

**RESTART\_4Danube**  
**Boosting cREative induSTries in urbAn Regeneration for  
a stronger Danube region**

**Deliverable D.T 1.3.1**  
**Smart guide for cities to develop Local Action Plans  
(UPB)**

## Document Control Sheet

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## 1. List of Abbreviations

CCIs	Creative & cultural industry
ICT	Information and communication technologies
LAPs	Local Action Plans
LP - UPB	Lider Partner - Universitatea POLITEHNICA București
PP	Project partner
PP1 - SEZ	Steinbeis Europa Zentrum
PP2 - SASS	School of Advanced Social Studies
PP4- UM	University of Maribor
PP10 - PBN	Pannon Business Network Association
PPP	Public-private partnerships
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises

## 2. Executive Summary

RESTART\_4Danube project is based on the idea that transnational collaboration between SMEs, research and development (R&D) institutions, and cities in the region is necessary to disseminate good practices, improve local along with regional innovation policies, stimulate new business models and thereby inspire structural change. As a knowledge-intensive sector based on cultural values and creative expressions, CCIs not only exhibit huge growth potential but play a central role in the shaping of a shared identity and the strengthening of social cohesion as well, supporting the regeneration of urban communities, for developing Creative Cities across Danube region.

While action plans can take many forms, they are mainly tools of coordination. Action plans address long-term goals and strategic vision through specific actionable items. The deliverable D.T.1.3.1. “Smart guide for cities to develop Local Action Plans” will contribute to the sharing of knowledge, to the growth raising awareness of the transnational dimension of urban regeneration issues and providing practical recommendations, final scope of implementation the LAPs addressing the stakeholders, in particular investors, decision makers, and the local community, in the sense that the development of Creative Cities can be beneficial to the specific urban communities.

Cities are the ideal places to foster creative interactions and enable the experimentation that drives innovation. The smart guide is clearly a practical manifesto for a wider usage of art, culture and creative industries (CCIs) in economic and social development of cities, expressing the idea that art and culture are essential resources for innovation.

Local action plans (LAPs) are strategic documents describing how the knowledge gained as the result of trans-regional cooperation will contribute to the improvement of regional policy instruments. LAPs should address specific policy instruments, understood as interventions designed by governing authorities with the aim of achieving a predefined goal or objective, referring to either strategies, policies, laws or other instruments.

For the purpose of each LAP preparation, we recommend integrating the principles of the FAST approach and the framework of Value Proposition Canvas, because this can help better identify what the ‘customers’ want and how to tailor what is being offered within the project, being important to take into consideration the needs of the target group or of the beneficiaries, during the LAPs design and implementation.

### 3. Introduction

The technological advancements and innovative approaches, focused especially on cultural and creative industries (CCIs), with their ever-growing number and quality, have a powerful transformative and regenerative effect on urban communities. Becoming a Creative City, this transformation aims at enabling the city to capitalize its citizen creative potential, providing a sustainable development, addressing all aspects, economic, social and environmental.

Creativity is increasingly regarded as a crucial feature of urban regeneration, like a key engine for facilitating sustainable human development, social harmony, technological innovation and scientific discovery. Cities should become hubs of innovation, creativity, and cultural dynamism when cultural and creative sectors, which include arts and crafts, literature, design, entertainment, architecture, books, media and arts, gastronomy and many more, become a vital force in accelerating human development at the local level. They empower people to take ownership of their development and stimulate the innovation that can drive inclusive sustainable growth.

Culture-based creativity is creativity that comes from artists, creative professionals and the cultural and creative industries (CCIs). It is linked to the ability of people, notably artists and creative professionals, to think imaginatively or metaphorically, to challenge the conventional and to call on the symbolic and affective to communicate. Culture-based creativity is also capable to “break the natural order”, the usual way of thinking and to allow the development of a new vision, an idea or a product. It needs the development of products and services that meet citizens’ expectations or that create these expectations.

Traditionally, innovation processes unfold at the level of firms and individual organizations, and cities increasingly playing the role of R&D laboratories, by making possible the spaces for innovation to emerge. In this respect, cities are today’s “laboratories” of tomorrow’s world, when if becoming Creative Cities, they are destined to be more connected, smart, providing plenty of joyful experiences. They will be fun places to live, with attractive cultural offers, plenty of spaces for social networking and co-working including bars and restaurants, also providing learning facilities in art, design as well as engineering or business. The spatial organization of Creative Cities will facilitate crossovers between disciplines, by sharing new skills and enabling the emergence of new mindsets and innovative economic and social projects. Local cultural resources should include cultural institutions and organizations, tangible and intangible heritage, festivals and cultural events, CCIs as well as artists and creative professionals (such as designers, architects and communication professionals).

RESTART\_4Danube project is based on the idea that transnational collaboration between SMEs, research and development (R&D) institutions, and cities in the region is necessary to disseminate good practices, improve local along with regional innovation policies, stimulate new business models and thereby inspire structural change. The partners seek to encourage this development through activities such as study visits, cross-national exchange with local action plan (LAP) tandems, transnational service offers and requests. Focusing on creative

and cultural industries (CCIs), the project aims to promote business investment in research and innovation. As a knowledge-intensive sector based on cultural values and creative expressions, CCIs not only exhibit huge growth potential but play a central role in the shaping of a shared identity and the strengthening of social cohesion as well, supporting the regeneration of urban communities, for developing Creative Cities across Danube region.

#### 4. The Creative City action plan

##### 4.1. Defining the action plan

While action plans can take many forms, action plans are mainly tools of coordination. Action plans address long-term goals and strategic vision through specific actionable items. The document conveys to the stakeholders, in particular investors, decision makers, and the local community, in the sense that the Creative City concept can be beneficial to the city, and how change will occur. Action plans prioritize issues within the city into actionable items with the intent to achieve positive outcomes. The plan is output orientated, with distinct strategies to achieve the stated goals.

Action plans coordinate partnerships across the public, private, non-profit sectors, and the community. The action plan development process will vary; therefore, city leaders should allow ample time for receiving input and feedback from stakeholders. It is recommended to allow the drafting process to last up to three months to give ample time to develop a comprehensive plan, be inclusive, and focus on the tasks at hand.

##### 4.2. Action planning strategy governance and organization

City leaders should consider constructing a strong governance policy and strategic organizational charts prior to developing the action plan itself. Those in charge of the development of the action plan or the organizing committee within the city government should consider the following points in particular:

- The first point is the **identification of rules, practices, and expectations for participation** to be applied to the entire action plan. This should be considered as a contract with all those involved in implementing the action plan. There is a need to identify the proper level of regulatory and legal oversight, especially with regards to land use and permitting, providing clear channels of accountability and the presence of due diligence necessary for attracting future investment.

- A critical task of the action plan is to decide which **office/agency/individual is responsible for coordination and overseeing** actions of the implementation of the plan. City leaders should use this to help organize responsible parties to develop and oversee the goals associated with their respective indicator areas.

- The complexity of the plan reflects the need to identify subordinate offices in charge of respective tasks. A clear **organizational chart** with an accompanying outline of duties and responsibilities of each actor should be produced for each major goal in the plan. It is

recommended that this to be presented in a clear, unambiguous manner. This enables accountability and transparency throughout process.

### **4.3. Action plan structure and strategy**

#### **4.3.1. Key characteristics and elements of the action plan**

Action plans should be clear, concise and implementable. Action plans have three major components:

- Specific Goals
- Identification of Actors and Resources
- Time Management and Process Monitoring

##### **4.3.1.1. Specific Goals: Vision, objectives, action items**

Specific goals arise from the long-term strategic vision for the city. Each city will have unique challenges and different desired outcomes. It is the vision that shapes what the city aspires to achieve. The objectives or goals equate to the targeted outcomes desired by a city.

Action items are the specific activities needed to accomplish an objective, being the role of the Action Plan to transform them into actionable items.

##### **4.3.1.2. Identification of Actors and Resources: Strategy**

In order to fulfill objectives and implement action items should consider the following elements:

- Actions to be taken;
- Leader of these actions;
- Timeframe for them to take place;
- Resources (people, capital, etc.);
- Stakeholders and monitoring mechanisms.

Determining these elements allows the development of strategy to identify the necessary resources, evaluate existing resources, further build partnerships with stakeholders, and identifying the appropriate individuals, groups and resources that need to be gathered to effectively achieve the desired outcomes.

##### **4.3.1.3. Time Management and Process Monitoring**

The process by which the goals will be achieved is the most important part of the plan. This process is not easy, but highly complex. Once specific goals and action items are clear and concise, the best mix of stakeholders and adequate resources are identified, the implementation must be monitored for effectiveness and adhere to time-bound restraints.

Monitoring the progress and documenting achievements are critical aspects for continued engagement with partners, identifying funding opportunities and stimulating community engagement. Maintaining time constraints is as important as being mindful of budget constraints. Exceeding schedules increases costs and dilutes effectiveness of future planning.

#### **4.4. Structuring the action plan**

##### **4.4.1. Vision and goals statement**

The long-term vision is dynamic and reflective of the changes that are happening to the city. The first step in the action plan is developing the vision and goals statement. The city indicators fall into three broad categories: Economy, Environment, and Society & Culture. These categories can be used to shape the perspectives of a creative city vision.

##### **4.4.2. Goals and outcomes**

Following the vision and goals statement, the goals, objectives, activities, and desired outcomes should be clearly stated. The goals are outcome orientated and should follow a framework such as an input-output model or logic. Goal outputs are reflective upon the quality of planning and subsequent actions that take place over the course of the activities. Overall, the relationship between goals, objectives, activities, and outputs leading to outcomes is one that requires structure and organization.

##### **4.4.3. Objectives and activities**

Each goal requires objectives and specific activities to take place to achieve the desired results or outcome. Objectives provide strategic planning, and the activities outline the specific actions needed to achieve a desired outcome.

##### **4.4.4. Desired outcomes: performance targets**

Each goal needs a series of targets in order to achieve the desired outcome. The targets represent the incremental outputs of specific activities and are important in the monitoring process to assess progress toward a desired outcome.

##### **4.4.5. Identification of key actors and stakeholders**

The identification of key actors is complementary to the governance plan. Ideally, key partners should be involved in the drafting of the action plan. Stakeholders are brought in as necessary as the action plan is further developed. In this section of the action plan key actors and stakeholders should be identified and presented with clear task designation.

Based on existing partnerships within a city, key partners need to be involved in the overall planning process.

This allows for two outcomes:

- 1) Multiple points of view and diversity of thought in the planning process;



2) Commitments of key partners from the beginning allowing for greater potential for consistent participation and positive outcomes.

#### **4.4.6. Stakeholder partnerships**

When identifying the main partners who have a stake in the action plan, it is recommended this takes the form of a formalized process, such as a memorandum of understanding, where partners pledge and sign an agreement. Alternatively, letters of support indicating their involvement and dedication to the process could be submitted to the lead agency.

Stakeholders can be identified from a variety of sources and should be organized according to expertise, in addition, cross-functional teams should be formed.



With Creative Cities, it is often non-apparent connections that have the greatest value. Patterns and spillovers from other sectors may result in novel identification of solutions to inherent problems, not otherwise seen in respective silos. Commonly, stakeholders are drawn from the following areas: policy makers, regulators, private sector investors/developers, private sector owners/operators, local business owners, general public.

#### **4.4.7. Community engagement strategy**

In a small to medium sized city, where local private and non-profit partnerships are of key importance to ensure success, coordination between all stakeholders is essential. The Creative City concept places great value on open channels of communication between government, the public, and private partners. Thus, an engagement strategy should foster an environment where elected officials involved in the plan are identifiable and reachable by both partners and citizens. By being mindful of partnerships and the contribution of each actor, public, private, non-profit, and community members can continue to work together to figure out the way forward in both action planning and implementation. Engaging the community will ease the pathway towards being able to complete the goals and reduces time

barriers for each priority to be achieved. This will also grant a bottom-up approach necessary for the success and the sustainability of the plan's measures.

It is recommended that the public to be consulted about what they need and desire in their communities. Therefore, a community engagement plan should be included as part of the action plan. Reaching out directly (inform) and interacting (engage) with the people to best understand what they see as relevant to their communities can help to smooth implementation barriers and be more effective in delivery. Furthermore, the community should be involved in the decision-making process. Ultimately innovative ideas can originate from the public, leading to more inclusive plans. This collaboration allows for a more open, transparent process, reducing risk from public opposition to project plans. The public can be engaged through direct consultation or innovative ways to connect digitally to the public. Public acceptance and open transparent decision-making are imperative to the process. Therefore, community engagement should be included in the partnership identification process. Involving key partners at the earliest stage possible is the key to be able to prepare an action plan that is implementable.

#### **4.4.8. Timeline of goals and actionable items**

There are two components of developing a timeline. The first is a long-term desired target date for completion of each goal. The second is a timeline of the action items and activities necessary to achieve each goal. The first should be included in the vision statement. The second is critical for success of the action plan. The timeline of action items is critical for a successful implementation. Therefore, the timeline should reflect the necessary steps needed to accomplish a comprehensive implementation strategy.

The integrated planning process should be mindful of resource allocation. If multiple action items, due to the context of interaction inherent in the process, utilize the same resources, they need to be scheduled accordingly. While each goal and action items should be independent in concept from each other, certain activities will not be able to happen while others are in progress. This can be due to resources constraints or simply prerequisites needed for the action item to be able to be completed. Creative City planning results in synergies; as the planning process reaches across multiple projects and requires coordination between multiple existing resources. In a creative city, traditional departments will overlap, and there is a need to be aware of the cross-functional resources and inputs needed in the action plan development. This becomes clearer when timelines take the form of a work plan. The work plan details not only the scheduled completion time and associated activities but also all resources needed to complete the task.

#### **4.4.9. Funding and financing strategy**

The commitments obtained through the partnership process helps to identify sources of funding. Sources come from both public agencies and private partners. Financing institutions and investors should have been identified as part of the partnership process. In addition to monetary resource, non-financial resources should be accounted for at this time. If there is not sufficient pool of skilled workers, the city may have to bring in outside help or develop a

worker training program to be able to support the implementation of new technology and processes.



When developing a financing strategy through the action plan, city leaders should pay close attention to recommendations that will vary by each city depending on the strength of legal and financial institutions. It is recommended to establish a long-term financial plan for each project to guarantee current costs to build, but more importantly to identify dedicated funding streams to operate and maintain the projects for many years to come. Identifying new streams of revenue is also critical for this component of the plan.

Two components of this section of the action plan should be:

#### **4.4.9.1. Cost estimates**

Funding and financing to follow closely with the involvement of stakeholders and actors. The preparation of cost estimates and the sources of funding are closely linked. The city should have target costs for each priority, and through the identification of funding sources determine which projects may be eligible for private involvement. It is also recommended to continuously track actual compared to estimated costs as the projects progress.

#### **4.4.9.2. Proposed methods of funding and financing**

For most cities the first step in determining methods of funding and financing is to identify government resources. These can be in the form of dedicated funds, project specific taxes, grants, and other publicly available funding.

Public-private partnerships (PPP) are also an attractive option for revenue generating projects. When involving private partners through PPP, keep in mind the private sector finances project, it does not pay for it, unless the project is completely privatized. Public-private partnerships are an attractive option if there is a clear revenue stream identifiable from the project.

#### 4.4.10. Monitoring mechanism

The use of work plans for each task and setting target dates for each task should be done to monitor the completion and task components of the action plan. Monitoring should include channels of feedback to the participants as well as disseminating information to the public. Reporting procedures need to be established as consistent processes across all areas.

Examples of questions that should be reported on consist of:

- Are tasks being completed a) on time b) within budget?
- Have any innovative solutions/partnerships been created / identified?
- Are externalities being present?
- Were they positive or negative?
- Were they utilized or mitigated?

The use of a “score card” can be useful to track set stages of completion. As each target is reached these can be reported as “successes” to the public, building recognition and trust in the process.

#### 4.4.11. Accountability and transparency

A necessary component of monitoring is the accountability and transparency of each task. Who is the leader or set of lead actors for a specific task? These people or the agency should already have been clearly identified in the organization and identification of key actors. The progress and outcomes of each task are tracked and are to be available for public scrutiny. Creative cities bring together data and people. The people should have open access to reporting data, not only for accountability purposes, but for potential public innovation and contribution to the creative city development process.



#### **4.4.12. Contingency planning**

Contingency planning is essential for any action plan, as unexpected events always occur. Planning in this regard should reflect the plan at every level.

Items to consider planning for include:

- Leadership changes
- Labor market shocks
- Funding shortfalls
- Private partner bankruptcy or otherwise removing themselves from the deal.
- Resource misallocation or unexpected loss of promised resources

In all of these cases, a secondary and possible tertiary source should be identified in the contingency plan.

#### **4.4.13. Resilience**

Resilience should be worked into the plan. The ability to bounce back from failure is important. Not every element of the plan will be able to be achieved. Therefore, the plan should remain flexible, and as open and transparent as possible. Failures could occur, but as long as all the necessary steps have been taken to be thorough and information has been effectively communicated, it will help to mitigate fall out.

#### **4.4.14. Dealing with unintended consequences**

In order to deal with unintended consequences, it is recommended to develop a manageable institutional structure at the city level.

Creative Cities require constant communication and coordination across institutional levels. Cross-sectional teams developed in the planning process need a clear structure of reporting and accountability.

Unintended consequences of policy implementation are common. Often demonized as negative impacts, in some case unintended consequences can be positive, and there has to be a way to capture them and support effect. Negative unintended consequences can sometimes be out of everyone's control. The possibilities of such things occurring should be brainstormed during multi-stakeholder sessions in order to anticipate their possibility and to be able to take steps to mitigate their impact on the process. While this is difficult, there should be a mechanism within the action plan to account and make city leaders aware of the potential of such things to arise.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

While sustainability challenges of cities are significant, urban areas also hold the key to achieving many global sustainability goals. Cities are home to the majority of humanity, and sustainable development cannot be achieved without significantly transforming the way we build and manage our urban spaces.

The infusion of ICT into key processes is pertinent to achieving sustainability, especially by means of the support offered by CCIs. ICTs can assist with the establishment of creative cities through innovation, redesign of existing processes and create a more resilient and liveable space for its citizens. Creativity comes from the combination of ability, and environment. It relates to the capacity of people to think with imagination and challenge the existing. This aptitude is characterised sometimes by unpredictability, divergent thinking combining cognitive elements with the expression of human senses and emotions. In combination, both context and place are important elements in the emergence of creativity. As a result cities provide an ideal environment conducive to the expression of creative abilities. They provide the “container” of creative expression.

Without creativity there would not be music, poetry, paintings, literature and all activities associated with art, culture and creative industries (CCIs). Creativity contributes to the making of culture. In turn culture, art and creative talents are a powerful source of creativity and innovation. Culture-based creativity is creativity that finds its source in art, culture and creative industries. This form of creativity is essential in modern economies driven by differentiation, meanings, ethical or aesthetic values beyond products’ functionalities.

The Smart Guide (the Guide) considers new ways to look at art and culture, to explore the contribution of the latter to economic and social changes. It expresses the idea that art and culture are essential resources for innovation. These resources can be mined everywhere. The more they are localized, the more valuable they are as the expression of (much in demand) singularities.

Cities are the ideal places to foster creative interactions and enable the experimentation that drives innovation. The smart guide is clearly a practical manifesto for a wider usage of art, culture and creative industries (CCIs) in economic and social development of cities, expressing the idea that art and culture are essential resources for innovation.

Local action plans (LAPs) are strategic documents describing how the knowledge gained as the result of trans-regional cooperation will contribute to the improvement of regional policy instruments. Therefore, it should reflect the knowledge obtained during the inter-regional collaboration with other actors during the different actions and activities which are and will be carried out. LAPs should address specific policy instruments, understood as interventions designed by governing authorities with the aim of achieving a predefined goal or objective, referring to either strategies, policies, laws or other instruments.

For the purpose of each LAP preparation, we recommend integrating the principles of the FAST approach (Sull & Sull, 2018), not needed mandatory to be directly addressed in its elaboration, but it should serve as general guidance in the preparation and implementation phases to ensure the best possible outcome.

Although the framework of Value Proposition Canvas was primarily developed for businesses and enterprises it can also be applied to the project management field (Wagner, 2017). It can help better identify what the ‘customers’ want and how to tailor what is being offered within the project to their specific needs. While the customers cannot be understood in precisely the same manner as they might be in the business world, it is important to consider the target group or the beneficiaries of the LAPs the actions will be designed for.

These recommendations are congruent with the deliverable “Local Action Plan Methodology” elaborated by UM and will serve for an optimum design and implementation of all 5 LAPs from RESTART\_4Danube project.

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