framework for sustainable and integrated development across territories and local initiatives that are currently grappling with the impact of remote work. Cities within the network will enhance their capacity to address the intricate changes brought about by the decentralization of work, leveraging transnational exchanges to collaboratively shape future initiatives that can significantly bolster local economic development and, in many cases, transition toward sustainable tourism practices. This includes enhancing social resilience through proactive adaptations in public services, cybersecurity, and multi-level governance collaborations.

Additionally, the network contributes to Policy Objective 1 of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027, fostering a more competitive and smarter Europe, by specifically addressing the economic transformation facilitated by regional ICT connectivity. This is beneficial for cities in more developed regions at risk of losing talent, as well as for cities in less developed or transitioning regions that can attract talent. Furthermore, Remote-IT aligns with Policy Objective 2 of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027, promoting a greener, low-carbon economy, and Policy Objective 3 of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027, advancing a more connected Europe, as it actively involves local stakeholders in re-envisioning the delivery of public services and private amenities to harness the potential of remote work practices, leading to reduced commuting and increased use of neighbourhood services.

2.2 Digital nomads and link with sustainable tourism

The European Union (EU) has recognized the increasing trend of digital nomadism and has started to address its policy implications. In 2021, the European Commission proposed a new directive to improve the working conditions of digital nomads within the EU [iii]. On page 5 of the EU directive proposal you can find a very informative problem tree mapping related to the main challenges of this largely unregulated domain in the EU context. The proposed directive aims to provide a legal framework for digital nomads, ensuring their rights and working conditions are protected while moving between different EU countries. It includes provisions for access to social security, health care, and other benefits for digital nomads who work remotely across borders.

The EU also recognizes the potential economic and social benefits of digital nomadism, such as promoting digital innovation and entrepreneurship, and is exploring ways to support and facilitate this lifestyle within the EU. In addition, the EU is working on initiatives to improve digital infrastructure, such as high-speed internet access and digital skills training, to support digital nomads and remote workers. Overall, the EU policy context on digital nomads is focused on creating a supportive and enabling environment for remote work and digital nomadism, while ensuring the rights and well-being of those who choose this lifestyle are protected.

What is a digital nomad?

*As defined by the **OECD**[iv], a digital nomad is an individual who leads a technology-enabled, location-independent lifestyle. This lifestyle is made possible by the use of enabling technologies, such as high-speed internet, video conferencing tools, online collaboration platforms for teams, and cloud solutions, which allow for global connectivity. Remote work offers the potential to access a higher quality of life environment and the ability to choose a more favorable tax regime. A key distinction of digital nomads from other categories of working migrants, such as cross-border workers and intra-corporate transferees, is that their income is earned from foreign sources.*

The EU currently lacks a standardized definition [v], and in some cases, individuals who rely solely on semi-passive or passive income may also fall under the category of digital nomads based on certain new regulations. Some specific definitions can be identified in the national laws of countries that have introduced a ***digital nomad visa***, as follows:

- In **Croatia**, a third-country national who is engaged in employment or work using communication technology for a company, whether their own or another, that is not registered in the Republic of Croatia and does not provide services to employers within the Republic of Croatia.
- **Estonia** allows third-country nationals (TCNs) to temporarily stay in the country in order to perform work as a location-independent employee, entrepreneur with a registered business abroad, or freelancer serving clients based abroad.
- In **Spain**, international telecommuters can stay in the country to remotely perform work or professional activities for companies located outside of Spain, using only computer, telematic, and telecommunication tools. If employed, visa holders can only work for foreign companies or, if working for a Spanish company, their work in Spain cannot exceed 20% of their total professional activity.

Further information on the state of play on digital nomad visa mechanism around the world is also available in the dedicated brief developed by the **United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)** published in 2023 [vi].

Partially, EU member states have been promoters of adopting a digital nomad mechanism in order to support their tourism industry. Tourism was one of the most affected sectors by the COVID-19 pandemic. The **European Commission's 8th Cohesion Report**, published by DG Regio in 2022, confirms that certain areas in Europe rely heavily on tourism, such as numerous Mediterranean islands, coastal regions, the Alps, the Black Sea coast, Algarve, and the Canary Islands. Although several capitals and major cities also draw numerous tourists, their economies are more robust and varied, making them less reliant on tourism compared to coastal and mountainous destinations [vii]. Moreover, the same study clearly documents that in 2020 Cyprus, Malta, Croatia, Greece, and Spain experienced the most significant decreases in the number of nights spent per resident, surpassing the EU average by more than two-fold. Conversely, Member States with generally lower tourist nights per resident saw comparatively smaller reductions.

Attracting digital nomads (persons who can stay up to 1 year using the digital nomad visa) or remote workers (persons who can stay long-term, opting for other legal frameworks outside the digital visa mechanism) is seen as a practice that can support a destination in its transition towards sustainable tourism. Arguments for this include: long-term stays, stays in low season, extensive use of local services, influx of talent and funding, high motivation to connect to local residents and culture.

2.3Work from home and hybrid work practices

In 2019, 5.5% of the EU's employed population usually worked from home, according to the **European Commission's 8th Cohesion Report**. Due to the pandemic and the requirement to work from home where possible, this proportion more than doubled to 12.4% in 2020. The ability to work from home varies depending on the type of job. Some jobs, such as those in healthcare, manufacturing, and agriculture, must be done in person. Many regions with large cities experienced significant increases in the percentage of people working from home, reflecting the high number of economic activities that can be done remotely, usually by high-skilled workers. The distribution of critical and 'teleworkable' jobs is heavily influenced by the level of urbanization, with rural areas having a higher share of 'non-teleworkable' jobs compared to cities, towns, and suburbs.

Actually, teleworkability uptake raises concerns over a new digital divide. The European Commission's **Joint Research Center** has demonstrated that approximately 37% of employees in the EU-27 are in occupations that can feasibly be conducted from home [viii]. However these occupations generally pertain to high-paid, white-collar workers, which signals the potential of raising inequities. The same JRC study dedicated to teleworkability also points on gender-based differences. A significantly higher percentage of women, 45% compared to 30% of men, are in occupations suitable for telework. While pre-pandemic surveys indicated similar rates of teleworking among genders, the Eurofound COVID-19 survey data did reveal a small gap, with 41% of female employees and 37% of male employees reporting that they began teleworking since the start of the current crisis.

The gender discrepancy in teleworkability is partly due to the segregation of sectors, with men being overrepresented in sectors with limited potential for telework, such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, utilities, and construction. Another part is because the connections between remote work and caregiving responsibilities can harm the balance between work and personal life, potentially exacerbating gender disparities that already exist.

These emerging trends of teleworkability also inform the new **Horizon** – Tranformations-01 call dedicated on "remote working arrangements and their economic, social and spatial effects" ix. The call has recently closed in March 2023, with three projects being approved for funding from June 2023:

- REmote-working Multiple impacts in the Age of disruptions: socioeconomic transformations, territorial rethinKING, and policy actions, led by University of Bologna;
- Mapping, understanding, assessing and predicting the effects of remote working arrangements in urban and rural areas- led by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki;
- Healthy, inclusive and sustainable remote work futures as a Win-Win for employees and employers in urban, rural and cross-border areas- led by Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research.

There is a high potential of synergies between there three Horizon projects and the future activity of Remote-IT network, which should be actively explored through the future online forums.

While it is clear that we are only experiencing the tip of iceberg in terms of understanding the systemic implications of teleworkability, the current hybrid work practices are beginning to transform our workplaces.

Hybrid work refers to a work model that combines both remote (working from home or off-site) and in-person work (at the office or on-site). This model allows employees to have flexibility in where they work, often splitting their time between working remotely and being physically present in the office[x]

Numerous studies and guidelines have been published after the Covid-19 pandemic, aiming to support organisations in their transformations[xi],[xii]. In general, in order to effectively navigate the transition to hybrid work, organizations must contemplate restructuring work, empowering the workforce, and adjusting the workplace based on three elements: human, digital, and physical.

Human	Digital	Physical/ place-based
Advancing human-machine collaboration by empowering workers to augment their abilities with technology while embracing increased flexibility through hybrid work methods.	Developing an interactive and motivating digital teamwork environment that enriches human interaction, creativity, and the overall employee experience.	Transforming local conditions, such as the presence of high-speed Internet and suitable space for remote or alternative work, significantly influence the ability to engage in telecommuting.

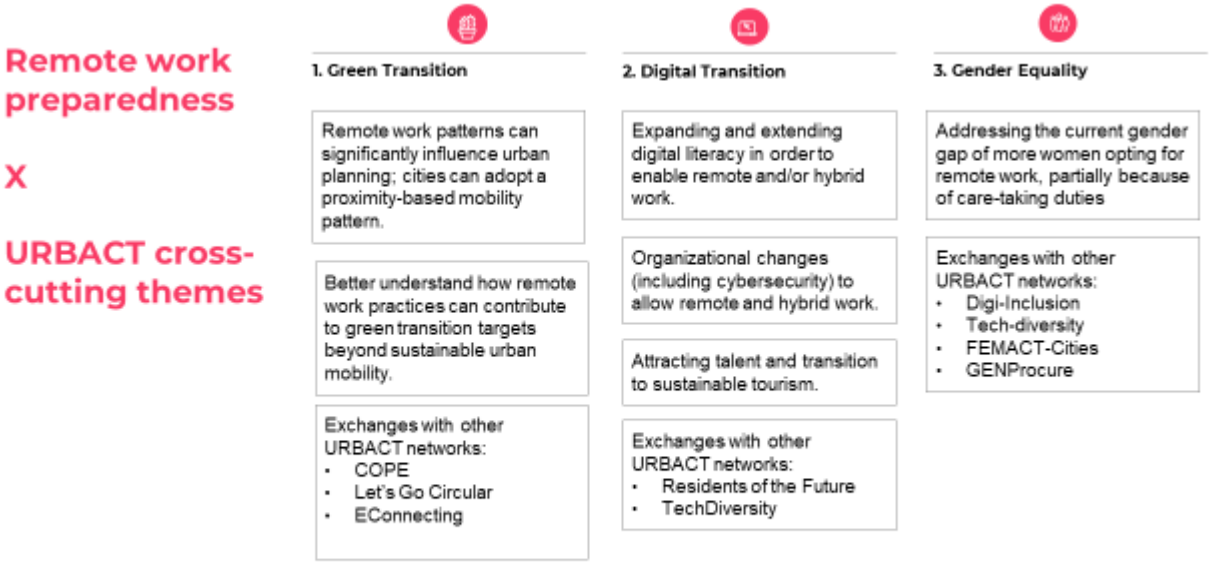
Hybrid work arrangements in a public authority brings an additional level of complexity. On the one hand, addressing imminent challenges of cybersecurity and data protection. On the other hand, upskilling and attracting new talent in the workforce with skills needed to effectively manage and further develop productive hybrid work environments. The **European Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control** background study on "COVID-19 response of EU public administration" provides useful insights on key aspects that a public organisation needs to take into account for changing its workflow for hybrid work [xiii].

2.4 Relevance of Remote-IT network and link with URBACT cross-sectoral themes

Remote-IT is the first URBACT network of cities exploring the different layers of remote work preparedness. As the network deals in a proactive way with emerging disruptive effects of the ongoing digital transition and de-localization of work, it serves as a test-bed on how a participatory approach towards action planning can shape different courses of action for some of the possible scenarios on the future of (our) work.

Moreover, the URBACT cross cutting themes of green, digital transitions and gender equality strongly apply to Remote-IT network, as summarized in Figure 2. While the digital transition topic is one of the central themes addressed by the network, both green transition and gender equality aspects are interweaved in the current effects cities are beginning to experience as a result of higher adoption of work from home practices. In addition, several other current URBACT networks address as core challenges green transition and gender equality issues. Remote-IT aims to capitalise on this, by including exchanges and learning opportunities with these networks, as the methodology in section 3 further describes.

Figure 2:



The thematic focus of the network is also strongly connected with three of the newly launched partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU and the current work of the European Urban Initiative. First, the partnership on sustainable tourism, where Remote-IT can contribute with thematic content as it progresses in implementation on how digital nomads may contribute to creating different value chains locally and a better cohesion with residents, which can strongly contribute to the sustainability of tourism practices. Second, on greening cities, where Remote-IT can contribute with input on remote work practices for sustainable urban mobility. Thirdly, on the partnership of cities of equality, where Remote-IT can contribute on how remote work practices can become more equitable and fostering work-life balance and promoting mental health.

Moreover, a strong majority of Remote-IT partner cities are Article 11 cities, and their future Integrated Action Plan on remote work preparedness will be strongly aligned with the funding opportunities provided through these Cohesion policy funds and their current sustainable urban strategies. Furthermore, the network will advance the understanding of remote work preparedness in order to support cities reach the objectives they have committed to EU Mission of 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities (with our network city partner Tartu being one of them) and towards UN's SDG Goal 11 "Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

Overall, the subject of remote work is changing as we speak and requires immediate actions. This is why, Remote-IT can open the way to other European cities which are facing similar challenges and want to learn what possible integrated actions they could consider and how to co-create a shared vision with their local stakeholders by using processes as the URBACT method.

3. Section2 – Partner Profiles

This section provides for each Remote-IT partner an overarching profile, highlighting the state of play for each city, both in terms of challenges connected to remote work preparedness and of local resources already in place to support the implementation of Remote-IT activities. The section summarizes: (1) the data collected by the Lead Expert via the city visits from each city between July-October 2023 ; (2) information collected through the co-creation workshops with all network partners during the network's first transnational core meeting held in Dubrovnik in July 2023 and online in November 2023 and (3) review of information submitted by the network in the initial Application Form when they applied for URBACT funding.

3.1Dubrovnik (DURA)

LOCAL CONTEXT

The City of Dubrovnik stands out as a highly sought-after Mediterranean destination, experiencing a consistent rise in visitor numbers annually. However, akin to numerous premier tourist cities in Europe, Dubrovnik faces the challenges associated with over-tourism due to the escalating influx of visitors. In response to the constraints posed by limited capacity and resources, the city initiated the "Respect the City" project in 2017, aiming to foster sustainability in tourism. Additionally, Dubrovnik joined the URBACT Tourism-friendly cities network (TFC) during 2020-2022.

The implementation of the TFC coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly impacting Dubrovnik's local economy heavily reliant on mass and short-term tourism. This period of disruption prompted the city to reevaluate and diversify its approach to tourism. The surge in remote work, coupled with the necessity to reorganize tourism activities, revealed the potential of digital nomads as an appealing market. Recognizing this opportunity, in 2021, Dubrovnik launched initiatives like the European conference "Dubrovnik for Digital Nomads" and "The Dubrovnik Digital Nomad-in-Residence." In 2022, the TFC ULG identified remote work preparedness as a strategic avenue to foster sustainable tourism practices, emphasizing prolonged stays.

The primary challenge lies in leveraging the remote work trend to attract digital nomads for extended periods, thereby fundamentally reshaping the city's tourism models. Simultaneously, there is a need to address the well-being of the city's residents, predominantly employed in the tourism sector, whose livelihoods rely heavily on face-to-face interactions. Additionally, the city must navigate its digital transformation to democratize sectors such as housing, short-term rentals, urban mobility, air quality, and sea biodiversity. This approach aims to identify collaborative solutions that align with the evolving landscape and cater to the diverse needs of residents and visitors alike.

KEY FIGURES

41,562 residents | UNESCO Heritage Site

Croatia issues a digital nomad visa since 2021

Dubrovnik launched the Digital Nomad Pass in 2023

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN FOCUS

The Dubrovnik IAP will focus on actions that can promote the city for remote workers especially during low season in order to contribute to the transition towards more sustainable models of tourism. Their work will also target other implications for adopting hybrid work models, considering economic, ecological, and social Implications.

KEY LOCAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Complementarity with the current local and regional strategies, which identified remote work patterns as an opportunity: Respect the City plan, Integrated Action plan from URBACT Tourism Friendly Cities, Strategy for the development of the Dubrovnik Urban Area, Smart City plan and Development plan of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County 2027.
Contribution to targets set up by the national strategy on digitalisation- Act on the System of Strategic Planning and Development Management of the Republic of Croatia and legislative framework set up by the Croatian Labor Law on work from home patterns.
Strong political support of Ms. Jelka Tepšić, Deputy Mayor, City of Dubrovnik. Ms. Tepšić has been actively involved in both the city visits and the first transnational Remote-IT meeting, showcasing how she and her colleagues have championed Dubrovnik recent orientation towards attracting digital nomads through campaigns such as the Digital Nomad Residency Programme and the Digital Nomad Monthly Pass in order to use city services, as well as recognizing the added value brought by the URBACT programme.
Very strong URBACT experience. DURA has been involved as partner in several URBACT III networks: TechTown, 2nd Chance, Active NGOs and Tourism-friendly Cities and has contributed regularly with speakers and showcasing good practices of IAP development in the URBACT capacity building events.
Possible Action plan resourcing, through the secured funding of the New European Bauhaus (NEB). DURA is managing the revitalization project of the TUP Factory (“TUP” Carbon Graphite and Electrical Contact Products Factory), which was chosen with 20 other cities to receive the NEB Support for transforming the old industrial venue in new urban cultural and social incubator and intersection between local community and tourists/ remote workers.
Synergies with other URBACT networks. DURA is also part of EcoCore network, where they will focus on transforming the city’s brownfields in thriving green corridors, encouraging green businesses to use the current underutilized areas. This opens potential synergies to the environmental dimension of remote work patterns and also may contribute to the cross-sectoral theme of green transition.

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS RELATED TO AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

As the Lead Partner, DURA team has a strong capacity for integrated approaches for sustainable urban development and a strong knowledge of the URBACT method. However, it is the first time DURA is a lead partner of an URBACT network, even though the organisation has successfully managed over 50 international and EU projects. Thus, main capacity building needs of DURA refer to:

- ✓ Implementation of the communication strategy at project level, showcasing achievement from each network partner;
- ✓ Capitalisation of network’s results at European level and documenting follow-up actions related to the project’s implementation from partners;

COORDINATION OF THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP (ULG)

Ms. Luna Polić Barović, Senior Advisor in DURA, is the ULG Coordinator. An initial ULG meeting was already organized in July 2023, while the second meeting took place on 30 November 2023, with a focus on the topic of co-creating the problem tree and common vision for the future IAP. Ms. Barović participated in the Malmo URBACT Summer University and has strong knowledge of the tools needed in order to animate the ULG.
Since Dubrovnik is quite a compact city, the majority of meetings will be held in person, with online meetings with national stakeholders held on an as-needed basis.
The ULG composition is diverse and balanced. Most of the ULG members have also been members of previous ULGs for the URBACT projects already implemented in URBACT III. There are several ULG members that operate at regional and national levels, as the topic of remote work is highly independent from the administrative boundaries.

ULG members:

Administrative Departments:
Administrative Department for EU Funds and International Cooperation
Administrative Department for Culture and Heritage
Administrative Department for Tourism, Economy and the Sea

NGOs:
NGO “Bonsai”
Association “DEŠA”
Digital Nomad Association (DNA) Croatia

Cultural institutions:
Dubrovnik Museums
Dubrovnik Heritage

Higher education and research institutions:
University of Dubrovnik
University of Dubrovnik Student Center
RIT Croatia
Eupolis

Tourism related stakeholders:
Dubrovnik Tourist Board
SMEs in the Tourism sector
Chamber of Crafts
Chamber of Economy
Dubrovnik Long Stay (web page)
Saltwater Nomads
Sun Gardens Residences

CCI stakeholders:
TUP Factory

3.2Brindisi

LOCAL CONTEXT

Brindisi, positioned as a gateway to the renowned Puglia region in Italy, grapples with overcoming its industrial history and confronting contemporary challenges associated with demographic shifts, including population decline, an aging populace, increased financial burdens, and the underutilization of public buildings. Despite its strategic coastal location, functioning as a crucial maritime port and a key United Nations logistical hub, Brindisi has not been a preferred tourist destination.
In response to the need for economic diversification over the past two decades, tourism has emerged as a potential alternative. However, the vulnerabilities of mass tourism underscored by the pandemic have prompted Brindisi, since 2020, to explore a fresh identity as a city welcoming remote workers. To encourage interest and position itself as an innovative Italian city embracing "smart working," Brindisi initiated a marketing campaign in 2020, presenting the 'Sea Working Brindisi' contest. The competition, offering the

opportunity to spend 10 days living and working on a sailing boat, attracted 800 international applications and garnered considerable attention from local and national media.
As a result, Brindisi began to be recognized as a European destination for digital nomads in various rankings published by The Guardian and Airbnb from 2021 onwards. However, the city currently lacks a comprehensive strategic plan outlining how to bolster remote work readiness and cultivate its local economy by enticing international talent to reside and work in Brindisi. This endeavor aims to avoid issues such as gentrification and environmental degradation. Brindisi acknowledges that the structural shifts in the geography of work brought about by the pandemic present a unique opportunity to creatively devise a new strategy aligned with emerging demands.

KEY FIGURES

87,141 residents

Italy offers a digital nomad visa since 2022
+'Impatriated workers' law, which offers a temporary tax relief regime, applying to workers who transfer their residence to Italy. A special extra tax incentive is given if the residence is taken in the region Brindisi is part of (Puglia) or in Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Basilicata, Calabria, Sardinia, Sicily.

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN FOCUS

The Brindisi IAP will focus on creating a favourable environment for remote workers in order to support the development of the local economy in a sustainable way. Brindisi would like to focus on the creation of a dedicated infrastructure in order to promote smart/remote working practices, as well as promoting its local assets at international level, using them to increase the quality of life of local residents and visitors.

KEY LOCAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Key moment in the development stage for the city, as Brindisi's core local development strategy 'Destinazione Brindisi' focuses on addressing the economic decline of the city by creating a new path for development aligned with new trends, in particular focusing on tourism development. It aspires to build together with residents and local stakeholders a sustainable, smart, beautiful and inclusive destination, in line with the New European Bauhaus promoted by the European Commission. Moreover, Brindisi's destination marketing and management strategy, recognizes remote/smart working (locally called « sea working ») as one of the potential areas of development. Additionally, Brindisi is geatured as a pilot city for a project for smart working in the regional strategy for tourism and culture, called Puglia Region 365.
Very experienced and motivated local coordination team, composed by Ms Gelsomina Macchitella - Project manager, Mr Gabriele Mingolla - Financial Manager and Ms Francesca Andriulo - Administrative Support. Apart from the strong technical knowledge of each team member, Brindisi's team contribution to all Remote-IT activities has been highly insightful and committed. It also shows the good timing of the project in the overall stage of development of Brindisi and the need to learn from the other cities which went through similar transformations.
Strong political support was shown during the city visit from Mr Giuseppe Marchionna - Mayor - City of Brindisi and Ms Ernestina Sicilia - Councillor in charge of European Policy and EU Cooperational Programmes - City of Brindisi.
Promising experience of citizen engagement and social innovation, by successfully implementing in a multi-actor consortium the "Case di quartiere" project, using public funds for both regenerating public spaces

and managing these spaces. These spaces may in the future be equipped to host remote workers and also to operate as pivot centres to foster a cultural/artistic (international also) community.
Possible Action plan resourcing, as Brindisi managed to secure from the Italian Resilience and Recovery Funds 30 million euros for the urban regeneration of Collegio Tommaseo, a former navy school strategically located in the city. While the funding was granted for a general makeover of the building and grounds into a cultural hub, the exact specifics and how the place can become a cultural attractor also for remote workers should be determined through the Remote-IT IAP co-development work. In addition, the municipality of Brindisi and its partners have applied for 5 million euros to expand the infrastructures of Case di Quartiere, which would include 10 public spaces with services for citizens but also remote workers. In addition, Brindisi is an Article 11 city, currently receiving funding through the ROP Puglia ERDF ESF SUD strategy "Can You Imagine Paradise", which funds 13 funding priorities that contribute to boosting economic growth and enhance social investment in the region. This will mean that Remote-IT IAP actions could also be funded through these lines of financing.

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS RELATED TO AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

- ✓ Co-creation approach for an integrated action plan. Brindisi has a strong experience in citizen engagement and participatory approaches (especially through the recent work of Case di Quartiere), but has limited experience in long-term process of co-creating with local stakeholders a strategic plan. Hence, the experience of co-creating the IAP and following the URBACT method will be crucial for local capacity building.
- ✓ Peer learning and a stronger European network of peers to learn and share good practices.

COORDINATION OF THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP

Brindisi has organized an initial workshop with potential ULG members during the city visit, extremely dynamic and well received locally. There are strong candidates for the role of ULG coordinator, from the interested local stakeholders that joined the ULG after the meeting and from the local team. The process of appointing the ULG coordinator will be finalized end of January 2024. The ULG will meet in person, and when needed, after co-creating the common vision and objectives for the IAP, the ULG will split in smaller working groups in order to identify actions for making Brindisi a more attractive city for remote workers but also for citizens/tourists in general. This approach was requested by ULG members, in order to make sure they can discuss in detail potential lines of action and keep the meetings operative.

Currently, ULG members are:

- University of Salento
- Ex-Convento Scuole Pie Co-working space and neighbourhood social business
- Confindustria
- Confcommercio
- Province Authority
- Puglia Region
- United Nations logistics base of Brindisi
- IBCenter Coworking Space
- STP - Società Trasporti Pubblici
- Neighbourhood Associations
- Molo 12 - in charge of Palazzo Guerrieri
- Brio srl
- Madera Bike
- Local Association of B&B
- Federalberghi

- Brindisi Basket team

3.3 Bucharest District 6

LOCAL CONTEXT

Bucharest District 6 (PS6) functions as a territorial administrative unit within Bucharest, the capital of Romania, boasting a population of 397,754 residents within the broader context of the city's approximately 2 million inhabitants. The governance structure of Bucharest is challenging due to the necessity of coordinating political efforts across seven distinct territorial administrative units for critical strategic decisions. These decisions encompass crucial aspects such as the shift toward sustainable urban mobility and the promotion of local economic development.

The implications of this governance structure are particularly significant for Bucharest's District 6, which houses the largest building stock in the entire city. This building stock primarily comprises high-rise collective units with limited green spaces, predominantly serving residential purposes and featuring a mix of nearby retail services. During the lockdowns imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a surge in reported cases of mental health issues and domestic disturbances. These challenges were attributed to the practice of working from home in spaces that were deemed inadequate for such purposes.

Simultaneously, Bucharest is gaining popularity among international remote workers due to its affordability, vibrant cultural scene, and high-speed internet. Recognizing these dynamics, District 6 City Hall aims to address its existing governance challenges and formulate a robust strategy for remote work and digital adaptation. This strategy seeks to address the systemic changes required in the public spaces and public services to enable residents to work from home/and within public spaces in improved conditions. Given that all major employers in Romania are concentrated in Bucharest and embrace hybrid work models, there is a potential risk of losing talent to other locations offering a better quality of life. Therefore, it is imperative for District 6 City Hall to proactively manage these challenges and enhance the city's appeal as a conducive environment for remote work.

KEY FIGURES

397,754 residents

Digital nomads legal framework since 2022

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN FOCUS

Bucharest PS 6 IAP will mainly focus on how to support residents and the business ecosystem that needs to adopt hybrid work practices. It will also address aspects related to key investments that the municipality needs to make in order to be become a competitive public organisation that transforms its public service delivery with the support of digital tools.

KEY LOCAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Significant political support, with Mr Paul Moldovan- city manager and public administrator, bringing a significant contribution throughout the first transnational meeting and city visit, and Mr. Lucian Dubălaru - local councillor supporting the activities during the city visit

Strong local team, with extensive experience in managing public funds, composed by Mr. Octavian Aron - deputy general director/project manager for Remote-IT, Mr. Lucian Verești aghin - public

manager/implementation expert Remote-IT and Ms. Mihaela Călin - counselor / implementation expert Remote-IT.
Potential synergies with TechDiversity URBACT network, where Bucharest PS 6 is also a partner. Their work on how to nurture an inclusive environment and tackle the digital divide in an underserved area of the city, will also contribute to the Remote-IT further understanding on gender-equal and digital transition aspects.
Very strong local investment plan, with several large urban revitalization projects already completed or due to finish mid 2024. These investments contribute to increasing the quality of life of residents and may also further influence various public and private schemes of "work-from-home".

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS RELATED TO AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Bucharest PS 6 as a municipality has not conducted so far long-term participatory process with local stakeholders, especially from the business and academia sectors. Its approaches so far included citizen consultation processes, awarding grants to NGOs and implementing a process inspired from the participatory budgetary approach. Thus, most potential ULG members have never worked together before, especially for a co-creation process of a strategic plan. This is why, main capacity building needs for Bucharest PS 6 would be in the areas connected to:

- ✓ Citizen engagement and co-creation processes
- ✓ ULG consolidation and engagement.
- ✓ IAP development, following guidelines for an integrated approach

COORDINATION OF THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP

The local project coordinator actively participated in the Malmo URBACT Summer University and now has a good basis for understanding what the ULG work should cover until early March 2024.However, due to delays in local procurement system for services related to Remote-IT implementation, the process of selecting the ULG coordinator was also delayed. The local team has appointed a ULG coordinator in December 2023, but no further information on the profile of the coordinator was yet supplied. During the city visit, an initial meeting with potential ULG members was organized, although limited in the diversity of the profiles of local stakeholders which took part. Since then, the local implementation team has worked on diversifying the local ULG, which now includes:

- Romanian Association for Smart City (ARSC)
- OPTAR - Organization for the Promotion of Alternative Transport in Romania
- The Politehnica University of Bucharest - largest technical university in the country
- Efden- local NGO working on sustainability of build environment
- National institute for research activities in the field of labour market and social protection (INCSMPS)
- Estuar Foundation- working on mental health issues
- Impact Hub - Coworking spaces în Bucharest
- ANIS – Professional Association for IT and Software Industry
- Remote workers - recruited throughout social-media relevant groups
- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
- Office spaces owners/administrators. (AFI Park)
- Internal departments - IT, HR, Public Space Administration, DG European Funds

3.4Camara de Lobos

LOCAL CONTEXT

Câmara de Lobos, situated in the Autonomous Region of Madeira, is a medium-sized municipality with a population of 32,162, located approximately 10 km from Funchal, a key city on the island. Although Câmara de Lobos and Funchal often function as a unified urban area, the former is aiming to diversify its local economy. Currently reliant on agriculture (notably the production of grapes for Madeira Wine, cherries, sour cherries, chestnuts, and bananas), fishing (unique for black scabbardfish), trade, and tourism, the city faces challenges in economic development. The adoption of remote work practices presents an opportunity to attract economic activity from various sectors while promoting sustainable tourism practices.
Furthermore, Câmara de Lobos maintains its status as one of the country's municipalities with the youngest population, necessitating proactive youth policies. The regional government's commitment to new technologies and the widespread, high-speed internet coverage across the island, including Câmara de Lobos, has opened up new opportunities for local youth and digital nomads in this peripheral European space. While Madeira is generally recognized as a potential destination for digital nomads, Câmara de Lobos stands out for offering a high quality of life and greater affordability compared to other locations on the island. Remote work could also be a means to attract tourists year-round, countering the current trend of short and highly seasonal stays.

KEY FIGURES

32,162 residents

New telework rules, approved on 5 th November of 2021 in the Portuguese National Parliament, made telework more flexible;

Portugal has a digital nomad visa system.

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN FOCUS

The Câmara de Lobos IAP will focus on actions that can transform the city in a destination friendly for remote workers, and especially for culture and creative industries professionals. Their work will also target other implications for adopting hybrid work models, considering economic, ecological, and social implications.

KEY LOCAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Very strong political support. Vice President Leonel Silva has highly contributed to the first transnational meeting and the city visit. Mayor Pedro Coelho has shown the support for Camara de Lobos's participation in the Remote-IT network during the city visit.

Proficient and highly motivated local implementation team, with Mr. Joel Viana - Project Coordinator and Ms. Dina Silva - Project Manager. Mr. Joel Viana has been in constant contact with the city of Fundão in Portugal, an experienced partner city in the URBACT programme, in order to capitalise on lessons learned for a good implementation of an URBACT project. The two cities have a good working relationship, since their last common participation in a national project inspired by the experience of URBACT III projects, promoted by the Portuguese Government and by the General Directorate of the Territory.

Complementarity with existing local and regional strategies, especially related to local targets of local economic development by supporting the creation of one's own business, the social economy and/or social

entrepreneurship projects. Also, at regional level, the Plan of the Regional Government of Madeira, called “Digital Nomads Madeira Island”, implemented through the “Startup Madeira” public structure, aims at consolidating the presence of digital nomads on Madeira Islands.

A core interest in the green transition cross-sectoral topic, as Madeira, as a region has recently been extremely committed to environmental issues. Participially, Câmara de Lobos City Council is currently also part in the projects Life Natura@Night (Project co-financed by the LIFE program and Natura 2000) – which aims to "reduce light pollution that affects the protected areas of the archipelagos of Madeira, Azores and Canary Islands, and mitigate its impacts on species protected at of the EU" and the MERCAMARKT (Project funded by Interreg MAC) – which focuses on improving the competitiveness of agricultural and craft markets in the MAC cooperation area;

Strong initial practices interrelated to remote work preparedness:

- ✓ Vibrant local initiatives increasing attractiveness of Camara de Lobos: upcycling educational art projects showcased in public spaces, En Cima Residency space and partnership model of youth engagement, the local public library’s and museum community engagement programme
- ✓ Strong digital nomads community organising initiatives such as Madeira Friends, managed by emerging local entrepreneurs
- ✓ Recent re-localisation of major local business in TV and streaming in Camara de Lobos, with future plans to also open a co-working space.
- ✓ Strong experience of Madeira Government on cybersecurity practices

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS RELATED TO AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

As a first time partner in an URBACT network, Camara de Lobos’s capacity building needs mainly refer to ULG engagement, with particular focus on capitalising on URBACT toolbox, and becoming more familiar with URBACT method. Otherwise, the city has extensive experience in participatory practices, as well as strong track record of integrated actions.

COORDINATION OF THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP

For the city visit, the local implementation team organized an extensive workshop with relevant stakeholders from the entire island of Madeira. The workshop was highly successful in creating local synergies and giving a chance for various local stakeholders to showcase their vision for remote work preparedness for Camara de Lobos. Due to this process, several candidates for the ULG coordinate position were identified. In autumn of 2023, Ms. Bárbara Rodrigues, manager at BRB Creative Agency was appointed as ULG coordinator and has already actively contributed to the second online transnational meeting. Currently, the ULG members are:

- Insular Association of Geography;
- Open University (Universidade Aberta);
- StartUp Madeira;
- Remote Workers and Digital Nomads;
- BRB Creative Agency;
- Association of Friends of the Arts - Teatro Metaphora.
- ARDITI - Regional Agency for the Development of Research, Technology and Innovation;
- Rodoeste - Transports;
- Casa São José - Social Institution;
- DNA - Digital Nomads Portuguese Association

3.5Heraklion

LOCAL CONTEXT

In the case of Heraklion, the city grapples with multi-level governance challenges related to tourism. Despite national and regional promotion of Crete as a tourism destination due to the island's economic dependence on this sector, the reality in Heraklion is that the city serves as the main entry point with the local airport and port experiencing significant traffic. However, the influx of tourists disrupts residents' quality of life and contributes minimally to the city's economy. Housing affordability concerns have risen, exacerbated by a considerable number of units dedicated to short-term rentals. Tourists tend to spend limited time in Heraklion, favouring other parts of the island, perpetuating an unsustainable tourism model with a substantial environmental footprint.
Recognizing the need for change, digital nomad visas were identified as an opportunity to shift Heraklion's tourism model. However, regional authorities initiated a marketing campaign in 2020 promoting Crete as a destination for digital nomads, leading to an unexpectedly busy 2022 season. Despite this success, Heraklion remains committed to environmental goals, signing the Covenant of Mayors Planning for Energy and Planning to reduce CO2 emissions by 40% by 2030. Consequently, strategic actions are now crucial to support Heraklion in becoming a digital nomad destination while addressing challenges in the housing market.

KEY FIGURES

211,370 residents

The Ministry of Tourism of Greece has a pilot programme for telework practices in multinational financial services company, in cooperation with the Greek Digital Nomads initiative, and the VISA multinational company

Greece issues a digital nomad visa since 2021

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN FOCUS

The Herakllion IAP will focus on actions that can promote the city for remote workers especially during low season in order to contribute to the transition towards more sustainable models of tourism. Their work will also target other implications for adopting hybrid work models, considering economic, ecological, and social implications.

KEY LOCAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Very strong project implementation team, composed by Project Manager Ms.Zacharenia (Renia) Drosou, Financial Manager Mr.Panagiotis Tsakmopoulos and Communication Manager Ms. Zacharenia Vitorou. Ms. Drosou has greatly contributed to both the in-person transnational meeting and the city visit, while Mr. Tsakmopoulos has fully supported all project activities, including the active participation in the Malmo URBACT Summer University. Local elections had taken place two weeks after the city visit, so the new mayoral team was not fully officially mandated (the full transfer of power will take place in January 2024). However, the local technical team has kept everyone informed about Heraklion's participation in Remote-IT network, and there seems to be enough political support for the project, given that it directly responds to the city's core developmental goals.

Possible Action plan resourcing, as Heraklion, as an art 11 beneficiary, is currently designing its new SUD Plan in the framework of 2021-2027 operational program of Crete. Thus, Heraklion will also be able to access the funds that will be related to this strategic plan.

Strong alignment with local, regional and national strategies related to economic development, also considering the opportunities provided by the digital transition. Specifically, the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Urban Development of the Municipality of Heraklion has also identified as priority areas the increase of the number of digital services provided and strengthening the cohesion of the local economy, including giving incentives for the reuse of empty commercial buildings, while Heraklion's Strategic Plan for Tourism has identified as a potential area of development the digital nomads and the ICT entrepreneurs, but no further specific action plan being developed on the topic. Also, recently, the regional government of Crete has established a new Destination Management Organisation DMO called Work from Crete, which aims to focus on making the island a friendly destination or digital nomads. Their work is just starting, thus it is a good timing for involving them in the Heraklion's ULG work.

Strong initial practices interrelated to remote work preparedness:

- ✓ Dynamic regional universities, with numerous initiatives of incubators, accelerators and interested in applied research on remote work preparedness topics;
- ✓ State of the art research institutes, which run their own foreign/ expat researchers in residence programmes
- ✓ Growing interest in Crete as a destination for remote workers, who clearly use Heraklion as one of the gateways to access the island. However, no studies and data is yet available to better understand the phenomenon of digital nomads in Crete and specifically in Heraklion.

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS RELATED TO AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Heraklion is an experienced partner in the URBACT programme and the local project coordinator has extensive experience in an integrated approach both in the context of the URBACT programme, as well as the Urban Innovative Actions (now EUI) programme, as well as European structural funds. However, for the rest of the implementation team, as well as the newly appointed ULG coordinator, Remote-It will be the first URBACT network they are in. Thus, the capacity building needs of Heraklion are related to:

- ✓ ULG consolidation and engagement.
- ✓ IAP development, following guidelines for an integrated approach

COORDINATION OF THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP

Heraklion's ULG coordinator is Mr. Markos Kourgiantakis from the Hellenic Mediterranean University (ELMEPA). Mr. Kourgiantakis has also participated in the second transnational meeting online in November 2023. The other ULG members are:

- University of Crete
- Hellenic Mediterranean University, H.M.U.
- Digital Nomads Crete Association
- The Union of Women Association Heraklion
- Union of Hotels of Heraklion
- Labor Center of Heraklion
- Region of Crete and new DMO Work from Crete
- Association of Real Estate Owners of the Prefecture of Heraklion
- Technical Chamber of Greece – Eastern Crete Department
- Foundation for Research & Technology – Hellas (FORTH)
- Heraklion Port Authority SA
- Heraklion Commercial Association
- Heraklion Urban Bus
- Taxi Passenger Car Owners Association
- Association of Car Rental Companies

3.6Murcia

LOCAL CONTEXT

Presently, Murcia is confronted with the challenges stemming from a sluggish economic recovery post-pandemic. A primary focus is on the local retail sector and small businesses, which face difficulties attributed to the pandemic, competition from larger-scale enterprises, and the rise of online purchases. Consequently, the City of Murcia deems the topic of hybrid and remote work highly relevant, given its impact on both urban infrastructure within the municipality and the evolving private landscape.

As the shift towards more people working from home or adopting hybrid and remote work setups gains momentum, there is an anticipated decrease in demand for office space and traditional urban infrastructure, including traffic and public transport. Conversely, there is expected to be an increase in demand for residential housing and services such as parks and cafes. Cities, including Murcia, need to proactively anticipate and plan for these shifts in demand to ensure continued effective functionality.

Although Murcia is not currently recognized as a destination for digital nomads, it holds considerable potential to become a preferred choice for digital nomads within Spain and Europe. With approximately 450,000 inhabitants, Murcia is the 7th largest city in Spain and serves as the capital of the Murcia Region. It boasts modern facilities, two universities, university hospitals, a public transport system, and an economy primarily centered around services. This, coupled with its exceptional weather and lower cost of living compared to major cities like Madrid or Barcelona, contributes to its attractiveness.

Murcia sustains a vibrant tourism sector that has yet to reach the point of overtourism. The city has taken measures to guide tourism flows towards peri-urban and rural areas, preventing an overflow in the urban center. Similarly, in preparation for the realities of remote work and digital nomads, the city aims to safeguard the existing quality of life for residents.

KEY FIGURES

460,349 residents

Spain issues a digital nomad visa since 2023

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN FOCUS

Murcia's IAP will focus on the two pillars of Urbact IV Remote-IT, the internal approach to remote-working, in line with Murcia´s new internal guidelines on remote work (currently draft version, november 2023), in drafting a plan on how the municipality can promote teleworking, by documenting and analyzing the benefits of teleworking, both for the municipality as an institution, as well as for the civil servants whose position is apt for a teleworking setting. And externally, referring to civil society, the IAP will address how the city of Murcia can promote itself to attract Digital Nomads, what their needs are and how the city can transform accommodating those needs into an attraction strategy. Both pillars will be developed and transformed into a Integrated Action Plan under the continuous improvement model, meaning the city will strive to maintain an open and flexible document, that learns from, and adapts to, changes, especially those in line with the Digital Transition and Technological Advances.

KEY LOCAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Highly skilled local implementation team, composed of Ms. Mercedes Hernández Martínez, Head of the European Projects Department as the Municipal Responsible for Remote-IT, Mr. Kasper van Hout, European Programmes Expert, as the Project Manager and ULG Coordinator and Ms. Teresa Cobacho Illán, General Administration Technician, as the financial support officer. All team members also actively attended the URBACT Malmo Summer University and have updated knowledge to the URBACT tools to be used in the next period by the ULG.

Strong political support of the project, as it tackles one of key areas of potential development for Murcia. During the city visit the political representatives, Ms. Mercedes Bernabé Pérez, Deputy Mayor and Councilmember for Open Government, Economic Promotion and Employment (including the competences of European Programmes & Funding) and Mr. José Guillén Parra, Deputy Mayor and Councilmember for Urban Development and Smart City (including the competences of Digital Transition and Personnel) have reiterated their support for Remote-IT network, and have also organized a very well-attended press conference to mark the kick-off of the project at local level.

Extensive experience in European cooperation and innovative projects. Recognized as a Pilot Experience in the implementation of the Spanish Urban Agenda by the National Ministry of Development, Murcia Municipality has gained expertise in various initiatives, including ERDF, European territorial cooperation, Interreg Med and Sudoe, ERDF art. 7, integrated and sustainable urban development, H2020, Horizon Europe, LIFE, and ERASMUS+. Murcia has also successfully been a partner city in two URBACT III networks: Interactive Cities and Innovator, earning the Urbact Good Practice Label. The municipality is also engaged in International Urban Cooperation (IUC) with Solapur (India) and International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) with China Cluster, URBELAC-3, 4 & 5 (The Network of European, Latin American, and Caribbean Cities for Integrated and Sustainable Urban Development), and the Urban Development Network (UDN).

Very strong engagement at European level for championing EU's urban agenda. Within EUROCITIES, Murcia is part of the Digital Forum Steering Committee, and co-chairs the Digital Citizenship Working Group, and is also a member of the City Branding and International Economic Relations Working Group of the Economic Development Forum, the Working Group on Urban Agenda for the EU of the Urban Governance Group, member of the Culture Forum and member of the core group on water management and the Urban Water Agenda 2030.

Synergies with the other URBACT IV networks. Murcia is also a partner in the U.R.Impact network, where their work will focus on how to increase quality of life for residents considering various urban regeneration and revitalization approaches. This work will be inter-linked directly with theme 6 explored by Remote-IT (see section 3) which also focuses on enhancing quality of life for residents.

Strong initial practices interrelated to remote work preparedness:

- ✓ URBAN DNA URBACT good practice on participatory processes
- ✓ The newly approved Murcia Digital Hub focusing on developing culture and creative industry (especially related to audio-visuals businesses and initatives)
- ✓ New local framework for work from home for municipal employees

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS RELATED TO AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Murcia is an experienced partner in the URBACT programme and the local project coordinator has extensive experience in an integrated approach in the context of the URBACT programme. Current needs refer to translation these capacity to more members of the ULG, as well as a targeted focus on peer learning and a stronger European network of peers to learn and share good practices.

COORDINATION OF THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP

Mr. Kasper van Hout, European Programmes Expert, is the Project Manager and ULG Coordinator. Mr van Hout has extensive experience in URBACT projects, has strong ULG facilitation skills and knows well the URBACT method. In fact, the example of how Mr van Hoot is going to organize the ULG work has served as a potential example for the other network members and was showcased in the second online transnational meeting.
Specifically, Murcia recognizes that the two layers of remote work preparedness, the internal (municipality as an employer) and external (remote workers in general) demand in their case two separate working groups. Thus, the first group or cluster is composed by: the European Programmes Department for Project Management (Coordination, Administration, Financial), the ICT Department for Technical Expertise (Functioning, Infrastructure, Tools, Data Protection) and the Personnel Department for Technical Expertise (Civil Servants/Employees, Regulations, Rights), as well as other civil servants as potential teleworkers, with experience in teleworking during the pandemic. The second group/ cluster is made from the Tourism Department, Culture Department, Congress & Events Office, Economic Promotion Department regarding (City Attractiveness, Audiovisual HUB, Society Contact, Job creation, Start-ups, SMEs, Freelancers), Murcia Public University, Murcia Sociodemographic Observatory, Murcia Regional Government for (Tourism, Regulation, Taxes), Murcia Chamber of Commerce, CROEM Regional Confederation of Business Organizations of Murcia, Regional Professional Association of Technical Engineers in Computer Science, TiMur - Murcia Association of Companies in the Information Technology, Communications and Audiovisual Sector. Every 6 months the two working groups will meet in a general meeting in order to align their work for an integrated approach towards their remote work preparedness goals.

3.7Tartu

LOCAL CONTEXT

Estonia has been a trailblazer in developing various e-government solutions, and the advent of remote working is one of the outcomes facilitated by the nation's digital state systems. While official data is at the moment unavailable, a substantial portion of the Estonian workforce is open to the possibility for remote work from other countries, particularly during the winter months.

Tartu, Estonia's second-largest city, has played a leading role in this digital transformation. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly accelerated this trend, presenting a challenge to the city’s capacity in terms of cyber and data security. Tartu has identified two primary challenges:

Firstly, how can the city ensure that remote working spaces and internal systems are secure enough to withstand diverse cyber threats? While some risks rooted in human behaviour can be mitigated through training and awareness initiatives, individual capabilities to address certain problems vary significantly.

Secondly, Tartu, renowned as a university town, benefits from a substantial student population, yet most students leave after completing their studies due to limited job opportunities. Remote work emerges as a potential solution to retain educated professionals, capitalizing on the city's favourable living environment, particularly for young people and families.

KEY FIGURES

97,435 residents

Tartu is the European capital of culture in 2024

Estonia was one of the first contries in Europe to offer the e-residency and now also offers a digital nomad visa

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN FOCUS

Tartu IAP will focus both on how to enhance remote work preparedness for public sector employees, as well as on the attraction of digital nomads and skilled high-value high-education professionals.

KEY LOCAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Very strong political and technical support. Tartu Municipality has a cooperative working culture, rather non-hierarchic compared to the other network partner's local contexts. During the city visit, strong support and interest for Remote-IT project was shown both by the political representatives- Mr. Jüri Mölder - City Secretary of Tartu City Government and Mr. Raimond Tamm - Deputy Mayor of Tartu, and the local technical implementation team- Ms. Sandra Õnne - Service Development Manager of Tartu City Government, Project Coordinator for Remote-IT, Ms. Kerttu Ahuna – Employee Experience Manager of Tartu City Government, ULG Coordinator for Remote-IT and Ms. Liisi Park – GIS analyst of Tartu City Government, previous experience with URBACT project, assistance in project activities. The local implementation team has an unique background, of both technical experience in areas related to IT and European projects management, as well as in areas connected to future of work practices. In addition to this, all team members have contributed extensively to all project activities so far.

Strong initial practices interrelated to remote work preparedness:

- ✓ Ongoing internal debate about formats and impact of different work from home practices
- ✓ Strong experience and key investments in infrastructure for cybersecurity
- ✓ Public-private partnerships model in order to manage various services from the Tartu welcome center for new residents to new high-tech start-ups incubators
- ✓ Role of culture for social cohesion and quality of life. Tartu is going to experience a major transformation in this area after the full implementation of the Tartu 2024 European Capital of Culture which has an extensive programme of investments and activities under the "Art of Survival" curatorial topic.

Possible Action plan resourcing, as Tartu, as an art 11 beneficiary, is currently designing its new SUD Plan in the framework of 2021-2027 operational programme. Thus, Tartu will also be able to access the funds that will be related to this strategic plan.

Strong synergies with all the cross-sectoral topics of URBACT. On green transition, Tartu is also a Mission city for the European Union's mission of``100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030". Tartu City's Climate Strategy 2030 outlines ambitious goals for reducing the overall carbon footprint of the city. Remote work emerges as a viable strategy to achieve these objectives. To successfully reach these goals, it is imperative to formulate a comprehensive action plan and gain a clear understanding of how remote work influences the carbon footprint. On digital transition, Tartu as the second largest city is Estonia has been championing for many years this topic. Moreover the values of Tartu city are closely aligned with the mission of gender equal cities, and the co-production of Remote-IT IAP will offer an opportunity of mapping more in depth gender-related aspects interconnected with remote work preparedness.

Key synergies with local and national development strategies. The Development Plan for Tartu 2018-2026 places emphasis on Priority 3, titled "City of an inspiring urban environment." This priority advocates for the incorporation of innovative digital solutions to enhance citizen services and improve the satisfaction of

public servants. Moreover, the theme of remote work aligns with Estonia's Digital Agenda 2030, which supports national objectives such as enhancing ICT connectivity to facilitate the delivery of public services, educational solutions, and innovation.

Valuable lessons learned from previous URBACT projects. Tartu has been a partner city in the following URBACT III networks: Interactive Cities, Zero Carbon Cities, Health & Greenspace and has managed to largely implement the actions co-created in the previous Integrated Actions Plans. Also, Tartu has already shared with Remote-IT network its positive experiences in implementing a small scale action and plans to continue so also in this network.

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS RELATED TO AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Tartu is an experienced partner in the URBACT programme and the colleagues who implemented previous URBACT projects are also part of the ULG and offer continuous knowledge transfer and support to the current implementation team. Thus, the capacity building needs of Tartu refer to consolidation of certain approaches, mainly ULG engagement and the IAP development, following guidelines for an integrated approach.

COORDINATION OF THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP

The appointed ULG coordinator is Ms. Kerttu Ahuna – Employee Experience Manager of Tartu City Government. New to the programme, Ms. Ahuna has extensively contributed to all project activities so far, including the two transnational meetings and the Malmo URBACT Summer University (USU). The fast uptake of the URBACT method and methodology has resulted in Tartu team being able to already share good practices of their ULG work with the other network members. As such, they showcased their IAP progress co-creation by using the tools presented at Malmo USU and offered valuable insights on this during the second transnational online meeting.

Tartu's ULG members include:

- Sandra Õnne - Service Development Manager of Tartu City Government, Project Coordinator for Remote-IT
- Kerttu Ahuna – Employee Experience Manager of Tartu City Government, ULG Coordinator for Remote-IT
- Liisi Park – GIS analyst of Tartu City Government, previous experience with URBACT project, assistance in project activities
- Anneli Säälik - Service Development Manager of Tartu City Government, previous experience with URBACT project, assistance in project activities
- Maria Lütter - HR specialist of Tartu City Government
- Lauri Seegel – Head of Department of IT Systems Management of Tartu City Government, IT related topics in relation to remote work
- Getter Kartau – Chief Data Officer of Tartu City Government, cybersecurity related topics in relation to remote work
- Katrin Kask – representative of Department of Business Development of Tartu City Government, entrepreneurship related topics in relation to remote work
- Marleen Otsus – Head of Marketing of Tartu City Government, marketing Tartu as a destination for remote work
- Annika Ojasaar – Head of Tartu Visitor Centre, tourism related topics in relation to remote work
- Kaspar Alev – Climate Specialist of Tartu City Government
- Janika Hango - Representative of Tartu Welcome Centre (NGO) – offering free services for newcomers in Tartu and South-Estonia
- Sirja Sulakatko - Representative of Smartwork Association (NGO) - promotes smart work, incl. remote work in Estonia

3.8Tirana

LOCAL CONTEXT

As the capital and economic-social center of Albania, Tirana grapples with the challenges of accommodating its expanding population, resulting in heightened pressures on housing, urban mobility, and labour markets. Additionally, the city faces the task of diversifying its local economic base, given the limited availability of European and international funds for the required investments.

In this context, Tirana recognizes the significance of broadening its economic base, especially with the city emerging as a favoured destination for digital nomads and remote workers. Over the past two years, Tirana has steadily attracted a considerable number of digital nomads, with the Nomad List indicating a consistent interest from more than 400 professionals in visiting the country and the city. The municipality has actively sought to engage this group by organizing the Tirana Digital Nomad Festival in 2022 and promoting its coworking spaces, local IT ecosystem, and cultural attractions.

However, despite these promotional efforts, the influx of digital nomads and remote workers presents its own set of challenges for the city. One of the primary hurdles involves ensuring that the necessary governance and infrastructure are in place to support this professional cohort. This includes provisions for high-speed internet, robust digital infrastructure (including cybersecurity measures), and the cultivation of a highly collaborative local ecosystem comprising entrepreneurs and social initiatives. Additionally, there exists a notable digital gap at the local level, with a significant portion of the population lacking essential digital skills required for effective engagement with technology in professional or other activities. This limitation may impede their participation in an increasingly digitized workforce.

Consequently, there is a timely and strategic imperative to develop remote work preparedness, not only to support the city's economic development but also to address broader challenges, such as enhancing urban mobility and fostering connections between urban and rural areas.

KEY FIGURES

494 000 residents

Albania issues a digital nomad visa since 2022

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN FOCUS

The Tirana IAP will focus on creating a favourable environment for remote workers in order to support the development of the local economy in a sustainable way. Tirana would like to focus on the creation of a dedicated infrastructure in order to encourage remote working practices, as well as promoting its local assets towards the Albanian diaspora and internationally.

KEY LOCAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Strong synergies between the remote work topic and Tirana's local development strategy. Tirana 2030 is the current local strategy, which sets out as the main priority economic growth,with increasing ICT connectivity and exploring further opportunities related to ICT as a support area of intervention.

Strong initial practices interrelated to remote work preparedness:

- ✓ Vibrant co-working and incubators scene, developed by both private entrepreneurs and different public entities
- ✓ Significant urban revitalization project of one of the iconic areas of Tirana- the Pyramid of Tirana- a multi-purpose centre, which already houses one of the largest educational incubators for youth and will host in the future a new co-working space for remote workers
- ✓ Strong local and regional initiatives targeting the Albanian diaspora
- ✓ Already implemented a first edition of Tirana Digital Nomad Festival in 2023, which acted as a catalyst of understanding the scale of the movement in the trend and resulted in improving the conditions on how the digital nomad visas were being awarded

Strong interest from local technical team. Ms. Sara Cela, Senior Specialist MoT is the Remote-IT Project Coordinator and is highly championing the topic of remote work preparedness, and is experienced in international project development and implementation. She has also coordinated the 2023 Digital Nomad Festival initiative. During the city visit, support was shown also from Ms. Faola Hodaj - Director of Innovation in Social Services, MoT, Ms. Emilda Prifti - Director of Strategic Planning and Priorities Implementation, MoT and Ms. Adela Krajka, Head of Unit - Project Support

Possible Action plan resourcing, as Tirana municipality is eligible also for grant programmes by the GIZ Albania, Swisscontact, World Bank, UNDP,USAID etc.

Synergies with other URBACT networks. Tirana is also part of Let's Go Circular network, which opens the possibility of synergies for the green transition cross-sectoral topic.

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS RELATED TO AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Tirana is participating for the first time in the URBACT Programme, as until this programming period Albania was not eligible to be a beneficiary of this type of European funding. As such, the local implementation team needs to become familiar with the URBACT method and tools. Unfortunately, because of some technical issues related to the financial management of the Remote-IT project locally, the local team was not able to participate in the first in-person transnational meeting and the Malmo URBACT Summer University. Tirana municipality, the Lead Partner and the URBACT Secretariat are aware of this situation and are committed in recovering the content covered during these activities. Partially this has already happened, as Tirana organized a very good city visit and actively participated in the second transnational meeting online.
However, the capacity building needs of Tirana for the current project need to have a tailor-made approach and cover:

- ✓ Ensuring transparency of project activities at local level, both internally towards political representatives and other technical departments, but also to relevant stakeholders (ULG members and beyond)
- ✓ Citizen engagement and co-creation processes
- ✓ ULG consolidation and engagement.
- ✓ IAP development, following guidelines for an integrated approach

COORDINATION OF THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP

During the city visit, Tirana conducted an initial workshop for prospective ULG members, which was highly dynamic and well-received within the local community. Following the meeting, several local stakeholders expressed interest in joining the ULG, and among them, there are notable candidates for the position of ULG coordinator. The process of appointing the ULG coordinator will be finalized end of January 2024.

Currently, ULG members are:

Governmental:
Municipality of Tirana
Ministry for Finance and Economy
Ministry of State for Entrepreneurship Protection
Ministry of Tourism and Environment

Community (International/NGOs):
GIZ Albania
Swisscontact
Germin
Digital Nomad Association Albania

Academia:
University of Tirana - Faculty of Economics
Epoka University
Luarasi University

Industry/Business:
Chamber of Commerce
Vodafone
Coolab
Innospace
Destil

4. SECTION 3 – SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

This section is a synthesis providing an overview of the Remote-IT network's proposed methodology for achieving the best possible results and a Network Roadmap to guide progress. It sets out the work programme for the next 2 years and refines the issues to be addressed (sub-themes) at both the transnational and each local partner levels. The section summarizes the data collected by the Lead Expert via the city visits from each city between July-October 2023 and through the co-creation workshops with all network partners during the network's first transnational core meeting held in Dubrovnik in July 2023 and online in November 2023.

4.1 Synthesis

Proactive policy-making for remote work, or remote work preparedness, has two important layers. The first one refer to the level of the public entity itself: the municipality as an employer, that needs to take into consideration how the formats of work have changed and how it can foster a safe and productive work environment. A range of sub-themes have been identified by the partners to match this layer of focus for Remote-IT, as follows:

Theme #1: Governance		**Theme #2: Remote work preparedness for public sector employees**	
1.1	Regulations/ recommendations/ guidelines/ self-assesment for remote work readiness/ feasibility	**2.1**	Cybersecurity
1.2	Studies (evidence-based)	**2.2**	Tools for collaborative work and hybrid teams cohesion and management
1.3	Incentives	**2.3**	Equipment and equipment management needed for hybrid work policies (own devices vs. institutional devices)
1.4	Fostering work-life balance and digital wellbeing	**2.4**	Healthcare (mental and physical)
		2.5	Jobs/ tasks incompatible with remote work
		2.6	Education/ training
		2.7	Gender gap in remote work

The second layer refers to creating an enabling environment for remote workers in order to support the sustainable development of the local economy, while enhancing the quality of life for existing residents. In this case, remote workers might be digital nomads, professional who specifically choose (visa) incentives for stays to up to one year in a destination or long-term remote workers who opt specifically for one destination. The focus on attracting them to choose a destination is regarded by most cities as a way to shift towards a model of sustainable tourism, and also as a way to diversify the local economy with highly skilled professionals, especially for culture and creative industries. The partners have identified the following sub-themes matching this layer, with Governance acting a cross-theme:

	THEMES AND Sub-Themes
1	**Governance**
1.1	Regulations/ recommendations/ guidelines/ self-assesment for remote work readiness/ feasibility

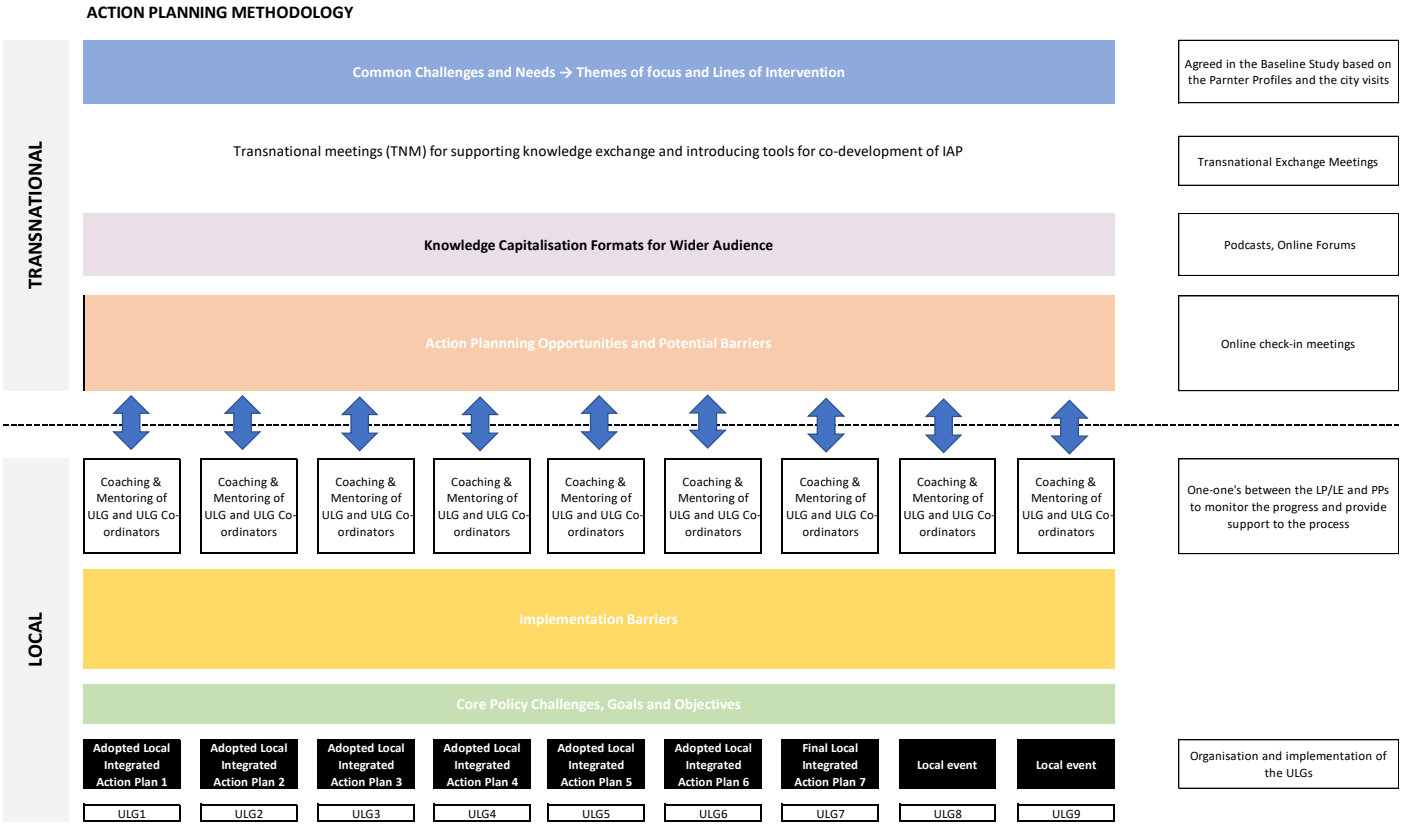
1.2	Studies (evidence-based)
1.3	Incentives
1.4	Fostering work-life balance and digital wellbeing
3	**Attraction of digital nomads and skilled high-value high-education professionals**
3.1	New data sets for understanding this emerging target groups
3.2	Awareness/ information campaigns/ events, including diaspora-focused or family-friendly oriented
3.3	Support soft/hard infrastructure: community builders, community events, co-working spaces, welcome centers, options for housing, options for engagement with local community and local projects
3.4	Development and maintenance of fast broadband internet access and coverage
4	**Transition to sustainable tourism practices**
4.1	Destination branding
4.2	Tools for tourist flows management/ transition to sustainable tourism practices
4.3	Green transition
5	**Support the development of culture and creative industries (CCI)**
5.1	Urban revitalization projects of public assets, including (living) heritage assets
5.2	Management of creative hubs
6	**Enhancing quality of life of local residents**
6.1	Urban revitalization of neighbourhoods
6.1	Supporting community development and initiatives in neighbourhoods
6.3	Mechanisms for balancing the needs of local residents and visitors/expats/ nomads

Each identified sub-theme will be explored through the building blocks of Remote-IT, which are detailed in the next section. By doing so, the Remote-IT network aims that by end of 2025 it will:

1. Establish a common consensus about the notion of proactive policy making for remote work and ways to increase knowledge around the subject
2. Support cities to develop robust Integrated Action Plans that support them towards proactive policy making towards remote work practices;
3. Facilitate Transnational exchange and learning to deliver the key knowledge and capabilities for an integrated approach for delivering sustainable urban development
4. Address implementation challenges/barriers through learning and exchange activities
5. Support cities, ULG's and ULG coordinators to manage a successful co-creating process for the Integrated Action Plan.

4.2 Network methodology and workplan

Remote-IT Methodology is structured around several building blocks, in order to enhance the possibility of each network partner to exchange and learn, while co-creating its Integrated Action Plan. The methodology is centred around two levels and their inter-connectivity: the transnational and the local level, as the illustration below shows.



REMOTE-IT BUILDING BLOCKS:

A. **Transnational Meetings (TNM).** These are the core mechanism for peer learning and exchange between network partners and a key component of the URBACT method. Organized as 1.5 on-site days of exchange, the meetings allow an in-depth exploration of the Remote-IT themes through case studies and site visits, while also showcasing new tools that can be later used by the ULG to progress with the IAP co-creation. Each partner hosts one TNM, while the Lead Partner (LP) hosts two meetings, the network's kick-off and final event.

Audience: Local project coordinators, ULG, coordinators ULG members, elected officials and press.

Pre and post preparation: Before each meeting the LE collects through a survey updates from each partner on their progress done by each ULG, implementation barriers they are encountering, new aspects that are emerging, in order to adapt the future content of the APN. The LE and LP coordinate for organising a trilateral meeting with the hosting city to co-design the agenda. After each meeting, the LP prepares a short meeting summary and the LE an executive summary, clearly outlining the main points discussed, next steps and ULG implications. These reports are to be used by each ULG coordinator to support them in translating the knowledge from the TNM back to their local ULG meetings. After each meeting the LE sends an anonymous feedback form, to collect what worked well and less well in each meeting, as well collect suggestions for future meetings.

B. **Online check-ins.** These are an ad-hoc tool that can be used by the LP and LE to ensure the network does sufficient progress between transnational meetings, or important aspects or challenges are discussed in a prompt manner within the network. They have a duration of up to 2 hours. In addition, the LP organizes ad-hoc online one-one meeting between the network's financial manager (from the LP team) and the financial managers from each partner before each reporting period or whenever this is requested by a partner.

Audience: Local project coordinators, ULG coordinators.

Pre and post preparation: A common time is agreed at network level through a collaborative tool (doodle, google survey etc) and an agenda is set in advance. Main points agreed are summarized by the organizer (LE/ LP) and sent by email to the network's email list.

C. **Bilateral meetings between lead expert and partner city**. Structured as coaching sessions, these meetings aim to provide personalized support from the Lead Expert to each partner for successfully completing the network's main deliverables: ULG engagement, any emerging implementation barriers, implementing a Testing Action, co-development of draft IAP and the final IAP. The Mid-Term Review provides a good opportunity to assess whether this support should include additional aspects, depending on emerging needs. They are structured as online 1.5h sessions.

Audience: Local project coordinators, ULG coordinators
Pre and post preparation: LE shares a template agenda and asks each partner to add specific aspects that they would like to discuss. LE may require for some meetings that each partner sends a draft version of the deliverable or additional materials, so that the discussion can be as applied as possible. A common time is agreed for each session through a collaborative tool (doodle, google slots etc). Main points agreed are summarized by the LE and sent by email to each partner.

D. **Trilateral meetings between lead expert, lead partner and partner city**. Designed for co-creating the agenda of each TNM, these meetings are organized with 1.5 - 2 months in advance of each transnational meeting. Based on the initial agreed TNM workplan (see below) agreed by all partners in November 2023 and the latest info collected by the LE through the survey before each TNM, the host city, the LP and LE co-design the agenda for the next TNM.

Audience: Local project coordinator and ULG coordinator/members from hosting partner city, LP team
Pre and post preparation: depending on the content of each agenda, additional materials can be designed by the host city (a briefing note on a site visit) or by the LE (templates to be filled/ consulted before the TNM to make sure we maximize the TNM time on-site.

E. **Remote-IT Podcasts.** Designed as an alternative channel for sharing insights from the Remote-IT TNM, in a format fit for a wider audience. Four podcasts will be produced, using ad-hoc expertise: two podcasts to be published online on all major podcasts mediums (Spotify etc.) in 2024 and two in 2025. The thematic for the two podcasts that will be published in 2024 have been identified in the network's online TNM in November 2023, namely: *Podcast#1: Our changing workplaces: what do we need for remote working [with inputs from Murcia and Tartu TNM]* and *Podcast#2: Who is a remote worker/digital nomad these days? [with inputs from Camara de Lobos and Brindisi TNM*]. The thematic for the last two podcasts will be decided by the network at the mid-term review meeting (MTR) which will take place in Brindisi in November 2024.

Audience: European urban practioners interested in future of work topics, URBACT networks, European Urban Initiative community
Pre and post preparation: If needed, the ad-hoc expert could travel to the two most relevant TNM in order to record on site several short interviews that she/he will later edit. In general, the ad hoc expert should organize online interviews in order to record guest speaker's point of view. The ad-hoc expert should work closely with the LE and LP for deciding the general curatorial concept, of each podcast and engaging network partners in recommending speakers from their teams/ULGs. Each podcast will include guest speakers from representative of the ULGs, as well as project coordinators. The ad-hoc expert will work closely the network's communication manager to develop a proper campaign for promoting the podcasts.

F. **Remote-IT online forums.** Designed as an alternative channel for creating synergies between the network's topic and other complementary initiatives at European and global level, including other URBACT networks. The forums are also a structured way to explore URBACT's cross-sectoral topics.

Two forums will be organized in 2024, and two in 2025, using ad-hoc expertise. The last forum will also be part of the network's final event, in order to ensure the event is in a hybrid format and can accommodate a wide range of international speakers that can join online. The forums will be 1.5 hours online events on the following topics:

Forum 1: Digital transformation & remote work- this forum will be mainly centred around latest research on the topic and public policy implications. Speakers will include the main authors of latest JRC report, European Parliament reports on the topic, as well as established academic research, including from the current Horizon-Transformation 01 consortium mentioned in section 1.

Forum 2: Gender-equal policy & remote work – this forum will focus on how remote work aspects affect women and men, sharing latest trends observed in both research and practice.

Forum 3: Green transition & remote work- will focus on emerging evidence on how remote work contributes to green transition objectives.

Forum 4: Incentives for remote work- what works and to what end? The topic will complement the lesson learned from the Remote-IT network's work during the final event in 2025.

Audience: European policy makers on remote work/ future of work/ tourism topics, URBACT networks, EUI, Eurocities, UN-Habitat

Pre and post preparation: The expected live audience for the event will be 100 persons. Session will also be recorded and later available on the network website, while the conclusions of the forums will be also integrated in the Remote-IT playbook. The network will promote each event with 2 months in advance.

Below is the agreed planning for the launch of the podcasts and online forums:

Deliverables	Action planning stage												Planning implementation stage										Finale	
	2024												2025										2025	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Remote-IT podcast episodes							x				x						x					x		
Remote-IT Digital Forums/ masterclass					x					x					x						x (hybrid format connected with final event			

G. **ULG meetings**. These meetings are the cornerstone of the work at local level, for co-creating the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for each city partner. The meetings are facilitated by the ULG coordinator, Each partner organizes 7 ULG meetings.

Audience: ULG members

Pre and post preparation: a local ULG meeting will be organized 4-6 weeks after a transnational meeting, in order to ensure proper knowledge transfer and a constant pace for co-developing the IAP. Each local coordinator and ULG coordinator will receive from the LP and LE after each TNM a summary of main points discussed and a factsheet with implication for the ULG (tools, actions that need to be taken into consideration, next steps etc). This will ensure that the ULG coordinator can more easily prepare the next ULG meeting and have available resources to share.

H. **ULG events**. The last two ULG meetings will have a different format from the previous 7 ULG meetings. They will be designed as local dissemination events, one more cantered as a reflection on the ULG's work and planning its legacy, and the final one as a community event- inviting press and the wider community beyond the ULG members to showcase the actions agreed in the IAP, lesson learned from the network and plans for implementation ahead.

Audience: ULG members, URBACT NUP, main managing authorities at regional level (national level if appropriate) and other relevant stakeholders

I. **Basecamp Library.** All materials from TNMs, URBACT guidelines and other important network documents will be constantly updated and maintained on basecamp. The dedicate network space will act as a repository.

J. **Network final product and optional dissemination event.** The network final product will be the Remote-IT playbook, which will capture the learning from all cities during the network implementation time and provide clear recommendations to other cities, policy-makers and European organisations on proactive policy making for remote work practices. Remote-It playbook will also contain the various tools and resources that the network has identified and gathered during the online forums and the podcasts. Remote-IT playbook will be available in more formats to ensure a greater dissemination for various audiences: a visual 2-page summary/leaflet as well as a full report, with helpful and attractive visual elements. Optional, the network considers organizing or joining one of the side events within the European Week of Cities and Regions 2025,in order to further capitalize the network's results.

K. **URBACT Capacity building actions.** During the network implementation all partners will be encouraged to attend URBACT's capacity building actions- from the URBACT Campus, the URBACT Festival and other sessions that will be decided by the URBACT Secretariat.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE NETWORK'S WORKPLAN

- ✓ All partners will make their best efforts to attend all transnational meetings (TNM).
- ✓ Each TNM should be attended by a delegation of 2-3 people for each partner city. The delegation can be comprised by the local project coordinator, the ULG coordinators, ULG members, political representatives. Depending on each TNM's thematic focus, each partner city may decide to bring different ULG members to the meeting,
- ✓ After each TNM, each partners needs to organize 1 ULG meeting.
- ✓ Each partner should host one TNM.
- ✓ Each TNM will have a thematic part and a capacity building part for action planning tools and the URBACT method.

WORKPLAN FOR TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS

Each transnational meetings will use certain methods and tools in order to guarantee that relevant progress is made each time, both at thematic, but also at capacity building level. Thus, each TNM will be structured as follows:

(1) Icebreaker and short recap- in the form of a quiz (using sli/do or something similar) that can support participants in a quick recap of activities that happened since the last TNM and a connection to the network roadmap;

(2) IAP progress slot- covering new tools that will be explained in order to be able to progress with the ULG work on IAP development, peer reviews and the Mid Term Review (MTR);

(3) Living Library slot- meaning that each participant can be an " open book" and share a relevant experience related to the topic. The living library slot means that each partner prepares beforehand a small presentation on the respective topic, so that during the TNS all participants and the local ULG can have a chance to learn from all the experience of all partners;

(4) the site visits slot, where the local ULG members will showcase their ongoing work and projects. The visits will be designed in an interactive way, with a debriefing focused on integrating the knowledge and links to the network's themes.

Below is the agreed work plan for each transnational meeting, detailing for each meeting the host city, the network themes to be addressed, the capacity building tools to be presented, formats to be used (peer review, MTR) and an indicative agenda with thematic content. The workplan will be reviewed at the Mid Term Review, or, if needed, sooner, through the use of an online check-in.

TRANSNATIONAL	Link to the Programme Objective	Overview of Remote-IT themes that will be discussed	Overview of action planning tools that will be presented	Hosting partner	Indicative agenda
TNM 1	Activation	Common challenges and needs	Drafting of the vision, problem analysis, stakeholders mapping in the frame of the 1st ULG	Dubrovnik	The meeting has been held and the agenda is delivered to the partners.
TNM 2-online-technical	Activation	Decision on network themes and sub-themes	Recap USU Malmo; State of play of ULG formation and emerging good practices	online	The meeting has been held and the agenda is delivered to the partners.
TNM 3	Action planning	Governance, Support the development of culture and creative industries (CCI), Enhancing quality of life of local residents, Remote work preparedness for public sector employees	Presentation of local progress since last TNM (all cities); **IAP progress tools:** presenting the logic from vision to objectives to actions; action tables, ULG engagement tools (linked with Murcia Good Practice Urban DNA showcased in a site visit).	Murcia	Living library : Destination branding stories- what worked and lessons learned; Site visits : (1) the Urban DNA good practice label related to Urban Regeneration and Revitalization Process and (2) CEUS (Murcia Central Digital Control-Centre) & Audiovisual HUB [3.3; 4.2]; Official Reception by the Mayor of Murcia Closing session and formal goodbye by the Councilmember
TNM 4	Action planning	Governance, Remote work preparedness for public sector employees, Attraction of digital nomads and skilled high-value high-education professionals, Support the development of culture and creative industries (CCI)	Presentation of local progress since last TNM (all cities); **IAP progress tools:** Continuation of the intervention logic: from actions to resources, integrating Testing Actions in IAP (linked to site visit)	Tartu	Living library : Strategies for attracting digital nomads and skilled high-value high-education professionals [3.1] Site visits: Remote work preparedness for public sector employees [2.1; 2.2; 2.3, 2.5] and Key actions for green transition (linked to 100 Mission cities) and support of CCI (linked to Tartu 2024 ECoC capital)
TNM 5	Action planning	Attraction of digital nomads and skilled high-value high-education professionals; Enhancing quality of life of local residents	Presentation of local progress since last TNM (all cities); **IAP progress tools:** Peer review Action planning tables	Camara de Lobos	Living library : Soft and hard infrastructure essential for strengthening the attraction and retention of remote workers Site visits: Art & cultural sites, including upcycling street art programme and La EmCina Artistic Residency, Friends of Madeira community events, managing urban sustainability: examples on how to balance the needs of the 4 micro-climates part of Camara de Lobos
TNM 6+MTR	Action planning	Support the development of culture and creative industries (CCI); Enhancing quality of life of local residents	Presentation of local progress since last TNM (all cities); **IAP progress tools:** Mid Term Review, Monitoring of the action plan --> new/updated content agreed for podcasts and the online forums in 2025	Brindisi	Living library : Management of creative hubs and innovative governance models of hubs Site visits: Casa de Quartiere model for neighbourhood revitalization and creating cohesion between local residents and remote workers; Collegio Tomaso Future Hub;
TNM 7	Preparing for implementation	Governance, Attraction of digital nomads and skilled high-value high-education professionals	Presentation of local progress since last TNM (all cities); **IAP progress tools:** governance framework of IAP, co-designing the final network product: the Remote-IT playbook	Tirana	Living library : Incentives for remote workers/ diaspora- what works and lessons learned Site visits: Pyramid of Tirana- process of urban regeneration and hubs and accelerators hosted there; co-working and cultural spaces (Coolab etc.)
TNM 8	Preparing for implementation	Remote work preparedness for public sector employees, Transition to sustainable tourism practices	Presentation of local progress since last TNM (all cities); IAP progress tools: **Peer review of IAPs**	Heraklion	Living library : Transition to sustainable tourism practices- examples and lessons learned Site visits: sustainable local food chains tour, Crete DMO for remote working, Heraklion digital transformation examples (internal and external)
TNM 9	Preparing for implementation	Governance, Enhancing quality of life of local residents	Presentation of local progress since last TNM (all cities); **IAP progress tools:** Check logic intervention and integration, review Remote-IT playbook	Bucharest PS 6	Living library: Mechanisms for balancing the needs of local residents and visitors/expats/ nomads Site visits: Parcul Liniei, Favorit community center, private creative hubs (Impact Hub, Apolo 111)
Final event	Finale			Dubrovnik	Lauch of Remote-IT playbook, overview of the network's key milestone, lesson learned, key actions in each IAP that will enter in implementation; Celebration

TIMEPLAN

Presented below is the agreed timeplan for the transnational and the ULG local level.

OVERVIEW OF TIME PLAN	Activation stage							Action planning stage												Planning implementation stage											Finale
	2023							2024												2025											2025
	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
TNM 1- Network Kick off		Dubrovnik																													
USU			Malmo																												
TNM 2- technical						online																									
ULG1					x																										
ULG2								x																							
TNM 3										Murcia																					
ULG3											x																				
TNM 4													Tartu																		
ULG4														x																	
TNM 5																Camara de Lobos															
ULG5																	x														
TNM 6+MTR review																		Brindisi													
ULG 6																			x												
TNM 7																					Tirana										
ULG 7																						x									
TNM 8																							Heraklion								
ULG 8- local community event/ reflection																								x							
TNM 9																									Bucharest						
ULG 9- local disseination event																												x			
Final Event																												Dubrovnik			
European Dissemination event																													Brussels- EWRC		

KEY ELEMENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSNATIONAL MEETING:

During the Remote –IT technical transnational meeting from November 2023 the partners have co-produced a checklist of main elements that can contribute to an ideal organisation of a transnational meeting. The full checklist is available as an annex to the current baseline, so that it can be used more easily by each host city.

Key aspects covered refer to:

- ✓ Ways to reduce the carbon-footprint of the meeting
- ✓ Ways to reach the city and venue
- ✓ How to best plan the meeting

INITIAL IDEAS FOR TESTING ACTIONS

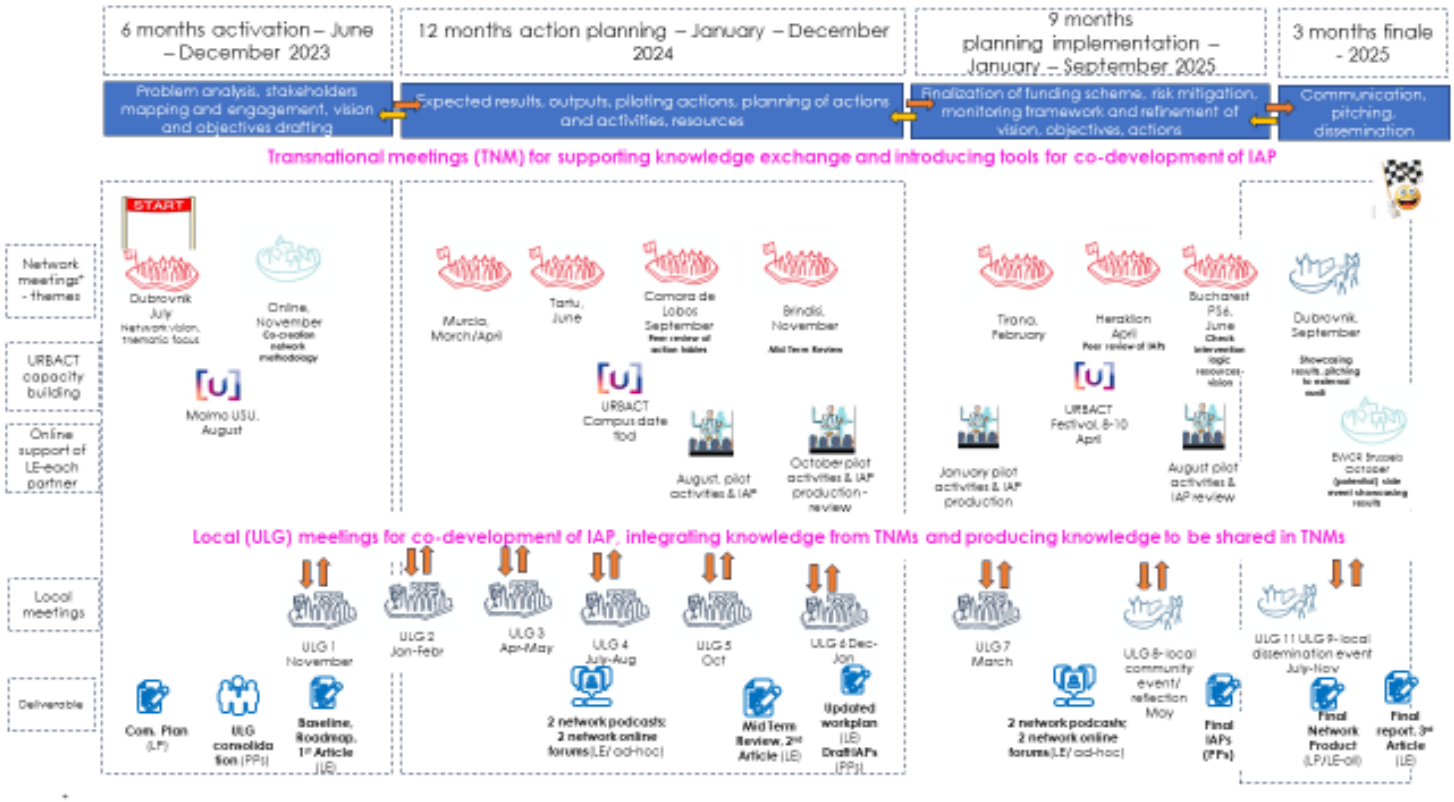
During the IAP co-producing process, each city partner can choose to test one of the agreed actions at a small scale. Depending on the results and lessons learned from the test action, each city partner can opt to include the action, this time calibrated to have an impact for the entire city, into the final IAP. In addition to the resources already provided by the Lead Expert and Lead Partner explaining the rationale of such small scale action and examples from previous URBACT networks, in 2024 each city partner can request a bilateral meeting with the LE to further make progress on planning and implementing a testing action. During the November 2023 online meeting, partners shared a few initial ideas of testing actions they are considering:

- *Dubrovnik, Murcia* and *Camara de Lobos*- testing a new marketing campaign/strategy for remote workers, also connected to the activation of community spaces in the city.
- *Brindisi* – a workshop/ campaign to co-create with (potential) remote workers a city diagnosis of remote-work preparedness and understanding different types of remote worker's profiles.
- *Tartu*- test different hybrid work formats for municipal employees and compare results in order to improve the current internal policies for hybrid work.
- *Bucharest PS6*- develop a stakeholder engagement process for co-creating a remote work-friendly park.

All partners agreed they need additional time to discuss and co-create with their ULG their testing actions.

4.3 The Network Roadmap

The following illustration captures the network roadmap, depicting the scheduale and links between transnational meetings (TNM) and ULG meetings, main deliverables to be achieved each year and the main URBACT capacity building events.
In order to ensure that the roadmap and the network methodology can be a “living document”, easy to update and follow throughout the network’s implementation, the editable versions are included on basecamp.



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Annex

Annex 1- Ideal transnational meeting guidelines, co-created by Remote-IT network members in November 2023

Annex 2- editable Network roadmap and planning for the future transnational meetings- available on basecamp.