



D.2.3.1 Pilot evaluation report

Version 6, 30.10.2025

The project is co-financed by the Polish Ministry of Education and Science under the program entitled International Co-financed Projects





Content

Executive summary	2
1 Introduction	4
1.1 Purpose of the report	4
1.2 Scope and methodology	4
1.3 Structure of the report	9
2 Pilots overview	11
2.1 Tandem 1: Re-use of spaces in city centres for circular offers by StadtLABOR and CIKE 11	
2.2 Tandem 2: Multifunctional resource centres by ZRS Bistra Ptuj and Brzeg Dolny .16	
2.3 Tandem 3: Sustainable e-commerce in city centres by UBA and ENVIROS	22
2.4 Tandem 4: Activation of users for circular lifestyles by ENEA and BME	28
3 Self assessment by local pilot projects	34
3.1 Key findings from local pilot projects	34
3.2 Common insights from the pilots self-assessment.....	54
4 Cross-Tandem assessment	56
4.1 Cross-tandem evaluation results	56
4.2 Common insights from the cross-tandem assessment	76
5 Assessment by pilot users	78
5.1 Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics.....	78
5.2 Key findings from pilot users' feedback	83
5.3 Cross-pilot analysis: common trends and differences.....	107
6 Lessons learnt and recommendations	110
6.1 Summary of key findings across all assessment components	110
6.2 General lessons for circular lifestyle pilots implementation.....	111
6.3 Recommendations for scaling and replicability.....	112
7 Annexes	114
7.1 Annex 1: Cross-tandem assessment questionnaire	114
7.2 Annex 2: Pilot users survey questionnaire.....	118



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the evaluation of eight pilot projects implemented within the NiCE initiative across Central Europe, aimed at activating citizens for circular lifestyles and strengthening the role of city centres as hubs for sustainable living and resource efficiency. The pilots tested diverse circular solutions – including reuse centres, pop-up stores, circular delivery services, multifunctional resource hubs, and water-focused living labs – co-designed with municipalities, entrepreneurs, and local communities.

The evaluation draws on three complementary perspectives: (1) Self-assessment by pilot project teams, (2) Peer cross-tandem assessment, and (3) Survey feedback from pilot users. Together, these methods provide an integrated understanding of both operational performance and user experience.

Across all pilots, the results demonstrate that **circularity becomes most meaningful when it is tangible**. Users expressed strong satisfaction with hands-on activities that allowed them to repair, reuse, co-create, and learn new skills. Participation was most often driven by curiosity and personal interest, rather than economic incentives. In line with this, pilots were highly valued for **education, community interaction, and visibility of local circular entrepreneurs**, while perceived financial benefits (e.g., saving time or money) remained low.

Pilot projects that transformed **vacant urban spaces into interactive circular hubs** (such as pop-ups and reuse centres) contributed directly to **revitalising city centres**, attracting new visitors, and strengthening local identity. Educational pilot projects embedded in universities and neighbourhoods effectively built **new competences and awareness** that can shape long-term behavioural change.

From an operational and organisational perspective, strong collaboration between local governments, NGOs and SMEs proved a critical success factor. Temporary pilot projects triggered increased interest in continuation, revealing **high potential for long-term growth** – provided that business models, promotion, and infrastructure can be further stabilised.

Across locations, three major challenges emerged:

- **Sustainability beyond project funding** – many pilot projects require new financial models to continue.
- **Space and accessibility limitations** – capacity constraints reduced participation where demand was high.
- **Awareness and visibility gaps** – citizens were sometimes unaware that activities were part of the NiCE initiative, reducing participation in the evaluation.



Pilot projects depending on behavioural change alone, such as sustainable delivery services, faced the greatest difficulty in achieving uptake without strong user incentives.

The pilot projects demonstrated that circular lifestyle transitions depend on **local engagement ecosystems** that combine space, skills, and social connections. Their results suggest that to scale up impact, cities should:

- Invest in **permanent or recurring formats** that maintain community momentum
- Enable **hands-on circular services** that directly support reuse, repair, and local production
- Leverage **trusted local networks** (schools, neighbourhood anchors, entrepreneurs) to mobilise participation
- Integrate **behavioural incentives and convenience** into circular consumption models
- Strengthen **monitoring and data tracking** to demonstrate environmental and social outcomes.

Overall, the NiCE pilots successfully activated citizens for circular lifestyles and provided **replicable solutions** for scaling circular economy practices in urban centres. They demonstrated that circularity can improve the vibrancy, resilience, and inclusiveness of European cities, especially when initiatives are co-created with local communities and embedded in everyday life.

Sustaining and expanding these achievements will require continued political support, strengthened business models, and ongoing collaboration across borders. The lessons and recommendations outlined in this report offer a clear roadmap for further implementation and replication toward a more circular future of European city centres.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the report

This report evaluates the implementation and impact of the four pilot topics and their eight local pilot initiatives conducted within the NiCE project. These pilots aimed to test and demonstrate circular lifestyle solutions in urban centers, fostering more sustainable consumption and circular economy practices. The primary goal of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness, challenges, and outcomes of the pilots from multiple perspectives.

By systematically analyzing these aspects, the report seeks to:

- Assess the pilots' performance based on partners' self-evaluations, considering operational, economic, and engagement-related factors.
- Compare and evaluate pilots across different tandems, identifying transferable solutions, along with success factors fostering their application and barriers hindering it.
- Examine how increased accessibility to circular lifestyle services influences consumer awareness, knowledge, behaviors, and satisfaction.
- Extract key lessons learned to inform future implementations, both within the NiCE project and beyond.
- Provide recommendations for improving and scaling circular lifestyle initiatives in European city centers, with a focus on long-term viability and policy integration.

The insights from this report will contribute to shaping more effective strategies for promoting circular economy practices in urban environments, ensuring that city centers become vibrant, resource-efficient, and community-driven spaces.

1.2 Scope and methodology

This report evaluates the outcomes of the eight local pilot projects, grouped into four tandems, implemented within the NiCE project, focusing on their impact on circular lifestyles in urban centers. The evaluation is based on a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collected through:

- **Self-assessment by project partners implementing pilots**, using the Circular Cities Project Excellence Framework (CC-PEM) developed in Work Package 1 (D.1.4.1 respectively) by the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) to track progress, operational challenges, and results.



- **Cross-tandem assessment**, where partners use semi-structured in-depth interview to evaluate each other's pilots to identify best practices, challenges, and lessons for replication.
- **Pilot users surveys** to assess their awareness, knowledge, behavioral changes, and satisfaction with circular lifestyle services.

Additional assessment perspective is presented in the report *D.2.2.1 Peer review to all eight pilot sites*, in which tandem partners mutually review the other partner's pilot.

1.2.1 Methodology of the self-assessment by local pilots

The self-assessment of NiCE pilots follows the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed by Project Partner 7, BME, which is based on the Circular Cities Project Excellence Model (CC-PEM). The aim of this framework is not to compare pilot results directly, but to guide the planning and implementation of pilot projects, provide feedback during and after implementation for fine-tuning, and identify benefits and drawbacks for future replication.

The CC-PEM builds on earlier sustainability evaluation models and has been specifically tailored to the needs of circular economy projects in urban contexts. It combines enabling factors (such as project leadership, strategy, people, and methods) with result criteria (including stakeholder satisfaction and fulfilment of objectives).

The framework is applied throughout the project lifecycle using dedicated Excel templates:

- **Initial data sheet** – filled in before the pilot start; includes scope, objectives, and planned results;
- **Monitoring sheets** – filled in after 6 and 12 months; tracks pilot implementation and adjustments;
- **Final evaluation sheet** – filled in just after the pilot end; covers the achieved results;
- **Follow-up sheet** – filled in a few month after the pilot ends; covers long-term sustainability assessment.

For this self-assessment, partners completed the Monitoring and Final evaluation sheets to document their progress, challenges, and outcomes during and after pilot implementation.

For further details about the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, please refer to *D.1.4.1 Framing concepts for our offers (pilots/ solutions and transfer formats) including the M&E concept*.



1.2.2 Methodology of the cross-tandem assessment

The cross-tandem assessment focuses on understanding the replicability of pilot activities and the factors that determine their success or failure in different urban contexts. The evaluation considers the following key research aspects:

- **Success factors and barriers** – What are the critical elements that contribute to the effectiveness of pilot initiatives supporting circular economy lifestyles in cities? What challenges and barriers could prevent their replication in other cities, and how can they be mitigated?
- **Replicability and necessary adaptations** – To what extent can the pilot initiatives supporting circular lifestyles in cities be transferred to other cities? What adjustments are required in terms of policy, infrastructure, or stakeholder engagement to ensure successful implementation elsewhere?
- **Innovative concepts** – What unique solutions or practices have emerged from pilot initiatives supporting circular lifestyles in cities? How can these innovative concepts be adapted and applied in other urban settings to promote circular lifestyles?

By analyzing these aspects, the assessment aims to identify the most impactful strategies for scaling up circular economy initiatives and ensuring their long-term sustainability in different city contexts.

The assessment is based on qualitative research methods to ensure an in-depth understanding of the pilots' implementation, impact, and replicability. The methodology relies on peer evaluation, where partners not directly involved in a tandem assess the activities of another tandem. This approach ensures an external perspective, facilitates knowledge exchange, and highlights transferable insights. Specifically, the following evaluation plan was adopted:

Tandem being evaluated:	Evaluation performed by:
Tandem 1: StadtLABOR + CIKE	Tandem 2: ZRS Bistra Ptuj + Brzeg Dolny
Tandem 2: ZRS Bistra Ptuj + Brzeg Dolny	Tandem 1: StadtLABOR + CIKE
Tandem 3: UBA + ENVIROS	Tandem 4: ENEA + BME
Tandem 4: ENEA + BME	Tandem 3: UBA + ENVIROS



The data collection process includes the following key elements:

- **Desk research and document analysis:** reports, pilot documentation, tandem review reports, and internal project materials are reviewed to understand the background, objectives, and progress of each pilot.
- **Semi-structured interviews:** interviews with pilot implementers (i.e. project partners and if relevant, local operators) provide detailed insights into the challenges, successes, and practical experiences of each tandem.
- **Comparative analysis:** findings from different pilots are analyzed to identify recurring patterns, unique methods, and key success factors that contribute to the replicability of circular initiatives.

By applying these qualitative methods, the assessment offers a contextualized evaluation of the NiCE pilots. To ensure consistency across different assessments, the data collected through the three methods outlined above is summarized in the cross-tandem assessment questionnaire, provided in Annex 1 of this report. The questionnaire consists of 13 questions divided into five sections: (1) general information, (2) key success factors and barriers, (3) replicability of pilot activities, (4) innovative concepts, and (5) overall evaluation and recommendations.

1.2.3 Methodology of the assessment by pilot users

To evaluate the satisfaction, motivations and perceived benefits of users participating in the NiCE pilot activities, a structured assessment methodology was implemented across all pilot locations in Central Europe. The assessment formed a dedicated part of a broader international survey on circular lifestyle behaviours conducted within the NiCE project.

A single standardised online questionnaire was used in all eight countries participating in the project (AT, CZ, DE, HU, IT, PL, SK, SI). The questionnaire was originally developed in English and subsequently translated into national languages, with each translation validated by native speakers to ensure accuracy and cultural relevance.

The survey was distributed by NiCE partners and local pilot stakeholders directly among participants of pilot activities, primarily during or immediately after workshops, events and engagements. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw at any time prior to submitting their responses. To increase participation, RIC Pro-Akademia organised a contest for the most creative response to the question *"Which of your household products could be used for a new purpose instead of being thrown away? Please be creative and describe the new function of this item in your household"*.



Only respondents who indicated that they (or their child) had participated in a NiCE pilot activity completed the pilot-specific questions. This conditional section included: (1) motivation to participate (multiple choice); (2) satisfaction and perceived benefits (5-point Likert scale); (3) open-ended questions on what participants liked most and what they would improve

The analysis presented in this report covers solely direct pilot users and their children. No responses were excluded. Sample sizes per country were as follows:

Country	Direct adult pilot users (n)
Austria	8
Czechia	1
Germany	1
Hungary	5
Italy	12
Poland	20
Slovakia	10
Slovenia	11
Total	68

Additionally, for the child-engagement path, responses were obtained for: Poland (3), Slovakia (3), Italy (2), Austria, Czechia and Slovenia (1 each).

The data analysis applied a **mixed-methods approach**. Quantitative analysis involved descriptive statistics (percentage distribution of Likert-scale responses) and country-level reporting without pooling due to different pilot project contexts. Qualitative analysis included manual thematic coding of open-ended responses and grouping into comparable categories across pilots. Cross-pilot comparisons are descriptive only, due to small and uneven sample sizes in some countries.

The study followed GDPR rules and the NiCE data protection protocol. Before responding, users were required to: (1) confirm informed consent to participate; (2) provide consent for personal data processing until project closure. Respondents could choose whether their responses remain fully anonymous or not, depending on the agreed data processing purpose



(details provided in Annex 2 to the present report). Data are reported exclusively at aggregated group level.

The following limitations must be considered:

- small sample sizes in several pilots (e.g. DE, CZ, HU, AT) limit generalisability
- self-selection bias: participants were already interested in sustainability/circular activities
- self-reported perceptions may differ from actual behavioural effects
- some participants did not realise that the activity they attended was part of NiCE pilot, and therefore answered “no” to the initial screening question, reducing the effective pilot sample size
- pilots differ significantly in scope, timing, activity format and duration, thus results should be interpreted within their specific local contexts.

1.3 Structure of the report

This report is structured into seven main sections, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the eight pilot projects implemented within the NiCE project.

- **Section 1 – Introduction** outlines the purpose, scope, and methodology of the report, detailing the assessment approaches used, including self-assessment by pilots, cross-tandem assessment, and feedback from pilot users.
- **Section 2 – Pilots overview** provides a brief description of each of the eight local pilots, highlighting their objectives, key activities, and context within their respective cities.
- **Section 3 – Self-assessment by local pilot projects** presents findings from the self-assessment conducted by project partners using the Monitoring and Evaluation Tool, developed earlier in the project. Each pilot project is analyzed separately, followed by a cross-pilot analysis identifying common insights and recommendations for future implementations.
- **Section 4 – Cross-tandem assessment** evaluates the pilots through peer review, where partners assess each other’s approaches, challenges, and best practices to derive transferable lessons.
- **Section 5 – Assessment by pilot users** focuses on survey results conducted among users of circular services in pilot cities. It presents key socio-demographic



characteristics of respondents, pilot-specific findings, and a cross-pilot analysis of user perceptions and experiences with circular services.

- **Section 6 – Lessons learnt and recommendations** synthesizes key insights from all assessment components, summarizing lessons for the implementation of circular lifestyle pilots and providing recommendations for scaling and replication.
- **Section 7 – Annexes** includes supporting materials such as the cross-tandem assessment questionnaire and the survey template used for gathering feedback from pilot users.



2 PILOTS OVERVIEW

This chapter provides a brief overview of the eight local pilot activities implemented within the four tandems under the NiCE project, highlighting their main objectives, activities, and stakeholders. Each pilot represents a different approach to fostering circular lifestyles in urban centres. For a more detailed description of the pilots' implementation processes, outcomes, and lessons learned, please refer to the report *D.2.2.2 Documentation report for each pilot*

2.1 Tandem 1: Re-use of spaces in city centres for circular offers by StadtLABOR and CIKE

The tandem of StadtLABOR (Graz, Austria) and CIKE (Košice, Slovakia) tackled a shared urban challenge: how to bring life back to declining city centres by transforming vacant spaces into vibrant hubs for circular activities. Both cities were struggling with underused urban premises, changing consumer habits, and a lack of public awareness about circular lifestyles. The tandem's cooperation focused on demonstrating that re-use, social engagement, and sustainable entrepreneurship could serve as powerful tools to reactivate city centres and make circular economy concepts tangible for citizens.

Through close collaboration, StadtLABOR and CIKE explored complementary models of circular space revitalization – one more commercially oriented, the other community-driven and socially focused. Their joint work involved identifying suitable vacant locations, engaging a wide network of municipal and local stakeholders, and testing participatory approaches to design, operation, and user involvement. The partnership was built on mutual learning: both teams exchanged methodologies, compared business models, and shared experiences on how to balance economic viability with social and environmental value.

By combining their expertise, the tandem demonstrated how cities of different scales and contexts can adapt circular solutions to their needs. Their cooperation helped outline practical pathways for other municipalities aiming to convert empty properties into accessible spaces that promote reuse, creativity, and inclusion – ultimately contributing to more resilient and sustainable city centres.

2.1.1 Austria – House of Future in Graz

General description of the pilot project

The pilot project at Herrengasse 10 aimed to temporarily revitalize a vacant inner-city property while giving entrepreneurs the opportunity to showcase their products and experiment with new business ideas. Sixteen businesses were selected through a call for applications, all of which shared a focus on regionality, sustainability, and art. Each entrepreneur took turns using



the space in a purely self-organized manner, creating a dynamic and ever-changing showcase of local creativity.

The City of Graz, through its Department of Economic and Tourism Development, provided the 22m² space free of charge. The only conditions were that it had to be attractively designed, operate with regular opening hours, and be equipped by the entrepreneurs themselves, including furniture and cash register systems.

Preparations began in April 2024, with the pop-up shop opening in June and running through September. The project concluded with a large closing event that celebrated the achievements of all participants.



Figure 1 Entrepreneurs involved in the pilot, in front of the pop-up store. Source: StadtLABOR

Implementation and key activities

A distinctive feature of the initiative was the direct interaction between producers and visitors. Entrepreneurs personally staffed the shop, offering insights into their products and, in many cases, demonstrating their craft on site. This hands-on approach gave customers a deeper understanding of local production and added authenticity to the experience.

The pilot also tested a new business model based on collaboration. Small groups of entrepreneurs joined forces and divided up the opening hours to save on personnel costs.



Initially, this required a good introduction to the products so that every entrepreneur could confidently represent and sell one another's goods. It also required building trust among each other so that they could entrust their products to one another. The success of this cooperative "personnel for rent" concept encouraged further experimentation with similar models in other store in the city center.



Figure 2 Entrepreneurs showcase their craft, jeans upcycling (with Felizia). Source: StadtLABOR

Target users and engagement

The pilot was aimed primarily at small businesses that did not yet have their own retail space in Graz and wanted to display and test their sustainable and regional products. The entrepreneurs were found through two calls specifically targeting people involved in the circular economy in Graz. This quickly resulted in 16 participants for the pilot.

Located in the heart of Graz, the pilot reached both residents and tourists. Tourists appreciated the opportunity to purchase unique, sustainably made souvenirs that differed from conventional tourist shops, while citizens were able to discover local companies and also experience traditional crafts in interactive settings.



Promotion of the pilot relied on strong regional outreach, including coverage in regional media and daily newspapers, and, above all, social media. Collaborations with various municipal departments further increased its visibility and reinforced the city's commitment to supporting sustainable urban entrepreneurship.

2.1.2 Slovakia – Re-use centre Košice

General description of the pilot project

The Košice Re-use centre pilot project aimed to bring circular economy principles into everyday life by creating a community space dedicated to reuse, social help and education. Its main objectives were to reduce waste, encourage responsible consumption and support vulnerable groups through targeted donation campaigns of second-hand goods.

The Re-use centre reused an empty municipal building in Košice's city centre (Kováčska 18), transforming it into a lively hub for circular activities. It served as both a collection point for second-hand items and a space for creative and educational workshops. The pilot directly addressed material reuse, circular services and social solidarity.

Key stakeholders included CIKE as the pilot lead, City of Košice, K13 – Košice Cultural Centres, and several NGOs that help people in need. Corporate volunteers from IBM and T-Systems co-designed a prototype online tool to improve coordination between donors and NGOs.

Implementation and key activities

The pilot timeline was as follows:

- Planning phase: December 2023 – April 2024 (stakeholder mapping, needs assessment, Living Labs)
- Preparation phase: May – September 2024 (venue renovation, communication setup, visual identity)
- Pilot running phase: October 2024 – April 2025 (official launch, workshops, collections, events)
- Closure & evaluation: May – October 2025

The Re-use centre introduced a set of circular solutions focused on material reuse, social help, education and community engagement. In practice, it operated as:

- A donation and redistribution hub – collecting reusable household items, clothing and furniture for redistribution to people in need via local NGOs.



- An educational and creative space – hosting workshops on circular living and upcycling. Educational events encouraged citizens to rethink waste and learn repair, reuse and DIY skills.



Figure 3 Collection of items in the Re-use centre. Source: CIKE

Target users and engagement

The Re-use centre targeted local residents, vulnerable groups, NGOs and socially engaged citizens. It was open three afternoons per week, offering drop-off opportunities and free participation in educational activities.

User engagement was based on hands-on participation. People were motivated to donate when they knew exactly who would benefit, creating a personal sense of solidarity. Workshops and creative sessions provided inclusive learning opportunities. Regular communication through social media and newsletters helped maintain visibility and repeat participation.

Over 6.5 months, the pilot attracted dozens of visitors, organized 12 workshops, 10 donation campaigns, and built a strong network of 7 cooperating NGOs.



Figure 4 Workshop organised in the Re-use centre. Source: CIKE

2.2 Tandem 2: Multifunctional resource centres by ZRS Bistra Ptuj and Brzeg Dolny

The tandem between ZRS Bistra Ptuj from Slovenia and the Municipality of Brzeg Dolny in Poland addressed a shared challenge: how to promote circular lifestyles and community engagement through accessible, multifunctional spaces that combine education, creativity, and material reuse. Both partners sought to demonstrate that the circular economy can become part of everyday life when embedded in local spaces that encourage participation and collaboration.

While operating in different contexts and scales, the two teams built a strong partnership centred on mutual learning and exchange. Their cooperation focused on exploring how permanent and temporary formats can complement each other in spreading circular practices: Brzeg Dolny through a stable educational hub, and Ptuj through a dynamic, mobile model. This contrast allowed both sides to test how physical space, duration, and community dynamics influence participation, visibility, and long-term behavioural change.

The partners worked closely throughout implementation, holding regular coordination meetings and sharing communication materials, educational content, and strategies for stakeholder engagement. Each benefited from the other's expertise: Brzeg Dolny drew inspiration from ZRS Bistra Ptuj's experience in promoting creative entrepreneurship and design thinking, while



ZRS Bistra Ptuj adapted lessons from Brzeg Dolny's community-based model of transforming municipal spaces into inclusive resource centres.

Their collaboration also strengthened transnational visibility, as the tandem jointly contributed to NiCE study visits, dissemination events, and exchanges across the project network. This cross-border cooperation highlighted how diverse local approaches – permanent centres and temporary pop-ups – can together form a flexible, replicable model for cities seeking to integrate circular principles into urban life.

By linking community education with entrepreneurship, the tandem demonstrated that the circular economy thrives where people, skills, and creativity meet. Their joint work provided a blueprint for other municipalities on how to turn underused spaces into vibrant, multifunctional resource hubs that foster sustainability, participation, and local pride.

2.2.1 Poland – Multicentrum Zero Waste in Brzeg Dolny

General description of the pilot project

The Multicentre Zero Waste pilot project was created to promote sustainable urban lifestyles and encourage the community of Brzeg Dolny to adopt circular practices in everyday life. The main objective was to transform an unused municipal space in the city centre into a multifunctional educational hub – a place where residents could learn, create, and exchange ideas around the circular economy. The pilot focused on practical aspects of circular living, such as material reuse, repair, and upcycling, while also fostering social interaction and community building.

Key stakeholders included the Municipality of Brzeg Dolny (project leader), local NGOs, educators, and small local businesses that provided workshop materials or expertise. The Local Action Group “Kraina Łęgów Odrzańskich” supported educator recruitment and community outreach. The planning and preparation phase lasted from late 2023 to early 2025, including refurbishment of the space, equipment purchase, and community consultation. The pilot officially launched in February 2025 and is ongoing, with regular workshops and events running until the project closure in late 2025.

Implementation and key activities

The pilot introduced a practical model for a Multifunctional Resource Centre, offering hands-on workshops in sewing, carpentry, cooking, and upcycling. These activities aimed to demonstrate how materials can be reused and how waste can be reduced through creativity and skill-sharing. The centre operates both as a workshop venue and an open-space area, where residents can work on their own projects under the supervision of skilled mentors.



Other activities included community events such as the Zero Waste Festival, local awareness campaigns, and online communication through a blog and Facebook page. The pilot also developed a visual identity and communication strategy to raise visibility. The flexible, modular design of the refurbished space allowed for easy adaptation to various types of workshops and meetings, making it a living example of efficient resource use.

Target users and engagement

The primary users of the Multicentre are local residents – children, youth, adults, and seniors – as well as local educators and NGOs. Schools and teachers have been particularly engaged, with educational workshops organised for pupils aged 7-13. Adults and seniors participate in thematic sessions that promote creativity and self-sufficiency, such as sewing from scraps or woodworking from reused materials.



Figure 5 Upcycling workshop for school students organised in the Zero Waste Multicentre. Source: Municipality Brzeg Dolny

Engagement strategies included surveys and meetings to identify community needs, regular online updates, and collaboration with local educators and entrepreneurs. The strong sense of ownership and belonging encouraged participants to contribute voluntarily – some even became workshop leaders themselves. The high attendance rate and positive feedback show



that the pilot not only increased awareness but also sparked genuine behavioural change toward a more circular and community-oriented lifestyle.



Figure 6 Instructor (left) and participants in front of the Zero Waste Multicentre presenting photoframes made during a woodworking workshop. Source: Municipality Brzeg Dolny

2.2.2 Slovenia – Pop up store Ptuj

General description of the pilot project

The pilot activity in Ptuj focused on launching a circular economy-themed pop-up store in the city centre to raise awareness, promote reuse and repair, and activate underused urban spaces. The initiative aimed to showcase sustainable and upcycled products while fostering cooperation among creative, environmental, and economic stakeholders. It also sought to engage citizens in hands-on experiences that demonstrated circular lifestyles in practice and to test the temporary use of vacant premises as a tool for revitalising the historic core of the city.

The pop-up store became a local hub for material reuse, repair, upcycling, and sustainable production, while also encouraging knowledge exchange among participants. The initiative brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including local artisans, designers, small and medium-sized enterprises, NGOs, and cultural and creative organisations. The Municipality of Ptuj, educational institutions, local residents, and ZRS Bistra Ptuj also played key roles in supporting and implementing the project.



Figure 7 Clients visiting the Pop-up store. Source: ZRS Bistra Ptuj

The pilot followed a structured timeline: planning and preparation took place in mid-2024, the pop-up store operated in two main phases – between October and December 2024, and again from June to August 2025 – and the closure and evaluation phase was scheduled for autumn 2025.

Implementation and key activities

The pilot introduced a temporary retail and educational space dedicated to promoting circular economy solutions in Ptuj's city centre. This pop-up store combined retail, education, and community engagement to demonstrate how sustainable practices can be integrated into everyday life. It featured an exhibition and sale of upcycled products and sustainable design items, offering visitors tangible examples of circular production and consumption. Alongside this, a series of workshops on reuse were organised in collaboration with local artisans and NGOs, allowing participants to learn practical repair and creative upcycling skills.

Throughout its operation, the space hosted a variety of special events, including a Christmas stand and an art exhibition in December 2024, as well as a creative workshop led by ZUDV Dornava in July 2025. The interior of the pop-up was furnished entirely with reused and refurbished items sourced from the local Reuse Center, serving as a live example of circular design in practice.

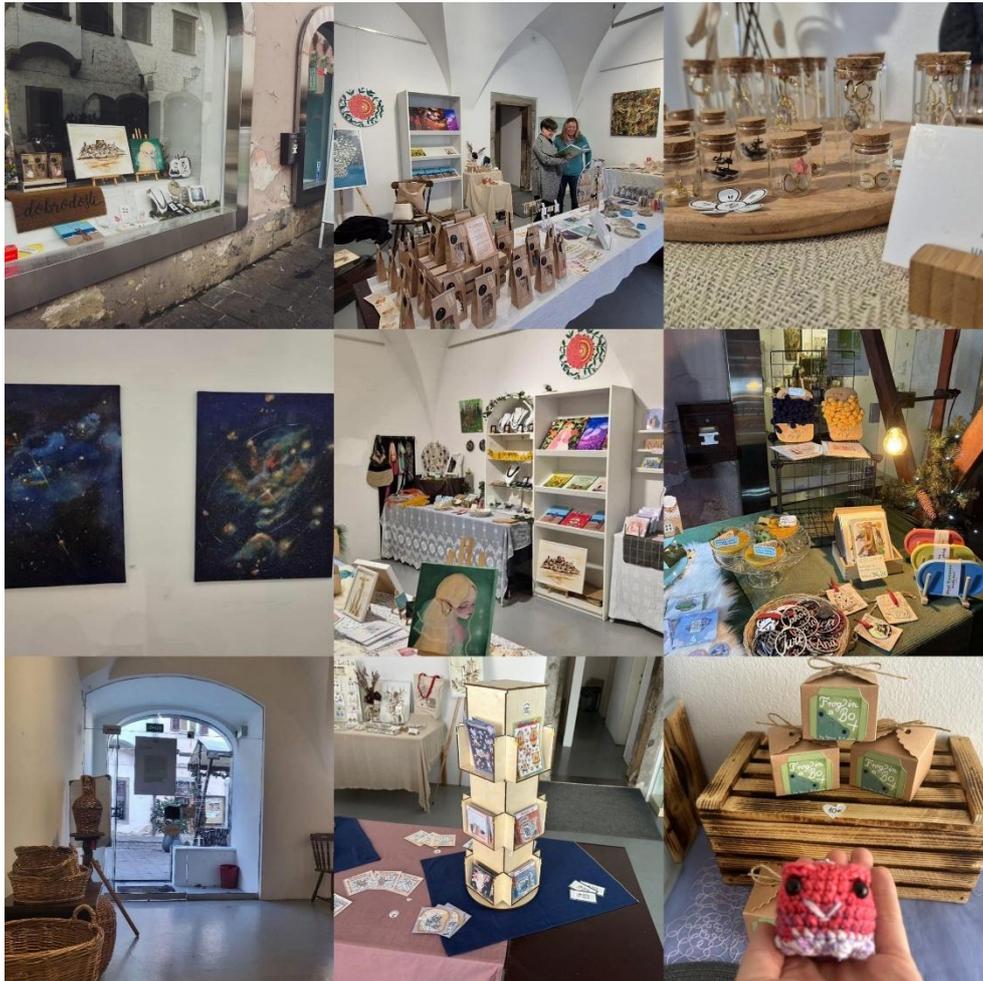


Figure 8 Products offered in the Pop up store Ptuj, Source: ZRS Bistra Ptuj

The implementation of the pilot was based on co-design with stakeholders and supported by strong communication and branding efforts across social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as through traditional media. A shared operating model ensured the regular involvement of creators and volunteers, fostering collaboration and a sense of community ownership throughout the project.

Target users and engagement

The primary users of the Ptuj pop-up store included local residents, young creatives, tourists, NGOs, small businesses, schools, and social institutions. The initiative aimed to bring together diverse groups and inspire them to explore and adopt circular practices in their daily lives. Engagement was fostered through a variety of interactive and participatory activities, such as open workshops and hands-on demonstrations that encouraged practical learning. Co-creation sessions with artisans, students, and people with disabilities from ZUDV Dornava added an inclusive dimension, while intergenerational events helped share knowledge and experiences



across age groups. Continuous communication through social media and local media outlets kept the community informed and involved throughout the pilot's duration.

In total, the pop-up hosted five workshops and events, engaging around twenty active participants. Beyond these numbers, the project achieved a broader impact by strengthening local cooperation, increasing awareness of circular economy practices, and generating highly positive public feedback. The spontaneous engagement of citizens – through donations, volunteering, and ongoing support – demonstrated genuine community ownership of the initiative. Overall, the Ptuj pop-up store successfully showed how the temporary use of vacant urban spaces can revitalise city centres, activate community participation, support circular-oriented SMEs, and inspire sustainable lifestyle choices in smaller urban contexts.

2.3 Tandem 3: Sustainable e-commerce in city centres by UBA and ENVIROS

The tandem between the German Environment Agency (UBA) and ENVIROS (Czechia) addressed a central urban and economic challenge: how to connect the rapidly growing digital and e-commerce sector with the revitalisation of city centres and the promotion of circular lifestyles. Both partners recognised that online shopping, while convenient, often weakens local retail networks and sustainability-oriented consumption. Their cooperation aimed to test new ways of linking digitalisation, logistics, and reuse systems so that e-commerce could support, rather than compete with, circular city-centre activities.

The tandem focused on two complementary dimensions of this challenge: UBA explored how sustainable logistics could strengthen repair and rental services within the city centre, while ENVIROS investigated how artificial intelligence and digital tools could improve the efficiency and visibility of reuse operations. Together, they demonstrated how technological innovation and urban sustainability can reinforce each other.

Cooperation between the partners was continuous and highly interactive. Through regular online meetings, joint ideation workshops, and mutual study visits, the teams aligned their approaches and shared practical experiences on integrating digital elements into circular business models. UBA's insights into logistics and customer engagement informed ENVIROS's approach to accessibility and user experience, while the Czech partner's expertise in digital tool development provided valuable lessons on how technology can optimise operational processes and data management.

Their collaboration also extended to joint evaluation, peer review, and documentation of results, ensuring that both pilots contributed to a shared learning process. This exchange



helped identify replicable solutions, such as AI-supported reuse management and CO₂-neutral delivery models, that other cities and reuse initiatives can adapt to their contexts.

Ultimately, the tandem showed how cross-border cooperation can bridge the gap between digital transformation and sustainable urban living. By connecting e-commerce innovation with circular values, UBA and ENVIROS demonstrated that modern retail ecosystems can evolve to become both customer-friendly and climate-conscious, helping city centres remain active, inclusive, and environmentally responsible.

2.3.1 Czechia – Integrating digitalization and e-commerce into reuse centre operation in Jihlava

General description of the pilot project

The pilot project in Jihlava, implemented within the NiCE initiative, aimed to explore how digitalisation and e-commerce tools could be introduced into local reuse practices. At the outset, the most suitable focus for such innovation was not clear, so the pilot team observed ongoing activities of the reuse centre Útulek věcí and Silo Jihlava – from the day-to-day operation of collecting and redistributing items to the organisation of Reuse Days, swaps, workshops and awareness events – and assessed where digitalisation could bring the greatest benefits. The analysis revealed that electronic management of reuse centre operations offered the highest added value, given the growing number of items and users. Building on this, the pilot also supported physical events as testing grounds for citizen engagement and awareness-raising. Key stakeholders included Silo Jihlava as the operator, ENVIROS as the project partner, the City of Jihlava, the Reuse Federation, and local NGOs. Planning began in 2024 with stakeholder mapping and establishment of a Local Advisory Board, preparation of public events and a study visit to Würzburg, followed by testing digital tools and concluding in mid-2025 with final evaluation and outlook.

Implementation and key activities

The core solution introduced was the Reuse Recognizer, an AI-based tool that simplifies record-keeping in reuse operations. Donated items are photographed and automatically recognised, with descriptions of material composition, type and approximate weight generated instantly. This innovation addressed the challenge of time-consuming manual registration, which previously consumed up to half of an employee's working time. The first version relied on batch processing of photos, while later development led to a Telegram chatbot connected to a Firebase database, enabling real-time recognition, searching and data export. In parallel, community events such as Reuse Days in 2024 and 2025, fashion shows made from reused textiles and creative workshops provided opportunities to demonstrate reuse practices and



engage the public, while also serving as a backdrop for promoting the pilot and its digital innovations.

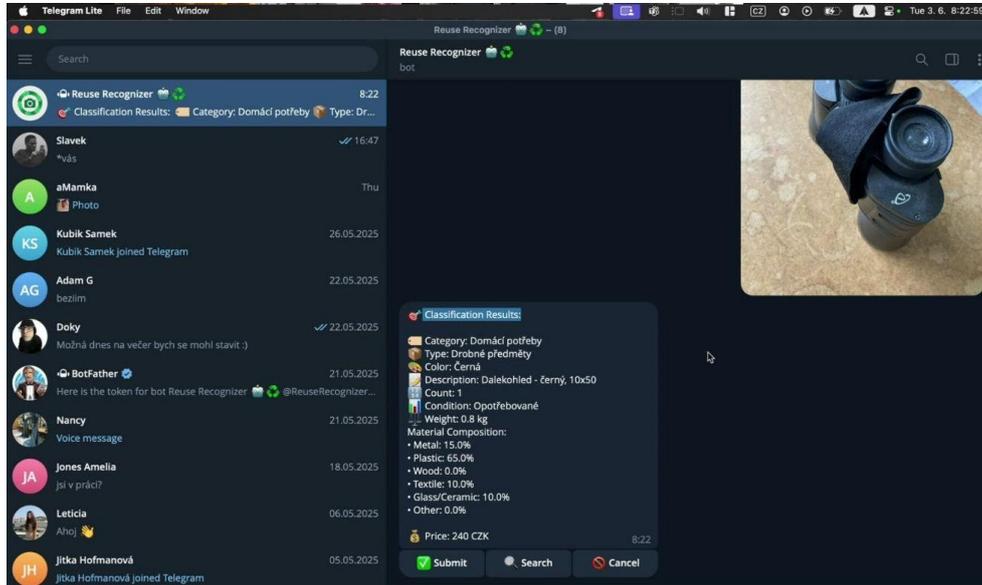


Figure 9 Reuse Recognizer tool. Source: ENVIROS

Target users and engagement

The primary users of the pilot were the residents of Jihlava, who donated items to the reuse centre, joined swaps and creative workshops, or attended lectures. At the same time, local NGOs and businesses were involved as partners and multipliers of the reuse and digitalisation agenda. Engagement was fostered through direct participation in public events, informal consultations, and the Local Advisory Board, ensuring that citizen needs and practical insights shaped the pilot. This combination of technical innovation and community activities demonstrated how digital tools can strengthen both the efficiency and visibility of reuse practices, laying the foundation for further integration of circular lifestyles into the city's everyday reality.

Originally, the Reuse Recognizer was intended to enable direct sale of higher-value reused items via online marketplaces, but the current technical solution does not allow posting items automatically and instead only prepares structured data for easier listing. In the future, a web application is planned that will allow sharing items through unique links and potentially connect to marketplaces via API, thus gradually fulfilling the original goal of increasing the online visibility and accessibility of reused goods.



Figure 10 Event organised within the pilot framework. Source: ENVIROS

2.3.2 Germany – Linking e-commerce and circular lifestyle offers in the city centre of Würzburg

General description of the pilot project

In Würzburg, the German Environment Agency (UBA) launched a bicycle pick-up and delivery service for repair and rental items as a pilot project. The idea behind it was to link sustainable e-commerce with city centres for the benefit of both.

The service was tested in cooperation with the Würzburg Zukunftshaus, the bicycle courier Radius, and adelphi. Beyond that, more local partners were involved at the local advisory board which supported the project. The board brought together representatives from the City of Würzburg, the Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg, memo Stiftung, and several NGOs.



Figure 11 Zukunftshaus Würzburg. Source: Zukunftshaus Würzburg.

UBA began looking for cooperation partners in mid-2024. The pilot idea was further developed together with the local partners until the pilot was launched. The pilot itself ran from June to December 2024. The official closing event for the local pilot took place in May 2025.

On the one hand, the service should strengthen repair and renting in Würzburg, thereby reducing resource consumption. On the other hand, this additional offering should help Zukunftshaus to further establish its location in the city center.

Implementation and key activities

The Zukunftshaus, a cooperative focused on circular lifestyles, offers already covered four pillars: sustainable products, renting, repairing, and swapping. The pilot added a new dimension – a pick-up and delivery service for rental items and for products customers brought in for repair.



Figure 12 From left to right, Chaminda Perera (Radius), Thomas Mitschke (Radius), Lisa Spängler (Zukunftshaus). Source: Zukunftshaus Würzburg.

This service made renting and repairing easier than before. People no longer had to visit the Zukunftshaus in person both ways. They either get their repaired items delivered, or they get their rented items picked-up from home. Rental items can be reserved directly at the Zukunftshaus website. The logistics partner for the service was Radius, a local bicycle courier. This means all pick-ups and deliveries were CO₂-neutral.

The pilot therefore combined the circular offers of renting and repairing with the classic delivery service for online retail. The fact that the delivery is CO₂-neutral also addresses the so-called "last mile", a hotspot in the environmental impact of online retail. And the location of the Zukunftshaus in the city centre can be further strengthened by the expanded offering.

Target users and engagement

The main beneficiaries were residents of the city centre and customers of Zukunftshaus, but the project was open to all Würzburg residents. Thanks to the bicycle delivery service, repaired and rented goods could reach all districts, promoting a circular lifestyle across the city.

During the implementation of the delivery service partners were very active to promote the new service and circular lifestyle offers in general. This involved activities on social media, street



festivals, local campaigns and direct contact at the shop. A short video became Zukunftshaus's most-viewed post ever. The communication activities reached many people. Yet, despite the positive feedback from the user survey beforehand, demand for the delivery service remained low.

2.4 Tandem 4: Activation of users for circular lifestyles by ENEA and BME

The tandem between ENEA (Italy) and BME (Hungary) addressed one of the most personal and impactful aspects of the circular transition – everyday behaviour and resource use in cities, with a particular focus on water. Both partners recognised that urban sustainability depends not only on technological innovations but also on the active participation of citizens and communities. In this context, water served as a tangible and relatable entry point for engaging people in broader discussions and practices around circular living.

The cooperation between partners revolved around two complementary approaches. ENEA concentrated on co-designing and testing practical solutions for water reuse and sustainable urban farming, implemented directly by citizens and local schools. In contrast, BME focused on behavioural change and education, embedding circular thinking into academic curricula and student projects while encouraging collaboration with businesses and municipalities. Together, they demonstrated that engaging users (whether households, students, or professionals) is key to embedding circular lifestyles in urban settings.

Both pilots shared a strong participatory foundation. They developed multi-stakeholder ecosystems built around the Living Lab methodology, bringing together citizens, local administrations, utilities, NGOs, educational institutions, and businesses. This approach enabled not only experimentation with technical solutions, such as rainwater reuse systems and hydroponic installations, but also the co-creation of knowledge and long-term behavioural change.

Regular communication between ENEA and BME ensured that experiences and lessons were exchanged throughout the implementation period. Joint discussions helped refine methodologies and identify common principles for engaging users effectively – from framing sustainability as a collective challenge to empowering people to act through accessible, low-cost solutions.

The tandem placed strong emphasis on the often-overlooked “refuse” and “reduce” strategies within the 9R framework, underlining that the most sustainable choice often begins with prevention rather than recycling. Both partners encouraged participants to understand how



Figure 13 Workshop organised at BME within the pilot framework. Source: BME

- Targeted Student Workshops: The Intensive Seminar Programme hosted workshops for 34 Master's students, introducing the NiCE project, the 9R model, and covering carbon/water footprints, which received positive feedback.
- Hands-on Learning: The core of the initiative was the "Sustainable Business Model Design" course, introduced in the 2024/25 Spring semester. This course formed the University Living Lab (ULL), where 8 students from various fields collaborated directly with partners like "Ligeti" Package Free Shop and FKF Educational and Reuse Center. Students conducted site visits, developed circular business model proposals, and engaged in mid-term and final co-creation workshops, demonstrating the value of the ULL methodology in fostering skills and behavioral change.

The pilot successfully engaged a broad network, including students, citizens, businesses, alumni, and senior university management, with particular emphasis on involving alumni and partner companies in the local stakeholder board. The pilot action concluded after one year, reinforcing BME's commitment to embedding circular economy principles through practical engagement and robust partnerships.



Figure 14 “Sustainable Business Model Design” course participants with academic teachers. Source: BME

2.4.2 Italy – Testing circular water management solutions in Bologna

General description of the pilot project

The “Acqua in circolo” (in English “water in circulation”) pilot activity was created by ENEA, the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development, to promote circular and sustainable lifestyles among the citizens of Bologna, Italy. Specifically, the pilot focused on water, including saving, reusing, and harvesting (rainwater) at home and for urban farming as main topics.

Target users and engagement

The contribution of city stakeholders was crucial in the design, implementation, and dissemination of the initiative. The Municipality of Bologna, an associated partner in the NiCE project, provided ongoing feedback and had its representatives present at public meetings with citizens, increasing the pilot visibility. The members of the Stakeholder Board, including Bologna’s water management company, local NGOs and foundations working on social and environmental issues, a neighbouring municipality, and a department of the University of Bologna, participated in defining the pilot’s objectives, promoted the public initiatives through their own channels, and helped find solutions when unexpected obstacles arose. Aquaponic Design, the startup chosen by ENEA as a subcontractor, provided materials and expertise for the pilot project, as well as activating additional partners to facilitate meetings and provide audiovisual documentation of the activities. The availability and commitment of teachers allowed for activities dedicated to elementary and middle school students, who then shared the insights and best practices discussed at school with their families. Overall, the participation and enthusiasm of the citizens involved, from various backgrounds and age groups, contributed to the initiative's success.



involved, who specialize in the study of nature-based solutions, to analyse in practice the potential of hydroponic cultivation.



Figure 16 – The wicking bed at the Porta Saragozza municipal gardens. Source: ENEA

The pilot's final event, held in June 2025, was an opportunity to review the year of “Acqua in circolo” activities, listening to representatives of the citizen groups involved share their observations, the obstacles encountered, the solutions adopted, and the lessons they learned from this experience.

Even though the pilot project has officially ended, the installations used during “Acqua in circolo” remain available to citizens, who continue to use them to promote more sustainable and circular urban farming and, more in general, lifestyles.



3 SELF ASSESSMENT BY LOCAL PILOT PROJECTS

3.1 Key findings from local pilot projects

3.1.1 Austria – House of Future in Graz

Key insights from the mid-term self-assessment

The Austrian pilot project successfully combined temporary urban revitalization with the promotion of circular consumption through the “Pop-up Store Herrengasse 10” and the development of a long-term concept known as the “House of Future” (HoF).

The pilot demonstrated how flexible cooperation and strong municipal support can sustain a circular lifestyle initiative despite structural challenges. Roles and responsibilities were clearly communicated through initial agreements, personal meetings, and accessible contact channels, ensuring that all participants knew their tasks. A common understanding of circular economy principles was fostered continuously, with information shared through posters, cards, seminars, and one-on-one discussions, which also enabled late entrants to integrate smoothly.

Organizationally, the pilot relied on both structure and self-organization. Cooperation rules were agreed at the outset, with a usage agreement and joint calendar ensuring transparent access to the space. At the same time, participants were encouraged to manage their own activities, a strategy supported by networking events that created trust and dialogue before the pop-up store was launched.

Quality criteria for the pilot were defined both in terms of immediate outcomes (awareness raising, stakeholder engagement, lessons learned) and future ambitions (transferring knowledge to a larger “House of Future” and securing a permanent venue). While the temporary pop-up successfully generated awareness and provided valuable lessons, there is still uncertainty as to whether this awareness translates into long-term behavioral change. The key strategic goal – establishing a larger, permanent space – remains unmet, though negotiations with property owners have begun.

Implementation was not without risks. The main obstacles were a lack of supportive property owners and difficulties in maintaining six-day opening hours. These were mitigated through creative solutions: the City of Graz provided a centrally located space free of charge, and a social enterprise ensured reliable store opening during holiday periods..



Key insights from the post-pilot evaluation

The pilot project managed to translate the idea of circular lifestyles into tangible urban experiences, achieving high visibility, stakeholder engagement, and public awareness, while also identifying critical challenges for scaling and long-term sustainability.

The Pop-up Store served as an experimental model where small local companies and start-ups showcased sustainable products, often made from upcycled or ecological materials. The initiative met its short-term objectives by supporting visibility and collaboration among entrepreneurs, increasing consumer awareness, and giving new life to a previously vacant commercial space. Visitors were introduced to the principles of circular economy through direct experiences, such as seeing, touching, and purchasing goods that embodied reuse and resource efficiency. This hands-on format proved highly effective in making the circular economy more relatable to citizens, fostering curiosity and trust in sustainable products.

From an economic perspective, the project strengthened local entrepreneurship. Participating start-ups benefited from increased exposure, new customers, and valuable experience in direct sales. Cooperation models between entrepreneurs, first tested in the pop-up store, were later adopted by other shops in Graz. This was an unplanned but significant replication effect. However, while the store was commercially viable for the short term, participating entrepreneurs could not yet sustain their livelihoods exclusively through circular business models. This finding points to a broader market challenge: the need to reconcile sustainable production costs with consumer affordability.

The environmental results of the pilot were positive but largely awareness-based rather than quantifiable. Products in the pop-up store had lower environmental impacts compared to conventional goods, and customers learned about waste prevention, repair, and reuse. Yet, the team recognized that awareness alone does not necessarily translate into permanent behavioral change. This insight led to the conceptualization of the House of Future, as a larger, permanent space that would go beyond product sales to include repair services, workshops, gastronomy, and education. The House of Future aims to embed circular lifestyles more deeply into urban routines and infrastructure.

Socially, the pilot made a visible contribution to community life and urban vibrancy. The pop-up store reactivated a central location, turning it into a lively meeting point that connected diverse stakeholders: entrepreneurs, the city administration, citizens, and social businesses. Cooperation with a social enterprise allowed the store to remain open throughout the summer, and new partnerships emerged organically. Importantly, the project fostered a culture of



collaboration and mutual support among participants, who expressed motivation to continue joint initiatives beyond the NiCE project.

The main challenge encountered during implementation was finding a suitable property owner willing to host the activities, particularly for the planned House of Future. This was overcome through the involvement of the City of Graz, which provided a centrally located space free of charge for the pop-up phase. However, for the long-term House of Future concept, negotiations with private property owners have been slower, requiring continuous dialogue and trust-building. The project team has addressed this through proactive stakeholder engagement, including “Future Breakfast” meetings, workshops, and networking events to co-create the House of Future vision.

Looking ahead, the long-term sustainability of results depends on three resource dimensions: financial stability (through a robust business plan and sponsorships), human resources (leadership and expertise in circular business), and partnerships (cross-sectoral cooperation). The team continues to nurture these through regular communication, newsletters, and joint planning with the City of Graz and core stakeholders.

Strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement

The Austrian pilot project demonstrated strong potential as an innovative model for promoting circular lifestyles through temporary urban revitalization. Its greatest strengths lie in the successful implementation of the Pop-up Store Herrengasse 10, which effectively combined local entrepreneurship, sustainability education, and community engagement. The project managed to attract public attention, increase the visibility of circular products, and establish cooperation among small businesses and social enterprises. The pilot also benefited from strong institutional support, particularly from the City of Graz, which enabled access to centrally located premises and strengthened legitimacy for the upcoming House of Future concept. Moreover, the pilot succeeded in translating circular economy principles into practical, tangible experiences for citizens through raising awareness and inspiring replication beyond the project’s initial scope.

However, several weaknesses and challenges emerged. Financial sustainability remains uncertain, as many participating entrepreneurs were unable to achieve sufficient sales to sustain their business models. The project also faced logistical and resource-related barriers, including the initial difficulty of securing suitable premises and the challenge of maintaining long opening hours. While awareness-raising goals were achieved, behavioral change and measurable environmental impact remain limited.



Key areas for improvement include developing a stronger business model for long-term operations, diversifying funding sources (e.g., sponsorships, crowdfunding), and strengthening partnerships with private property owners to secure permanent locations. The next phase – the establishment of the House of Future – should focus on integrating educational, repair, and sharing services into a unified, financially viable system. Additionally, structured data collection and monitoring should be implemented to better measure environmental and social impacts. By addressing these areas, future initiatives can move from temporary experiments toward lasting circular transformation in city centers.

3.1.2 Czechia – Integrating digitalization and e-commerce into reuse centre operation in Jihlava

Key insights from the mid-term self-assessment

The Jihlava pilot project combined practical reuse initiatives with digital innovation to foster circular lifestyles in the city. SILO led the local implementation, managing the reuse centre and community engagement, while ENVIROS handled coordination, financial administration, and transnational activities. An Advisory Board provided external guidance, ensuring quality control and alignment with broader NiCE objectives. Roles and responsibilities were clearly delineated, supporting efficient project management and accountability.

The pilot project emphasized raising awareness of circular economy principles among both citizens and project participants. Regular updates through social media, local media outlets, and public events complemented hands-on activities, creating a coherent educational and practical approach. Early successes included the organization of the first Reuse Day, transnational study visits, and the launch of the digital platform development, which together demonstrated a strong potential for integrating physical and virtual interventions in medium-sized cities.

Operationally, the division of tasks based on expertise, combined with well-defined milestones, facilitated smooth progress. Yet the pilot also faced structural vulnerabilities: the temporary closure of the SILO building for construction highlighted the need for contingency planning and spatial flexibility. Despite this, the team quickly initiated efforts to identify alternative premises, underscoring the project's resilience and pragmatic approach to managing community-driven circular initiatives.

Key insights from the post-pilot evaluation

The Jihlava pilot project advanced the city's circular economy ambitions by successfully blending community-oriented reuse practices with innovative digital solutions. Its most notable achievement was the development of the Reuse Recognizer, a digital tool that automated



product registration, tracking, and reporting within the reuse centre. This innovation improved operational efficiency, reduced staff workload, and enhanced data management. By streamlining processes, the tool also generated cost savings and created a replicable model for other reuse centres across the Czech Republic, supported by the Reuse Federation network.

Beyond operational improvements, the pilot strengthened public engagement and awareness. Events such as Reuse Days combined swapping, cultural activities, and educational workshops, providing an inclusive platform for citizens to interact with circular practices. These events made the concept of the circular economy tangible and relatable, particularly for residents previously unfamiliar with reuse initiatives. The reuse centre gained visibility as a respected element of Jihlava's sustainability landscape, integrated into Local Agenda 21 and municipal waste management strategies.

Environmental impacts, while challenging to quantify, included measurable waste reduction and resource conservation through material reuse, repair, and redistribution. Socially, the pilot fostered collaboration among NGOs, entrepreneurs, and citizens, creating a stronger local sustainability network. Economically, the project increased the profile of Silo Jihlava, attracting attention from municipal authorities and potential partners. Additionally, the pilot catalyzed indirect effects such as the emergence of new job opportunities in the reuse and upcycling sector, and the promotion of circular entrepreneurship models inspired by the centre's operations.

Challenges included infrastructural limitations, with temporary closures and limited space constraining growth, as well as reliance on motivated individuals and local government support for continuity. The team responded proactively by seeking alternative premises, negotiating expansions, and maintaining strong communication with stakeholders. In doing so, the pilot demonstrated resilience and adaptability, highlighting how small-scale, community-driven initiatives can achieve broader systemic influence when combined with strategic planning and digital innovation.

Strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement

The Jihlava pilot project exhibited several key strengths. Foremost was its innovative use of digital technology, particularly the Reuse Recognizer tool, which enhanced operational efficiency, improved data tracking, and facilitated replication at other centres. The pilot's integration of practical reuse activities with educational and awareness-raising efforts created a well-rounded model that engaged citizens directly while fostering understanding of circular economy principles. Strong institutional cooperation between SILO, ENVIROS, and the City of



Jihlava provided legitimacy and strategic alignment, while the Advisory Board ensured quality oversight. Citizen participation in events like Reuse Days cultivated a positive environmental culture and motivated local stakeholders to explore reuse-oriented business opportunities.

However, the pilot also faced notable weaknesses. Infrastructural vulnerabilities, exemplified by the temporary closure of the SILO building, limited operational continuity and visibility. Physical space and staffing constraints restricted the capacity to accommodate growing interest, and the absence of systematic quantitative monitoring of environmental impacts weakened the evidence base for broader policy advocacy. Dependence on motivated individuals and municipal support may pose risks for long-term sustainability if institutional priorities shift or key personnel change.

To strengthen future implementation, the pilot team should prioritize developing a resilient infrastructure plan that ensures continuity despite unforeseen disruptions. Expanding monitoring and evaluation systems will help quantify environmental and social impacts, reinforcing the pilot's role as a credible model for circular initiatives. Diversifying funding sources, including grants, sponsorships, or partnerships, will reduce reliance on municipal support. Further engagement with schools, universities, and other educational institutions can enhance reach and embed circular economy principles among younger generations. Finally, extending communication strategies and promoting inter-regional exchange of knowledge and experience will facilitate replication and scaling of successful practices beyond Jihlava, consolidating the pilot's contribution to systemic circular transformation at the municipal and national levels.

3.1.3 Germany – Linking e-commerce and circular lifestyle offers in the city centre of Würzburg

Key insights from the mid-term self-assessment

The pilot project in Würzburg, Germany, was run by Zukunftshaus Würzburg (ZH) in partnership with Radius, a well-established local bike delivery service. The initiative aimed to integrate delivery logistics into circular consumption practices by connecting ZH's existing rental and repair services with Radius's sustainable transport offer. The leadership structure was clear and efficient, with both partners operating within their established areas of expertise. This ensured a smooth start and effective coordination but also limited experimentation, as both organizations relied on familiar procedures rather than testing fundamentally new approaches.

Both partners had a solid and shared understanding of circular economy principles, as ZH's services were already rooted in practices of reuse, reduction, and repair. The pilot's innovation



therefore lay not in redefining circularity but in operationalizing it through a delivery-and-collection model intended to enhance customer convenience. The model was collaboratively developed to ensure mutual benefit, and coordination between partners remained strong through regular meetings, calls, and email communication.

The pilot followed a structured timeline with several milestones successfully achieved, including launch, initial evaluation, and final assessment. However, the planned expansion to the purchasing area was abandoned due to unexpectedly low demand. Despite positive feedback for the idea from ZH customers in advance and from the few users – who appreciated the service’s reliability and quality – the delivery offer gained very little traction, with only one recorded user throughout the pilot period.

Efforts to boost engagement through promotional events, targeted advertising, and temporary price reductions were unsuccessful. The experience highlights a critical barrier in translating well-conceived circular economy concepts into real behavioral change among consumers. While the service model was environmentally sound and logistically feasible, it lacked perceived value and convenience for everyday users.

Key insights from the post-pilot evaluation

Following the completion of the Würzburg pilot, the evaluation confirmed both the operational success and the limited market traction of the delivery service. The collaboration between Zukunftshaus Würzburg and Radius remained productive throughout the implementation period, characterized by consistent communication, mutual reliability, and efficient task management. The delivery model functioned technically as intended, demonstrating that local logistics partnerships can effectively complement circular economy services from an organizational standpoint. Nevertheless, the pilot underlined that practical feasibility does not automatically translate into user demand or behavioral uptake.

User engagement remained minimal despite the partners’ strong performance. Promotional activities, including flyers, newsletters, and local events, generated awareness but did not convert into regular use. The post-pilot evaluation suggested that the service’s low uptake was influenced by both external and behavioral factors: customers perceived limited added value in outsourcing short-distance returns or repairs, while convenience and cost expectations of green bicycle delivery differed from the project’s sustainability-driven rationale. In addition, Würzburg’s compact urban geography and the existing accessibility of ZH’s physical location reduced the perceived need for delivery support.

On a strategic level, the pilot successfully demonstrated the potential of integrating local green logistics with circular consumption systems, but also highlighted the need for more thorough



user research before scaling up. The concept could be viable in contexts with larger catchment areas or among specific target groups, such as elderly residents or local businesses requiring regular goods transport. Furthermore, the evaluation underscored that sustainability-oriented services must be framed around user convenience and lifestyle fit rather than solely on ecological benefits. Solutions could therefore also include online payment software, which did not yet exist at the ZH and could not be implemented as part of the pilot project due to a lack of financial and time resources. In addition, the service could have been started and promoted with for-free deliveries, instead starting with real costs to attract users.

Overall, the pilot project delivered valuable organizational and methodological insights despite its low quantitative impact. The experience strengthened partner cooperation and produced clear lessons for improving future service design, particularly regarding audience targeting, communication strategies, and the integration of user incentives into circular economy solutions.

Strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement

The Würzburg pilot's main strengths lay in its strong partnership structure, organizational reliability, and alignment with the principles of sustainable urban logistics. Zukunftshaus Würzburg and Radius demonstrated excellent collaboration, effectively managing their shared activities and maintaining a clear operational focus. The pilot also benefited from well-defined objectives, transparent communication channels, and a professional approach to data collection and monitoring.

However, the pilot's primary weakness was the significant gap between service potential and actual user uptake. While technically feasible and environmentally sound, the offer lacked appeal to the average consumer. The concept relied on behavioral assumptions that did not hold true in practice, particularly the belief that customers would be willing to use an external delivery service for small-scale, circular consumption tasks at the regular price of a bicycle delivery. Marketing and promotion proved insufficient to overcome these behavioral and perceptual barriers.

Future initiatives could improve outcomes by conducting preliminary market research to identify user needs and barriers before implementation. Stronger emphasis should be placed on co-designing services with end-users, testing different pricing models, and experimenting with digital engagement tools (such as online booking and payment or loyalty programs). Partnerships with other local actors, such as community groups, retailers, or municipal bodies, could also help broaden outreach and embed the service within existing urban mobility or waste reduction initiatives.



In summary, the Würzburg pilot provided a well-managed but low-impact demonstration of how operationally sound circular logistics models require stronger social and behavioral anchoring. Its lessons are essential for refining future pilots toward user-centered, demand-driven circular solutions.

3.1.4 Hungary – Co-creation for more circular cities at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics

Key insights from the mid-term self-assessment

The Hungarian pilot project, led by the BME Department of Environmental Economics, effectively combined academic leadership with broad stakeholder engagement to implement circular lifestyle initiatives. Roles and responsibilities were clearly communicated and reinforced during a pre-piloting phase, ensuring all participants – internal staff, students, and external partners – understood their contributions. The majority of partners had prior experience with circular economy concepts, and the pilot leveraged this knowledge through workshops, discussions, and written communications to align objectives and strategies.

Work organisation relied on clear project management principles, including timelines, meetings, and structured communication, which supported efficient task division and smooth implementation. The pilot successfully achieved its quality criteria: it engaged a diverse group of stakeholders, raised awareness about circular lifestyles, involved businesses and NGOs, and promoted positive attitudes toward sustainable consumption. Strategic partnerships with initiatives such as the Greendependt Institute, PHOENIX project, and BEECO platform further strengthened impact.

Challenges were addressed adaptively. Low student participation in a key course was mitigated by opening enrollment to multiple programs, attracting a small but diverse cohort. Changes in the legal status of the university were resolved seamlessly, preserving institutional continuity.

Key insights from the post-pilot evaluation

The post-pilot evaluation confirmed that the Hungarian pilot achieved significant educational and social outcomes while laying the groundwork for long-term institutional continuity. All main activities, such as the Sustainable Business Model Design Course with University Living Lab sessions, intensive seminar workshops, and participation in the European Researchers' Night were successfully completed. These initiatives collectively fostered a vibrant learning environment that encouraged students to critically examine their consumption habits and explore sustainable business solutions.



Feedback from students and external partners emphasized the pilot's value as both an educational platform and a community-building initiative. Students reported greater understanding of the relationship between natural systems and economic activities, improved decision-making competences regarding material use, and stronger awareness of environmental justice. Partners, including local SMEs and NGOs, valued their collaboration with the university and appreciated the visibility gained through participation. The living lab format, in particular, was highlighted as a successful model for linking academia with real-world sustainability challenges.

While the pilot project did not generate large-scale economic impacts or immediate market transformation, it succeeded in establishing key preconditions for such developments. Students' entrepreneurial skills and awareness of circular business models improved measurably, and the pilot facilitated the mapping of viable models for sustainable lifestyles. Moreover, the project enhanced BME's reputation as a national leader in sustainability education and created a foundation for integrating circular principles into future curricula and research.

The evaluation also noted the emergence of a small but cohesive community around the pilot, extending beyond the university to include NGOs, businesses, and citizens. The book & plant swap event, which served as the pilot's closing activity, effectively symbolized this growing network of circular practice. Long-term sustainability is ensured, as the activities are aligned with BME's strategic goals and supported by dedicated academic staff. Planned dissemination, through conferences, joint sessions with the PHOENIX project, scientific publications, and media outputs, will further expand the pilot's influence beyond Budapest.

Overall, the Hungarian pilot demonstrated that universities can act as powerful facilitators of circular transformation by combining education, research, and community engagement. Its success lay in creating a replicable and inclusive model for promoting circular lifestyles within higher education institutions.

Strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement

The Hungarian pilot project's key strength was its integration of circular economy education with community engagement. By combining formal courses, workshops, and public events, BME managed to engage a broad spectrum of participants: from students and academics to NGOs and citizens. This multidimensional approach not only raised awareness but also fostered new competences in sustainable business modelling and responsible consumption. The strong institutional commitment and the alignment of activities with BME's strategic mission ensure that results will be sustained beyond the project.



Another notable strength was the pilot's adaptability. The team responded effectively to unforeseen challenges, such as low enrollment in certain programs, by broadening participation opportunities. Partnerships with organizations like GreenDependent and PHOENIX also expanded the pilot's reach and impact, establishing synergies for future collaboration.

However, the pilot's limitations were primarily quantitative. The direct economic and environmental outcomes remained modest, as the scope of the activities was mainly educational. Changes in students' behaviour and market impact will likely unfold over a longer period. Furthermore, the pilot could have benefited from a stronger communication strategy to reach a wider audience outside the university and to better connect academic outputs with the needs of local businesses.

Future improvements could focus on scaling up successful components, particularly the living lab and intensive seminar formats, and embedding them more deeply into BME's teaching portfolio. Strengthening collaboration with municipal authorities and private sector actors could also help translate educational insights into tangible circular solutions within Budapest.

In summary, the Hungarian pilot stands out as a strong example of how higher education institutions can mainstream circular economy concepts and foster long-term behavioural change through education, partnerships, and civic engagement.

3.1.5 Italy – Testing circular water management solutions in Bologna

Key insights from the mid-term self-assessment

The Bologna pilot project, coordinated by ENEA, focused on circular water management through participatory urban living labs (ULLs) and school living labs (SLLs). From the outset, roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and formalized through contracts, agreements, and documented procedures. This ensured strong organizational clarity among institutional and technical partners, including the Municipality of Bologna, professional facilitators, and external service providers. For citizen participants, clarity was supported through facilitation during public meetings.

A central feature of the pilot was its co-design process, which invited residents to actively contribute to shaping local water reuse solutions. Early workshops and public meetings effectively established a shared understanding of circular economy principles and their application to urban water contexts. The project followed a structured timeline, achieving several key milestones such as concept sharing, co-design, and co-construction workshops, while the final feedback meeting was still pending at the time of mid-term evaluation.



Quality criteria were clearly defined across five dimensions: participation, technical effectiveness, integration with other initiatives, citizen learning, and project follow-up. By the mid-term stage, three of these criteria had been fully or partially achieved, while learning outcomes and follow-up activities were still ongoing. Importantly, no major risks or implementation challenges were reported at this stage. The groundwork laid through participatory design and technical preparation positioned the Bologna pilot as a well-organized and inclusive initiative that was expected to deliver both tangible and educational results.

Key insights from the post-pilot evaluation

The post-pilot evaluation confirmed that the Bologna pilot successfully implemented three prototypes promoting water collection, reuse, and micro-cultivation. These systems enabled measurable water savings by reducing reliance on potable water sources. The pilot's core achievements extended beyond technological innovation, encompassing strong social and educational impacts. The living lab approach effectively brought together diverse groups: citizens, students, teachers, administrators, and researchers, fostering awareness and collective responsibility around sustainable water management.

From an educational perspective, the school living lab proved particularly successful. Students not only acquired practical knowledge on water conservation but also internalized and disseminated these practices within their households, amplifying the project's social impact. The production of drawings, data tables, and reflections by students illustrated genuine engagement and understanding of the circular principles applied to water.

The project also strengthened cooperation between citizens and institutions, an unintended yet valuable outcome. This sense of shared ownership was visible in the collective efforts to address implementation challenges. Despite several technical and logistical issues, such as the relocation of a rainwater collection system due to construction works, mechanical failures in hydroponic equipment, delays in university approvals, and occasional data monitoring lapses, the team managed to resolve all problems swiftly. Solutions included relocating equipment with community support, repairing malfunctioning systems, improving coordination through a dedicated WhatsApp group, and closer planning with schools and researchers.

For long-term sustainability, the evaluation emphasized the need for continued engagement and institutional support. Recommendations included organizing annual community events to showcase good practices, establishing scholarships, and maintaining communication channels among researchers, schools, and stakeholders. Financial and human resources, as well as ongoing involvement of local administrators and technical experts, were identified as key factors to sustain results beyond the project's duration.



Strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement

The Bologna pilot project's greatest strength lay in its integrative and participatory design, which effectively combined citizen engagement, education, and technical innovation. The project successfully bridged social and environmental objectives, fostering collaboration among public authorities, researchers, schools, and local communities. The active involvement of citizens in designing and managing water reuse systems created a sense of ownership and awareness that is likely to sustain beyond the project period. The living lab model proved particularly powerful in motivating participants to adopt and disseminate sustainable water practices.

Technically, the pilot delivered robust and replicable solutions for rainwater harvesting and micro-cultivation, demonstrating their practical feasibility within an urban environment. The project's educational outcomes were especially noteworthy, as students not only learned about circular water use but also became ambassadors of sustainable behavior.

However, the project also revealed some weaknesses. While the participatory approach was strong, coordination among diverse actors sometimes required significant effort, especially when aligning schedules and procedures between schools, researchers, and municipal authorities. Technical risks, such as equipment malfunction or relocation needs, highlighted the necessity for more systematic contingency planning and technical maintenance protocols. In addition, sustaining engagement after the project ends will require new financial and institutional frameworks, as the long-term involvement of citizens and educators cannot rely solely on voluntary commitment.

Overall, the Bologna pilot demonstrated how combining technological experimentation with participatory governance can yield long-lasting educational and behavioral change. To strengthen future initiatives, Bologna's experience underscores the importance of embedding such participatory water reuse systems into broader municipal policies, ensuring continuity through annual community events, education programs, and consistent technical support.

3.1.6 Poland – Zero Waste Multicentre in Brzeg Dolny

Key insights from the mid-term self-assessment

The Municipality of Brzeg Dolny successfully implemented an ambitious pilot project centered on the Zero Waste Multicentre, transforming an unused municipal space into a vibrant community hub for circular lifestyles. The initiative combined educational workshops, community engagement, and proactive communication to promote reuse, repair, and reduction. Roles among partners were clearly defined, allowing efficient coordination and progress toward concrete outcomes.



By mid-term, all major milestones had been met: the Multicentre had opened, hosted its first Zero Waste Festival, and delivered a variety of workshops in sewing, carpentry, cooking, and upcycling. These activities proved highly popular, attracting diverse participants and fostering hands-on learning. Surveys confirmed an increase in circular awareness and willingness to adopt more sustainable habits.

A particularly strong achievement was the sense of ownership and self-organization within the community: participants began volunteering to lead their own sessions, indicating growing empowerment and sustained local interest. Potential challenges, such as educator availability or limited attendance, were effectively managed through flexible scheduling and continuous communication via social media storytelling. The pilot's design and execution reflected a well-integrated approach, combining educational, social, and environmental goals within a clear municipal framework.

Key insights from the post-pilot evaluation

The Zero Waste Multicentre had become an established part of Brzeg Dolny's social and educational landscape. The centre's core objective – to promote circular lifestyles through practical experience – was fully achieved. Workshops continued to attract high attendance, and registrations often filled within hours. Participants across age groups gained skills that translated into small but meaningful shifts in everyday habits, such as repairing household items, reducing waste, and creatively reusing materials.

While the environmental impact in terms of measurable waste reduction was not yet visible, the groundwork for long-term behavioral change was clearly laid. The pilot demonstrated that while awareness and skill-building can occur rapidly, broader systemic impact requires time and complementary municipal policies, such as improved waste management infrastructure and incentives for reuse.

The Multicentre's success also generated several indirect outcomes. The high level of participation revealed untapped potential for green jobs and small-scale entrepreneurship in repair and reuse. Local NGOs and grassroots groups deepened their collaboration, co-organizing workshops and events. Schools actively integrated circular topics into environmental education, while local media coverage helped normalize the idea of a zero-waste lifestyle.

However, challenges also emerged. The increased visitor traffic occasionally caused inconvenience for nearby residents, highlighting the need for better mobility and parking solutions. Some local institutions, like the public library, remained only marginally involved, indicating that not all actors were equally ready to embrace circular initiatives. Still, the overall



perception among stakeholders was overwhelmingly positive: the project was viewed as innovative, inclusive, and deeply rooted in community values.

Sustainability prospects for the Multicentre are strong. It is municipally owned and aligned with the town's long-term development strategy. Future funding will rely on a combination of municipal budget allocations, grants, and partnerships with local businesses. The model of revitalizing unused public spaces for circular learning was recognized as a transferable best practice, with clear potential for replication in other municipalities across Europe.

Strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement

The pilot project's major strengths included strong municipal leadership, effective coordination, and deep community engagement. The project succeeded in making circular lifestyles tangible and accessible to a broad audience. Its non-commercial and inclusive format built trust and participation, while hands-on activities gave residents a sense of agency. Cooperation with NGOs and schools enhanced the educational impact, and the use of social media storytelling effectively maintained visibility and motivation.

The project's main weaknesses lay in its limited capacity to generate measurable systemic change during the pilot timeframe. While awareness and participation grew rapidly, observable reductions in waste generation were not yet achieved. Some local institutions, such as the library, did not engage fully, suggesting the need for stronger cross-sectoral collaboration. In addition, the increase in visitor traffic exposed infrastructural gaps, showing that circular initiatives need to be integrated with broader urban planning measures.

Future efforts should focus on developing a Local Action Plan to ensure continuity, introduce performance indicators for environmental impact, and formalize cooperation with schools and NGOs. Expanding outreach to less active social groups and reinforcing cross-institutional ties would help broaden the project's reach. Establishing small-scale revenue streams (e.g. advanced paid workshops) and partnerships with SMEs for material donations could strengthen financial resilience. Finally, addressing mobility issues around the centre would help balance its growing popularity with local quality of life.

3.1.7 Slovakia – Reuse centre Košice

Key insights from the mid-term self-assessment

The pilot project in Košice demonstrated how well-structured partnerships and clear operational planning can drive effective circular lifestyle initiatives. From the beginning, the responsibilities of internal and external partners were precisely defined, which helped maintain strong coordination throughout the implementation phase. Regular monthly meetings between



the CIKE, City of Košice, and K13 ensured that all actors shared a unified vision and remained aligned on objectives and practical arrangements.

The pilot team translated circular economy concepts into tangible, community-based activities. Experts and workshop leaders with backgrounds in waste management, creative reuse, and 3D printing provided practice-oriented insights that connected abstract sustainability principles with hands-on experience. The co-development of the reuse center concept further strengthened this approach by ensuring that project activities met real community needs while engaging stakeholders in joint ownership of outcomes.

The pilot produced visible and measurable results. Ten collection events were organized, generating hundreds of second-hand items that were redistributed to people in need and diverted from the waste stream. Upcycling and do-it-yourself (DIY) workshops attracted active participation, particularly among young people, fostering practical learning and awareness. The involvement of influencers and local organizations expanded the pilot's visibility, spreading the message of circularity beyond direct participants.

Nevertheless, significant limitations emerged. The selected venue lacked adequate infrastructure, with insufficient heating, limited capacity, and restricted parking. These shortcomings reduced attendance, constrained logistics for collection events, and limited engagement with schools and larger groups. While some temporary solutions, such as portable heaters and stronger social media promotion, were introduced, they could not fully compensate for the venue's physical shortcomings. Despite these barriers, the pilot laid a solid foundation for further development of reuse and community-driven sustainability practices in Košice.

Key insights from the post-pilot evaluation

The post-pilot assessment confirmed that the initiative achieved most of its short-term goals across environmental, social, and economic dimensions. The reuse center successfully provided circular offers, services, and educational activities that raised awareness and reduced waste. Participants valued the opportunity to learn through action and appreciated the social dimension of connecting sustainable consumption with support for people in need.

Beneficiary feedback was particularly positive among vulnerable groups who received quality second-hand items and among residents who took part in workshops and collection campaigns. The City of Košice recognized the added value of the initiative for both environmental and social policy objectives. However, engagement from small businesses and craftspeople remained limited, indicating the need for a more targeted approach to involving economic actors in future phases.



Operationally, the pilot was completed within budget but required a two-month extension to test a simplified operating model. This delay reflected the need for adaptive management and realistic expectations about resource availability and coordination complexity. The post-pilot data also emphasized that maintaining adequate infrastructure – specifically a well-equipped and accessible space – is essential for sustaining the reuse center’s activities and ensuring participant comfort.

In terms of long-term potential, partners considered the outlook promising. The reuse center model demonstrated viability as a local hub for circular practices, provided that funding continuity and space improvements are secured. The project successfully contributed to waste reduction and to the emergence of a local community centered on sustainability and mutual aid. Participants who developed new skills and awareness through workshops are expected to carry these practices forward, extending the pilot’s educational impact beyond its duration.

To sustain results, several key actions have already been taken. Negotiations with the City of Košice are ongoing to ensure continuous operation of the reuse center, and plans exist to integrate it into future projects. Strengthening community engagement and promoting the center through local networks and social media are also seen as crucial for maintaining momentum. The pilot’s campaign-based collection model, matching donations with real demand, proved highly effective and is recommended as a transferable practice for other cities.

However, some challenges remain. Business-oriented stakeholders were less engaged than expected, partly due to the pilot’s social rather than commercial focus. The project also revealed logistical and infrastructure-related constraints that would need to be addressed for replication. The potential risk of supply exceeding demand in the long term was noted, underscoring the importance of maintaining a demand-driven approach and effective communication with target audiences.

Overall, the Košice pilot demonstrated that reuse initiatives can successfully combine social inclusion, environmental responsibility, and education, provided that operational conditions and stakeholder networks are properly managed.

Strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement

The Košice pilot project’s strongest feature was its robust partnership network. Collaboration between the municipality, cultural organizations, and sustainability experts ensured professional implementation and balanced social and environmental objectives. The pilot also demonstrated effective communication through regular coordination meetings and active social media storytelling, which built strong community engagement. The model’s inclusiveness, providing both social assistance and environmental education, proved



outreach, and a broader communication campaign that emphasized the attractiveness and local relevance of the pop-up store. As a result, public engagement improved steadily, leading to more visible outcomes.

Overall, the pilot successfully demonstrated that temporary retail spaces can serve as powerful tools for promoting sustainable production and consumption. By combining educational and commercial elements in an accessible format, the Ptuj Pop-Up Store reactivated an empty space in the city center and fostered new connections among local producers, creative industries, and consumers interested in sustainability.

Key insights from the post-pilot evaluation

The post-pilot assessment confirmed that the Ptuj Pop up store effectively achieved its short-term objectives in the social and educational domains, while providing a solid foundation for further environmental and economic development. The initiative contributed to revitalizing the city center by transforming a vacant building into a vibrant space for showcasing local circular economy products, crafts, and ideas. Visitors expressed strong satisfaction with the concept and the events organized, emphasizing the educational value and the opportunity to interact directly with sustainable producers.

Local producers and artisans benefited from increased visibility and networking, even if sales volumes remained modest. The pop-up store also strengthened the city's image as a hub for innovation and sustainable urban development. Awareness campaigns surrounding the pilot reached a broad audience through social media and local media coverage, further expanding the project's educational reach.

The pilot achieved its intended environmental objectives indirectly, by encouraging shorter supply chains, promoting eco-designed and locally sourced products, and raising awareness about responsible consumption. While the direct impact on waste reduction was limited due to the short operational period, long-term behavioral effects among consumers and producers are expected to persist.

From a management perspective, the project was implemented within both its planned timeframe and budget, which highlights the efficiency of planning and coordination. Importantly, the pilot also managed to integrate a social inclusion component by involving participants from a vocational training and protection institute in its second phase. This added dimension broadened community engagement and underscored the potential of circular initiatives to support diverse social goals.



Stakeholder feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Local residents, visitors, and sustainability-oriented organizations appreciated the project's role in raising awareness and providing a new, creative experience in the city center. The local government viewed the pilot as a useful model for future urban revitalization efforts. The long-term sustainability of results is considered high, as the pop-up model is simple, replicable, and cost-effective.

Securing lasting impact will depend on mobilizing several types of resources – financial, human, institutional, and knowledge-based. Potential pathways include public-private partnerships, integration of the model into local development strategies, diversified funding streams, and the introduction of modest cost-sharing mechanisms for participating businesses. Knowledge gained from the pilot, particularly concerning marketing, event management, and community engagement, can be transferred to future operators through training and practical toolkits.

The Ptuj experience offers valuable lessons for other cities. The pop-up store model proved to be a flexible platform for promoting circular economy principles, stimulating local creativity, and strengthening producer–consumer relationships. Its success depended on clear coordination, effective promotion, and visible integration into city life. Constraints to replication may arise from local financial limitations, differing policy contexts, or varying levels of stakeholder commitment, yet these can be mitigated through early planning and strong community partnerships.

Strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement

The Ptuj pilot project demonstrated several clear strengths. The project was underpinned by strong coordination and a well-defined management structure, which ensured smooth collaboration between internal and external partners. By combining educational, social, and commercial objectives within a temporary, low-cost format, the pilot created a vibrant urban experience that successfully reactivated a vacant city center space. Visitors, local producers, and municipal stakeholders responded positively to the initiative, highlighting its relevance and appeal. The inclusion of socially vulnerable groups further strengthened the project's social impact, illustrating the potential of circular economy initiatives to contribute to social inclusion alongside environmental and economic goals.

At the same time, the pilot faced some limitations. Initial low public turnout constrained sales and limited the economic benefits that could be realized. The short duration of the pilot made it difficult to measure long-term environmental outcomes or assess financial sustainability fully. The model relied heavily on external promotion and project-based funding, leaving some uncertainty about its continuity after the project ended. Engagement from tourists and non-



local visitors was also lower than anticipated, suggesting that the pilot's reach was primarily local.

These experiences highlight several areas for improvement. Future implementations could benefit from stronger and more targeted promotion from the very beginning, ensuring engagement from both local residents and visitors from surrounding areas. Establishing structured financial sustainability mechanisms, such as cost-sharing among participating businesses or sponsorships, would help secure long-term operation. Extending the duration of future editions would allow for better evaluation of environmental and economic impacts. Strengthening collaboration with the tourism sector could broaden the visitor base and enhance local economic effects. Finally, documenting the Ptuj experience in a practical toolkit or handbook could facilitate replication of the pop-up model in other municipalities, enabling cities to draw lessons from this successful approach to promoting circular lifestyles.

3.2 Common insights from the pilots self-assessment

The comparative assessment of the NiCE pilot projects reveals a set of shared lessons about the opportunities and challenges of implementing circular lifestyle initiatives at the local level. Across diverse thematic and social contexts, several consistent insights emerge.

A first pattern concerns the strength of organizational commitment and clarity of roles. Project teams across all pilots demonstrated well-structured management, with clearly defined responsibilities among core partners and support from external collaborators or community actors. This structure enabled smooth coordination, accountability, and effective problem-solving when challenges arose. However, collaboration frequently depended on the engagement and motivation of external participants: citizens, businesses, or students, who often required sustained communication, guidance, and incentives to remain involved over time.

Another recurring theme was the gap between conceptual understanding of circular economy principles and practical behavioral adoption. While project teams and institutional partners were well-versed in circularity, end-users often displayed limited motivation to change everyday habits. Experiences show that interactive, community-driven approaches, such as hands-on workshops, co-creation activities, and participatory events, are more effective in fostering user engagement than purely service-oriented or logistical models. Active involvement significantly increases awareness, skills, and commitment to circular practices.

The pilots also highlighted the importance of flexibility and adaptive management. Technical issues, logistical constraints, and unexpected external factors, ranging from equipment



malfunctions to space relocation or scheduling conflicts, required responsive problem-solving. Regular monitoring, open communication channels, and strong local networks were essential to mitigate risks and ensure continuity.

Educational and awareness-raising activities emerged as a key driver of long-term impact. Programs targeting students, community members, and local stakeholders enhanced understanding of circular principles and fostered cooperation, empowerment, and behavioral change. Even when quantitative outcomes, such as number of user or measurable environmental savings, were modest, qualitative impacts were substantial, including strengthened community ties and improved institutional capacities.

In terms of sustainability, maintaining results beyond the project period requires dedicated resources, institutional anchoring, and active community ownership. Long-term success depends on embedding initiatives within municipal or regional strategies, ensuring continued technical support, and fostering durable relationships among citizens, public institutions, and private stakeholders.

Finally, the pilots collectively demonstrate that circular lifestyle transitions are social innovations as much as technical ones. Building trust, shared learning, and co-responsibility among participants is crucial. Small-scale local actions can generate meaningful change when they connect people around tangible goals: repairing, reusing, saving, or sharing, and are supported by consistent facilitation, communication, and policy alignment.

In sum, the cross-pilot experience indicates a growing maturity in urban approaches to circular lifestyles. While challenges such as limited engagement, infrastructural constraints, and resource availability persist, the pilots provide a solid foundation of tested, community-based models that can inform broader replication and policy integration across Europe.



4 CROSS-TANDEM ASSESSMENT

4.1 Cross-tandem evaluation results

4.1.1 Austria – House of Future in Graz

Key success factors and barriers

The pilot in Graz succeeded thanks to strong partnerships, public interest, and the active involvement of municipal authorities from the very beginning. The City of Graz played a crucial role by providing a centrally located municipal space free of charge after an extensive search for affordable private premises proved unsuccessful. The collaboration between StadtLABOR, the City of Graz, and various local businesses and initiatives created a solid foundation for cooperation and shared ownership of the pilot's goals. Networking meetings in the first year helped establish a common vision among circular economy actors – many of whom had previously operated in isolation or on the city's periphery.

Public interest in sustainable, local, and circular products further supported the pilot's success. The pop-up store's location near the main square guaranteed constant visitor flow and visibility. The initiative also aligned well with the city's Economic Strategy 2030, which prioritizes circular economy development and revitalization of city centres. The support from the Department of Economic and Tourism Development and City Management was therefore instrumental in ensuring policy coherence and operational feasibility.

Despite these favorable conditions, the pilot faced several challenges. Some entrepreneurs were initially reluctant to share space and resources, requiring clear communication and trust-building. Maintaining continuous coordination among participants demanded significant effort. The long opening hours were difficult for small producers – mostly self-employed women balancing work and family responsibilities. Financial limitations restricted equipment purchases, while the heritage-protected façade introduced additional bureaucratic hurdles. Furthermore, the pop-up's short-term operation limited opportunities for workshops and habit-changing activities, and hand-crafted products remained relatively expensive for many customers.

These challenges were addressed through a combination of flexible coordination, strong mediation by StadtLABOR, and cooperative problem-solving. Clear operational rules, such as schedules for opening hours, attendance, and shared responsibilities, helped ensure smooth functioning. The City's Department of Economic Development supported adjustments to opening hour requirements, and a social business partner helped cover vacation periods. Participants furnished the space with their own or shared equipment, demonstrating creativity



and commitment. Finally, targeted communication, including press campaigns, social media outreach, and collaborations with local politicians, helped raise visibility and attract new visitors.

Replicability of pilot activities

The Graz pilot was assessed as somewhat easily replicable in other cities. Successful replication depends on several contextual factors, including policy alignment, infrastructure availability, and community readiness. Close collaboration with local authorities is essential to ensure that the pilot supports municipal sustainability and economic goals.

Cities aiming to replicate the pilot should survey suitable centrally located premises with basic infrastructure (electricity, heating, water, accessibility, and visibility) and evaluate regulatory conditions such as heritage protection or adaptation permissions. Rent and operating costs must remain affordable to allow small-scale entrepreneurs to participate.

The stakeholder landscape must be carefully mapped, identifying key actors from municipalities, NGOs, academia, and local businesses. Equally important is ensuring that participants are open to cooperation, self-responsibility, and shared use of space and resources. Assessing the level of community awareness and public interest in circular practices will help tailor outreach activities and avoid mismatched expectations. Strong promotion through joint communication channels (press, social media, personal networks) is essential for visibility. Finally, sustainable financial models, sponsorships, or public funding should be explored early to secure continuity.

Elements of the Graz pilot with high replication potential include the co-creation model involving municipal authorities, local entrepreneurs, and mediating institutions; the presentation of local circular products; and the sharing-based operational model. The use of joint promotional campaigns and public events effectively increased awareness of circular lifestyles. While short-term pop-up initiatives can be replicated relatively easily, establishing a long-term “House of Future” requires stronger financial commitment, partnerships with property owners, and broader stakeholder engagement.

Innovative concepts

The Graz pilot introduced an innovative collaboration model between the municipality, a mediating organization (StadtLABOR), and local producers. The City acted as an enabler by providing space and strategic support while delegating operational management to StadtLABOR. This arrangement fostered trust, ensured smooth coordination, and minimized bureaucratic burden on the municipality.



The pop-up store model itself was innovative in combining shared space, cost-free access, and co-responsibility among 16 local producers. Each participant had a display area within the shared shop and collectively managed opening hours. This cooperative approach allowed the participants to gain market exposure and experience at minimal financial risk.

The pilot also fostered experimentation and creativity by transforming an underused municipal space into a visible showcase of circular economy practices. Local entrepreneurs tested market responses to their products, received direct customer feedback, and experienced collaboration under living lab conditions. The project demonstrated how short-term, low-cost interventions can create tangible visibility for circularity in urban centres and inspire future business models and partnerships.

Overall evaluation and recommendations

The Graz pilot offered valuable lessons for future initiatives aiming to promote circular lifestyles in city centres. The central location and visibility of the pop-up were key to engaging both citizens and visitors. A storefront with large display windows and outdoor space encouraged spontaneous visits and interaction. Low entry costs allowed participants to experiment, learn, and collaborate without high financial risk.

Multi-stakeholder cooperation from the start proved essential to building trust and ensuring effective coordination. The use of an intermediary organization such as StadtLABOR simplified participation for entrepreneurs and encouraged the city to contribute space without being overwhelmed by administrative duties.

For future replication, ensuring sufficient space for workshops and events is recommended, as the limited size of the Graz pop-up restricted awareness-raising activities. Affordable and centrally located spaces remain a major challenge; long-term success will depend on public sector support, innovative business models, and partnerships with property owners.

Overall, the Graz pilot successfully demonstrated how temporary, collaborative reuse of urban spaces can promote circularity, connect local entrepreneurs, and revitalize city centres. It provided an important foundation for developing a permanent “House of Future” that continues to build on the networks, visibility, and experience gained through the pilot.

4.1.2 Czechia - Integrating digitalization and e-commerce into reuse centre operation in Jihlava

The pilot in Jihlava stood out for its strong partnerships, active community participation, and innovative use of digital tools. Collaboration among Silo Jihlava, ENVIROS, the City of Jihlava, and local NGOs created a solid foundation for implementation and local engagement.



Key success factors and barriers

A major innovation introduced by the pilot was the AI-powered *Reuse Recognizer* tool, which improved operational efficiency by automating record-keeping and reducing staff workload. It also enhanced data accuracy and opened opportunities for integration with e-commerce models and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes. Moreover, the tandem cooperation with Würzburg facilitated valuable transnational knowledge exchange, particularly in the areas of digitalisation, volunteer engagement, and reuse logistics.

However, the pilot faced several challenges. The reuse centre's location on the outskirts of the city and its limited space restricted accessibility and scalability. Sustaining citizen engagement required ongoing creativity and event renewal. Manual data entry for recurring items remained a burden, and political cycles posed a risk to the continuity of municipal support.

To address these challenges, the pilot team explored options for new, centrally located premises and tested incremental upgrades to the AI tool – such as a chatbot interface and simplified data input. Closer collaboration with the city administration and local stakeholders was also reinforced to strengthen long-term institutional and financial backing.

Replicability of pilot activities

The activities piloted in Jihlava were evaluated as *somewhat easily replicable* in other urban contexts. Key conditions for successful transfer include a supportive policy and regulatory framework that recognizes reuse as a legitimate element of local waste management and circular economy strategies.

Infrastructure readiness is equally important – cities must provide accessible and adequately equipped spaces for reuse activities. Active involvement of municipalities, NGOs, and local communities is essential to ensure trust, visibility, and sustained engagement. Furthermore, community awareness and interest in reuse practices should be fostered early on, and stable financial support or self-sustaining business models need to be secured.

Several components of the Jihlava pilot are highly transferable. The *Reuse Recognizer* digital tool can be easily adapted to different reuse centres, offering a scalable model for data-driven reuse management. Community engagement methods – such as *Reuse Days*, swap markets, and creative workshops – can be implemented in other cities with minimal resources. Additionally, the Local Advisory Board model proved to be an effective framework for structured stakeholder cooperation and can be replicated elsewhere.



Innovative concepts

Innovation was a defining element of the Jihlava pilot. The introduction of the AI-based *Reuse Recognizer* tool represents a unique contribution to the reuse sector, improving transparency, efficiency, and traceability of material flows. The pilot also successfully merged physical and digital innovation – linking community-based reuse practices with a digital monitoring system.

Creativity and experimentation were central to the project’s design. The pilot followed an iterative, flexible approach that allowed for testing, feedback, and adaptation. It encouraged community-driven innovation through participatory workshops, swap events, and joint experimentation. The transnational tandem collaboration with Würzburg further enriched this process by enabling the exchange and testing of new concepts across two distinct local contexts.

Overall evaluation and recommendations

The Jihlava pilot generated several valuable lessons for future circular initiatives. Combining digital and social innovation proved to be an effective strategy – technological tools gained greater legitimacy and impact when linked with tangible community activities. Securing strong institutional backing from the municipality at an early stage was identified as critical for ensuring continuity and overcoming infrastructure or funding barriers.

A gradual, step-by-step implementation of digital tools was also key to success, as it allowed staff to adapt progressively and avoid resistance. Finally, maintaining flexibility throughout the pilot enabled the team to capitalize on unexpected opportunities – such as the potential to link the *Reuse Recognizer* with EPR mechanisms – demonstrating the value of adaptive and exploratory approaches.

Overall, the Jihlava pilot exemplified how integrating technological innovation, civic engagement, and local governance can create a sustainable model for circular practices that can be replicated and scaled across European cities.

4.1.3 Germany - Linking e-commerce and circular lifestyle offers in city centre in Würzburg

Key success factors and barriers

The Würzburg pilot benefited greatly from strong stakeholder collaboration and well-established local networks. The close cooperation among universities, municipalities, and other local actors made it easy to engage participants and secure resources. These relationships enabled the use of meeting spaces and event venues free of charge, which significantly reduced operational costs and encouraged community participation. The



interconnectedness of the stakeholders facilitated communication and coordination, allowing the pilot to be implemented efficiently.

Despite these advantages, the pilot faced several challenges, particularly regarding user engagement and service uptake. Although the pilot was promoted through various channels, the number of users remained low. One key barrier was geographical: many interested individuals lived too far from the city centre, making delivery costs prohibitively high. Moreover, the delivery service operated only in one direction, limiting convenience and practicality. Another obstacle was the absence of an online payment option, which could have streamlined transactions but was deemed too costly to implement within the available budget.

To address these barriers, the pilot introduced coupons and special promotions to make the service more affordable and appealing. These measures aimed to attract more users, raise awareness of the initiative, and encourage repeated use. While these efforts had some positive effects, they also highlighted the importance of financial incentives, user-friendly digital tools, and flexible logistics in ensuring the long-term success of circular delivery systems.

Replicability of pilot activities

The Würzburg pilot was considered somewhat easily replicable in other urban contexts. However, several factors must be taken into account to adapt the model successfully elsewhere. The most critical condition is the availability of a reliable and affordable delivery partner. Ideally, this would involve cooperation with a courier service offering competitive rates, potentially supported by municipal funding or subsidies to ensure economic viability in the early stages.

Digital infrastructure is another key consideration. An online payment system would simplify operations and make the service more accessible to users accustomed to digital transactions. Partnerships with universities could prove especially valuable in this respect: academic institutions can support ICT development while also serving as potential customers or test users for the pilot.

Elements of the Würzburg pilot with high transferability include bicycle-based delivery services, which offer a sustainable and efficient solution for last-mile logistics. This approach could easily be adapted to various types of goods, including those from local producers, second-hand shops, or repair services, thereby supporting broader circular economy goals in other cities.

Innovative concepts

The innovation of the Würzburg pilot lies not in a single technological breakthrough but in its systemic integration of multiple providers of sustainable goods and services into a unified



delivery model. This cross-sector collaboration is relatively uncommon and presents significant potential for refinement and scaling. The pilot demonstrated how combining local suppliers under a shared operational framework can create synergies, reduce emissions, and promote a circular economy at the city level.

Furthermore, the pilot offered suppliers a valuable opportunity to test new ways of connecting with citizens and promoting sustainable consumption. By experimenting with shared logistics and joint promotion, the initiative fostered creativity and practical learning among participating businesses. This cooperative model encouraged participants to think beyond individual operations and explore collective solutions for sustainability challenges.

Overall evaluation and recommendations

The Würzburg pilot provided several key insights for future projects. Foremost among them is the critical role of pricing in determining user engagement. A free or low-cost introductory phase, gradually transitioning to paid services, could help attract early users and establish a loyal customer base. However, this strategy requires sufficient funding and careful financial planning, particularly when no external subsidies are available.

The local context also influenced the pilot's outcomes. Würzburg's strong public transport network and active cycling culture, while positive for sustainability, may have reduced the perceived need for additional delivery services. This suggests that similar cities might consider specializing their offerings, focusing, for example, on the transport of large or heavy items that are too small for a lorry but too large for individuals without a car and where therefore bicycle logistics have a clear advantage.

Future replications could benefit from targeting specific user groups, such as university students, who often require temporary access to goods and could benefit from circular rental models. Complementing this with a general offering would allow the service to address diverse needs and increase its market reach.

Adding digital functionalities such as online payment and real-time tracking could further enhance convenience and attractiveness. At the same time, the pilot revealed an interesting social dimension: in an increasingly digital environment, the interaction between courier and customer, often the only human contact in the delivery process, could be leveraged to create a more personal, community-oriented experience. Exploring this potential could position bicycle deliveries not only as a sustainable logistics solution but also as a socially enriching urban service.



4.1.4 Hungary - Co-creation for more circular cities at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics

The Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) pilot under the NiCE project is an exemplary model of university-led urban collaboration for circular transition. The pilot successfully merged education, experimentation, and stakeholder engagement, positioning the university as both a facilitator and innovator in developing sustainable business models and circular lifestyles.

Key success factors and barriers

The pilot's success was anchored in BME's strong institutional capacity and long-standing credibility as a hub of sustainability research and education. The Department of Environmental Economics and Sustainability, with over 35 years of experience, played a central role by providing expertise, coordination, and a trusted platform for cooperation among diverse actors – municipal authorities (BKM), businesses, NGOs, students, and local citizens.

A Local Stakeholder Board ensured continuous dialogue, co-creation, and feedback, making governance both participatory and adaptive. The rich circular ecosystem of Újbuda – characterized by repair services, package-free shops, and community initiatives – offered a fertile ground for experimentation and partnerships. Embedding the pilot in the curriculum through the new “Sustainable Business Model Design” course provided stability, long-term continuity, and a motivated student base.

A variety of engagement formats – from Researchers' Night and departmental conferences to intensive seminars and the University Living Lab (ULL) – broadened outreach and allowed interaction with multiple audiences, including students, academics, businesses, and the general public. The pilot also benefited from institutional backing through the university's PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education) commitment and financial support from faculty budgets. Cooperation with ENEA (Italy) as a tandem partner strengthened the methodological foundation through peer review and expert feedback.

However, several challenges were identified. A key issue was the perceived gap between BME's sustainability goals and its operational reality – students noted shortcomings in everyday practices such as cycling infrastructure and waste management. The resource-intensive nature of the ULL limited the number of participants it could reach. Furthermore, critical evaluation of digital tools revealed that not all apps marketed as circular actually reduced consumption, highlighting the need for careful selection and responsible communication. Maintaining long-term awareness and engagement across university and district communities also remains a continuing task.



To address these challenges, the pilot diversified engagement strategies, tailoring formats to each audience – from interactive games for students to hands-on workshops for the public and expert lectures for academics. Regular feedback from ENEA and the Stakeholder Board enabled agile adjustments. Communication efforts, including contributions to the NiCE newsletter and participation in public events, improved visibility, while future plans focus on targeted recruitment of entrepreneurial students and stronger promotion across disciplines.

Replicability of pilot activities

The BME pilot can be considered replicable with moderate adaptation needs in other academic and urban contexts. Successful transfer would depend on several enabling conditions:

- Institutional autonomy and regulatory support allowing universities to run Living Lab courses and engage external partners.
- Local infrastructure and partnerships, such as existing repair shops, reuse hubs, and package-free stores, to serve as field-learning environments.
- Stakeholder motivation and availability, ensuring regular cooperation throughout the academic semester.
- Financial and logistical support for instructors, facilitators, and field visits.
- Teaching capacity and cross-disciplinary accreditation to reach students from various faculties.
- Ethical and data considerations in citizen-science activities.

The ULL methodology, the multi-stakeholder governance model (Stakeholder Board), and the diversified engagement mix (public events, seminars, ongoing co-creation, and final presentations) all have strong replication potential. The pilot's focus on Refuse/Reduce principles, lifestyle footprint awareness, and integration into academic curricula further strengthens its sustainability beyond the project's lifetime.

Innovative concepts

The Budapest pilot introduced several innovations with lasting value:

- Curriculum-integrated University Living Lab, offering weekly interactive sessions that link theory with real-world challenges.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration between students from mechanical engineering, IT, energy, and management backgrounds, promoting systems thinking and holistic design.
- Citizen-science tools and gamified learning, including apps like *Beeco* and practical frameworks such as “Big Points” for responsible consumption.



- International tandem cooperation with ENEA, which provided external peer review, scenario evaluation (BAU vs. sustainable models), and methodological refinement.

This combination of academic rigor, community engagement, and creative experimentation made the pilot a unique testing ground for circular innovation.

The pilot created a safe experimental environment where students and partners could explore new ideas, test prototypes, and iterate based on feedback. The co-creative workshops and interim presentations allowed rapid learning cycles and reflection. By connecting classroom theory with practical challenges in businesses and municipal services, the Living Lab bridged the gap between academic research and applied innovation.

Overall evaluation and recommendations

The BME pilot demonstrates how universities can act as catalysts for local circular transformation, bridging education, practice, and policy.

- Key lessons learned include:
 - The effectiveness of linking academic learning with real-world experimentation.
 - The importance of diversified engagement formats and robust stakeholder governance.
 - The need to align institutional sustainability practices with stated ambitions to ensure credibility.

Pitfalls to avoid include over-reliance on theoretical approaches, underestimating the resource needs of Living Labs, and using digital tools without assessing their real circularity impact.

Recommendations for future pilots emphasize recruiting students with entrepreneurial mindsets from across disciplines, setting realistic and incremental behavior-change goals, and maintaining continuous feedback loops through peer review and stakeholder engagement. Embedding Living Lab activities in curricula ensures long-term institutionalization and sustainability of outcomes.

Overall, the BME pilot provides a scalable, interdisciplinary model for integrating education, innovation, and community collaboration in advancing circular economy goals within urban and academic ecosystems.

4.1.5 Italy - Testing circular water management solutions in Bologna

The circular water pilot implemented by ENEA in Bologna was a highly successful and participatory initiative, characterized by strong community engagement, effective collaboration with local stakeholders, and innovative approaches to circular water use in urban contexts.



Key success factors and barriers

The pilot's success was largely driven by high public interest and active citizen participation in both central and peripheral areas of the city. This engagement not only generated local acceptance but also inspired imitation and replication among community members. A crucial enabler was ENEA's existing stakeholder network, which included strategic partners such as the Municipality of Bologna, Gruppo Hera, and ANCI Emilia-Romagna. This network provided institutional legitimacy and facilitated coordination. Additionally, strong technical support for water solutions ensured the feasibility and quality of the implemented prototypes.

The main challenges encountered related to logistical and organizational issues. After a series of four public meetings, the initially selected pilot site had to be changed, as ENEA did not have full control over the premises. This required identifying a new suitable location, which delayed implementation. Another difficulty was the time-consuming installation of the water tank, as well as the need to maintain public interest throughout the process.

These barriers were successfully overcome through leveraging ENEA's stakeholder connections to identify a new pilot site. This flexibility and networking capacity were key to ensuring project continuity and maintaining community trust.

Replicability of pilot activities

The pilot was rated as "somewhat easily" replicable in other cities. However, successful replication would require consideration of local climatic conditions, especially temperature variations affecting water systems, as well as availability of community spaces for collective workshops. Moreover, access to stakeholders with technical know-how and expertise in water installations is essential.

Several aspects of the Bologna pilot have strong replication potential. The Urban Living Lab (ULL) approach, which involved citizens co-designing and building low-cost rainwater reuse prototypes (e.g. for micro-gardens, hydroponic kits, and greywater systems) under expert supervision, was identified as a highly modular and adaptable model. The integration of rainwater harvesting with urban agriculture – through balcony gardens, raised beds, or rooftop hydroponics – provides tangible and scalable applications for diverse urban settings. The developed toolkit of circular water solutions represents a practical, easily transferable output.

Innovative concepts

The pilot fostered creativity and experimentation by structuring the ULL as an open, collaborative environment. Participants – including citizens, students, and experts – exchanged ideas and co-created prototypes using recycled materials. This participatory design



process encouraged context-specific, personalized solutions for homes and communities, breaking away from standardized approaches.

Overall evaluation and recommendations

Key takeaways include the importance of leveraging strong local interest in circular water practices, particularly through schools as multipliers that engage both pupils and elderly citizens in intergenerational learning. Ensuring continuous technical support and knowledge transfer regarding water reuse systems is also critical for sustaining engagement and ensuring safe, functional installations.

Overall, the Bologna pilot stands out for its combination of community-driven innovation, practical demonstration of circular solutions, and strong institutional collaboration, offering a robust and inspiring model for other European cities seeking to promote sustainable urban water management.

4.1.6 Poland - Multicentrum Zero Waste in Brzeg Dolny

The pilot in Brzeg Dolny demonstrated how local commitment, available infrastructure, and community engagement can turn an unused space into a vibrant center for promoting circular lifestyles

Key success factors and barriers

One of the most decisive enablers was the availability of suitable premises. The municipality provided a building that had been vacant for two years, previously serving as a TV and household appliance repair shop. The space's transformation into the Zero Waste Multicentre represents a symbolic and practical example of urban reuse – revitalizing abandoned property while aligning with circular economy principles. The premises were modernized and adapted for public use, with four workshop studios fully equipped with sewing machines, carpentry tools, and kitchen stations.

The high level of public interest and participation was another major success factor. This engagement stemmed from several carefully planned actions. First, the project team conducted a detailed study of local needs, mapping target groups and identifying their interests and resources. This ensured that the Multicentre's offer was well-tailored and relevant. Second, the educators and supervisors played a crucial role not only as instructors but as community builders. Their authentic commitment to sustainability and informal discussions with participants fostered an environment of shared values and curiosity. As a result, residents felt a sense of belonging and ownership, which translated into high participation rates.



A third important factor was effective promotion and communication. Before the opening of the Multicentre, the team ran a strong outreach campaign in both physical and digital spaces. With support from municipal media (newspaper, website, and Facebook), the initiative reached diverse audiences and built anticipation. This communication strategy continues to serve as an important tool for maintaining visibility and community connection.

Lastly, additional financial support from the municipality enabled the center's professional setup and ensured the high quality of its facilities. The well-equipped studios became an attractive feature for both residents and local schools. The latter regularly organize educational visits, reinforcing the Multicentre's educational role and turning it into a valued local learning hub.

Despite these achievements, the pilot faced several challenges and barriers. The most persistent issue was the difficulty of balancing administrative responsibilities with operational needs. The Multicentre team often focused on day-to-day logistics, leaving limited time for strategic planning, long-term partnerships, or expansion activities. Additionally, many workshops take place in the afternoon and require extensive preparation, placing a heavy workload on a small team.

Another challenge was low public awareness regarding circular economy concepts. While interest in workshops was high, many participants perceived them as creative leisure activities rather than steps toward broader systemic change. This limited understanding of zero waste principles highlighted the need for more comprehensive communication and educational efforts.

Limited financial resources also constrained the number of workshops that could be organized, despite strong demand. Moreover, low engagement during open hours – when residents could use the facilities independently – showed that many people still preferred structured workshops rather than self-led initiatives.

To address these challenges, several corrective actions were undertaken. The municipality employed a dedicated open-space supervisor, responsible for preparing workshop rooms, supporting educators, and maintaining cleanliness. This relieved the project staff from some of the operational burden. A daily schedule of administrative and operational tasks was also introduced to improve workflow efficiency.

Efforts to sustain and expand public engagement included participation in outdoor events such as city festivals and thematic picnics, which helped to reach wider audiences. Collaboration with NGOs and local leaders became another key strategy: the center encouraged other organizations to include circular lifestyle activities in their projects and apply for funding to



organize additional events in the Multicentre. These efforts gradually diversified the offer and built a more resilient local network around the idea of sustainable living.

Replicability of pilot activities

The experience from Brzeg Dolny indicates that the pilot's model can be replicated somewhat easily in other urban settings, provided certain conditions are met.

A supportive regulatory and policy framework is crucial. The pilot benefited from alignment with municipal sustainability strategies and from the municipality's direct involvement, which ensured legal, administrative, and political backing.

In terms of local infrastructure, replication requires access to suitable spaces – ideally publicly owned, centrally located, and equipped with basic amenities such as electricity, water, and heating. These spaces should also allow for flexible adaptation into multifunctional workshop rooms.

Stakeholder engagement is another critical factor. In Brzeg Dolny, cooperation with local NGOs, educators, schools, and businesses provided human and material resources. For replication, it is important to identify local actors who can contribute expertise and networks, as well as community groups ready to participate.

Economic and financial considerations also play a decisive role. The initial investment in equipment and renovation requires public or private co-financing, while sustainable operation depends on diverse funding streams. The presence of motivated and skilled facilitators is equally essential to ensure quality programming.

Finally, cultural fit and motivation determine how well the concept will resonate in a new context. The success in Brzeg Dolny relied on a strong sense of community and a growing environmental consciousness. Cities aiming to replicate this model should assess community readiness and tailor the offer to local interests.

Several aspects of the pilot are widely transferable. The participatory engagement model – based on involving residents in co-designing the offer and leading workshops – can be easily adapted elsewhere. The emphasis on practical, circular-economy-based workshops (upcycling, repair, sustainable cooking) creates tangible outcomes that help shift mindsets toward reuse and waste reduction.

Equally replicable is the community outreach strategy, which combines online communication with face-to-face interaction and collaboration with schools and local organizations. This approach ensures inclusivity and broad engagement.



The exploitation strategy developed in Brzeg Dolny also offers lessons for long-term sustainability. The municipality will continue covering the facility's maintenance costs, while staff plan to diversify income through collaborations with businesses, grant applications, and in-kind material donations. Another viable option is to gradually transfer the management of the Multicentre to an experienced NGO, capable of securing additional funding and maintaining flexibility in programming.

Innovative concepts

The Brzeg Dolny pilot introduced several innovative practices that make it a model of adaptive reuse and community-based sustainability education.

First, the conversion of an unused commercial building into a Zero Waste Multicentre is a creative and sustainable response to urban challenges. Instead of new construction, the project repurposed an abandoned property, modernized it, and gave it new social value.

Second, the pilot established a multifunctional community hub that integrates education, skill-building, and social interaction. It functions both as a workshop center and as an informal meeting place for residents interested in sustainable living.

Another distinctive feature is the creation of shared workshop spaces for skill exchange. Workshops are led not only by professionals but also by community members, promoting a peer-to-peer learning model. This participatory approach empowers residents to become educators themselves and encourages intergenerational cooperation.

The pilot also demonstrated strong collaboration with local partners – NGOs, educators, small businesses, and municipal units – forming a local ecosystem that supports circular economy initiatives.

Finally, the project's communication strategy stands out as innovative. A consistent visual identity, regular social media updates, and transparent sharing of results helped to build trust and maintain interest throughout implementation.

The Multicentre also proved to be a space for creativity and experimentation. By providing flexible facilities and encouraging hands-on learning, it allowed residents to test new upcycling techniques, experiment with sustainable design, and co-create solutions adapted to their own homes and communities. Cross-disciplinary collaboration – for example, between carpenters, fashion enthusiasts, and educators – further enhanced creativity and innovation.

Overall evaluation and recommendations

The pilot in Brzeg Dolny provides strong evidence that local initiatives can successfully integrate circular economy principles into community life. Its key lesson is that true



engagement starts with listening to the community. By tailoring the Multicentre's offer to local needs and continuously adapting it based on feedback, the project ensured sustained participation and relevance.

Hands-on workshops proved to be an effective tool for education and awareness-raising. They combine practical skill development with behavioral change and can be easily applied in other cities. Flexibility in programming – regularly adjusting activities based on residents' interests – emerged as a best practice.

Collaboration with local partners and volunteers was another success factor. Partnerships with NGOs, schools, and businesses provided access to materials, venues, and expertise. Volunteer involvement reduced operational costs and increased community ownership.

The management model of starting the initiative under municipal leadership, followed by potential transfer to an NGO, is particularly effective. It ensures financial stability in the early stages and flexibility in the long term.

Finally, the pilot highlighted that sustaining engagement requires continuous communication, visible results, and opportunities for residents to take initiative. Future projects should build on these lessons by integrating long-term funding mechanisms, ongoing awareness campaigns, and deeper collaboration with both local authorities and civil society.

Overall, the Zero Waste Multicentre in Brzeg Dolny stands as an inspiring example of how circularity can be embedded into everyday community life through creativity, cooperation, and adaptive urban reuse.

4.1.7 Slovakia - Reuse centre Košice

The Košice Re-use Centre pilot was a well-structured, community-driven initiative that successfully combined environmental and social goals. Despite certain logistical constraints, the pilot effectively demonstrated how underutilized urban spaces can be transformed into dynamic hubs for circular activities, community engagement, and social inclusion.

Key success factors and barriers

The pilot's success stemmed primarily from strong collaboration with diverse local stakeholders, including municipal authorities, NGOs, social services, and corporate partners. These partnerships ensured alignment with the city's sustainability objectives, secured appropriate spaces, and enabled efficient distribution of reused items to vulnerable groups. Additionally, high public participation in donation drives, creative workshops, and community swap events reinforced the pilot's visibility and popularity, helping residents adopt circular lifestyles.



The availability of vacant municipal spaces was another crucial enabler, providing the physical foundation for the Re-use Centre and serving as a focal point for community interaction and sustainable practices.

However, the pilot also faced notable barriers. Low public engagement occasionally occurred, especially in colder months, when poor heating conditions in the space discouraged participation. The limited capacity of the venue – accommodating only about 15 people – restricted larger gatherings, particularly for school groups. Over time, participation became somewhat repetitive, with the same group of residents attending multiple events, which reduced outreach diversity.

To overcome these challenges, the team launched targeted awareness campaigns to attract new participants and broaden engagement. Portable heating devices were also installed to improve comfort during workshops, although this was only a partial solution, underlining the importance of proper infrastructure for long-term viability.

Replicability of pilot activities

The Košice pilot was assessed as somewhat easily replicable in other urban contexts. Several factors, however, must be carefully considered when transferring the model elsewhere. These include the regulatory environment supporting reuse initiatives, the availability of suitable infrastructure, and the engagement of key stakeholders such as local governments, NGOs, and community organizations. Community readiness is also crucial – local awareness and trust in circular practices must be evaluated beforehand. Finally, ensuring stable funding sources or business models is necessary for continuity beyond initial project financing.

Many elements of the Košice model are highly transferable. The multi-stakeholder engagement strategy, which united public institutions, social services, and corporate partners, proved effective in mobilizing resources and building community trust. The circular economy practices introduced – such as upcycling workshops, swap events, and collection drives – can easily be adapted to other cities. Likewise, the interactive, educational approach that linked awareness with hands-on activities offers a strong template for fostering behavioral change. Importantly, the network of partnerships established during the pilot provides a foundation for long-term sustainability beyond EU funding, demonstrating how community-based initiatives can evolve into permanent fixtures of urban life.

Innovative concepts

The pilot introduced several innovative practices that enhanced both its environmental and social impact. A standout innovation was the collaborative management model, which gathered local authorities, NGOs, corporate volunteers, and social services under one



operational framework. This integrated approach maximized resource sharing and strengthened social inclusion by linking reused goods with vulnerable community groups.

The adaptive reuse of an underutilized urban space into a functioning Re-use Centre showcased how vacant buildings can be revitalized to host sustainability-focused initiatives. Moreover, hands-on circular activities – including upcycling workshops and swap events – moved beyond theoretical awareness-raising to active community participation, enabling residents to experiment, create, and learn through practical experience. This combination of creativity and sustainability significantly contributed to the pilot's success.

Overall evaluation and recommendations

The Re-use Centre in Košice provides a compelling example of how small-scale, low-cost urban interventions can deliver tangible environmental and social benefits. Key lessons for future replication include the importance of early and continuous stakeholder collaboration, ensuring adequate infrastructure and climate control, and designing interactive formats that directly involve residents in circular practices.

The pilot demonstrated that multi-stakeholder cooperation – coupled with creative, community-oriented engagement – can generate lasting behavioral change and strengthen local networks. At the same time, it highlighted the need for careful logistical planning to address spatial and technical constraints that may limit participation.

By linking circular economy actions with social inclusion and community empowerment, the Košice pilot achieved a dual impact that extends beyond waste reduction to fostering social cohesion. Its approach serves as a replicable and inspiring model for other cities seeking to build resilient, community-based reuse initiatives that align environmental sustainability with social value creation.

4.1.8 Slovenia - Pop up store Ptuj

Key success factors and barriers

The Ptuj pilot demonstrated how collaboration, creativity, and visibility can effectively drive community-based circular initiatives. The pop-up store's success relied on strong cooperation among key stakeholders, including ZRS Bistra Ptuj, the municipality, local artisans, NGOs, and the Reuse Center. This collective ownership ensured a steady flow of ideas, resources, and local support. The pilot's central location in the historic city centre significantly boosted visibility, attracting both residents and visitors, while its flexible and low-barrier format enabled participation from small creators and start-ups. The supportive local context, with available vacant spaces, an active reuse scene, and municipal backing, further strengthened the foundation for implementation.



Despite these advantages, several challenges emerged. The short duration of the pilot limited its ability to establish long-term habits and maintain consistent momentum. Coordinating multiple stakeholders required considerable effort, and reliance on volunteers occasionally led to fatigue and scheduling difficulties. Operating on a limited budget demanded resourcefulness, while using heritage-protected spaces created administrative hurdles that required close coordination with local authorities.

These obstacles were addressed through adaptive engagement and creative problem-solving. Tasks were distributed among partners to reduce individual workload, while flexible scheduling helped maintain activity despite limited human resources. In-kind contributions from local businesses and the Reuse Center provided furnishings and materials at little or no cost. Early municipal involvement expedited necessary permits, and a strong communication strategy, combining social media, local press, and word-of-mouth, kept the pilot visible and engaging throughout its operation.

Replicability of pilot activities

The Ptuj pop-up store concept was assessed as somewhat easily replicable in other urban contexts. Its core strengths: simplicity, low cost, and adaptability, make it accessible for replication, provided that local support and stakeholder engagement are secured.

Several factors should be considered for successful transfer. Local regulations must allow or facilitate temporary use of vacant or underused spaces, ideally in central and high-visibility locations. Early engagement of stakeholders such as artisans, NGOs, local authorities, and community organizations is crucial to build a shared sense of ownership. The pilot also highlighted the importance of assessing community readiness and local interest in sustainability topics to tailor content effectively. Financial sustainability can be achieved through a mix of modest funding, in-kind support, and volunteer involvement.

Many aspects of the Ptuj pilot hold strong potential for replication. Its co-design approach, bringing together diverse local actors, is applicable in most urban settings. Using a physical space to demonstrate reuse, repair, and upcycling principles serves as a tangible communication tool for circular economy concepts. The outreach model, combining social media visibility with on-site events and workshops, proved particularly effective. Finally, the operational model of a modular, temporary, and low-barrier pop-up space can be easily adapted to fit various urban conditions and community needs.

Innovative concepts

Several innovative practices emerged from the Ptuj pilot. The reuse-based interior design, created entirely from second-hand and upcycled materials, embodied the pilot's circular



philosophy and served as a visible example of sustainable design. The hybrid format, blending sales, exhibitions, and workshops, broadened engagement and diversified participation.

A particularly notable innovation was the open collaboration model, which allowed multiple small creators to join with minimal entry barriers, encouraging experimentation and co-creation. The pilot also fostered intergenerational exchange: older participants contributed traditional repair skills, while younger creators introduced fresh design and artistic perspectives. This mix enriched the learning process and strengthened the local circular community.

The pop-up store acted as a “living lab” for testing new circular ideas in a real-world setting. It encouraged experimentation by offering a low-risk environment for creators and artisans to prototype, exhibit, and refine their concepts. The flexibility of the space enabled rapid adaptation to audience interests, shifting from exhibitions to hands-on workshops when appropriate. Encouraging community donations and volunteer contributions created a dynamic, evolving space that responded to citizens’ needs and input.

Overall evaluation and recommendations

The Ptuj pilot offers valuable lessons for future circular economy initiatives. High visibility and co-creation with local stakeholders proved essential to generating engagement and impact. The experience confirmed that flexible, modular formats lower participation barriers and attract diverse contributors, from students to established artisans.

To enhance sustainability in future iterations, better volunteer management and long-term resource planning are recommended. Early municipal involvement should continue, as it helps navigate administrative procedures related to temporary space use, especially in heritage-protected zones. The pilot also underscored the effectiveness of hands-on activities – such as repair workshops and creative upcycling events – in raising public awareness and fostering behavioural change.

Overall, the Ptuj pop-up store demonstrated that small-scale, low-cost interventions can have significant local impact when embedded in strong collaboration and community engagement. It provides a practical, replicable model for small and medium-sized cities seeking to activate circular lifestyles in visible, accessible ways. Future steps may include extending the pilot’s duration, integrating it into broader urban development strategies, and building lasting partnerships with local stakeholders to ensure continuity and long-term transformation.



4.2 Common insights from the cross-tandem assessment

Success factors and barriers

Across the pilots, certain conditions consistently made circular lifestyle interventions effective, while a small set of recurring obstacles limited their impact and transferability. The most powerful enabler was the living network: municipal backing combined with active civil society actors, local businesses, and educational institutions created legitimacy, unlocked resources (spaces, funding, volunteers), and built trust with residents. When cities provided visible, accessible spaces, even temporarily, it amplified awareness and participation, turning curious passers-by into workshop participants or repeat visitors. Equally important was the low-barrier, hands-on format of activities: practical workshops, swaps, and pop-ups translated abstract circular ideas into concrete skills and visible outcomes, which accelerated behaviour change and created social proof.

Technical and institutional support were also decisive. Pilots that paired quality facilitation with modest but reliable funding, basic equipment (sewing machines, carpentry tools, demo kitchens), and simple digital tools (event calendars, social media promotion, light inventory systems) reached more people and ran more smoothly. Finally, approaches that embedded co-creation, such as inviting residents, artisans, and schools to shape the offer, fostered ownership and reduced volunteer burnout because people were not just consumers but contributors.

The barriers were often the mirror image of these success factors. A lack of affordable, centrally located space, short pilot durations, and limited budgets constrained reach and continuity. Administrative friction (permits, heritage rules) and political cycles introduced uncertainty, while heavy reliance on a small core team or volunteers created coordination bottlenecks and fatigue. Digital gaps such as missing online payments, clunky data entry, or poor delivery logistics reduced convenience and discouraged uptake, particularly among users who expect seamless online experiences. Finally, cultural and accessibility factors mattered: pilots that assumed familiarity with reuse or repair found it harder to attract broader audiences beyond early adopters.

Mitigation is practical and familiar: secure municipal endorsement early and aim for at least medium-term access to space; design realistic staff and volunteer models (a paid coordinator plus trained community facilitators); combine in-kind contributions with modest recurring funding streams; simplify digital requirements to minimum viable tools and phase in more advanced features; and pair high-visibility activities with targeted outreach to under-engaged



groups. In short, investing in place, people, and simple systems reduces risk and multiplies impact.

Replicability and necessary adaptations

The pilot actions show that the model is transferable, but not plug-and-play: replication succeeds when the core idea (hands-on, local, collaborative circular activities) is adapted to local policy realities, infrastructure constraints, and stakeholder cultures. Cities with strong municipal will and available public spaces can replicate pop-ups and multifunctional centres relatively quickly; where such public support is weaker, replication requires different entry points (partnerships with social enterprises, temporary use agreements with private landlords, or integration into existing community hubs such as libraries or schools).

Policy adjustments that support replication are pragmatic: explicit recognition of temporary reuse and living labs in local economic or urban regeneration strategies smooths permit processes and opens funding lines; modest subsidies or rent waivers for pilot spaces lower entry barriers for local entrepreneurs; and inclusion of reuse metrics in local waste or sustainability strategies creates a stable institutional framework. Infrastructure adaptations include prioritising centrally visible locations (or excellent transport links), ensuring basic amenities (power, heating, storage), and providing lightweight digital services for bookings, payments, and basic inventory management. Logistics also matter: delivery or collection services (including bicycle couriers) must be planned to avoid geographic exclusion.

Stakeholder engagement must be calibrated to local capacity. In some places, universities or NGOs can act as convenors and ICT partners; in others, local business associations or citizen organisations might be the natural anchors. Successful replication therefore begins with rapid stakeholder mapping and a short co-design phase that sets realistic roles, expectations, and a shared calendar. Finally, replication benefits from modularity: start with short, visible interventions (a 4-8 week pop-up or a weekend reuse fair) that demonstrate value, then scale into regular programming or institutionalise the activity through municipal budgets or NGO stewardship.



5 ASSESSMENT BY PILOT USERS

5.1 Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics

Most respondents reported tertiary education (81%), followed by secondary education (15%) (Figure 17). Only 4% of pilot project users indicated primary or no formal education. This suggests that the pilot projects predominantly engaged well-educated citizens, which may reflect higher interest in sustainability topics among this demographic group.

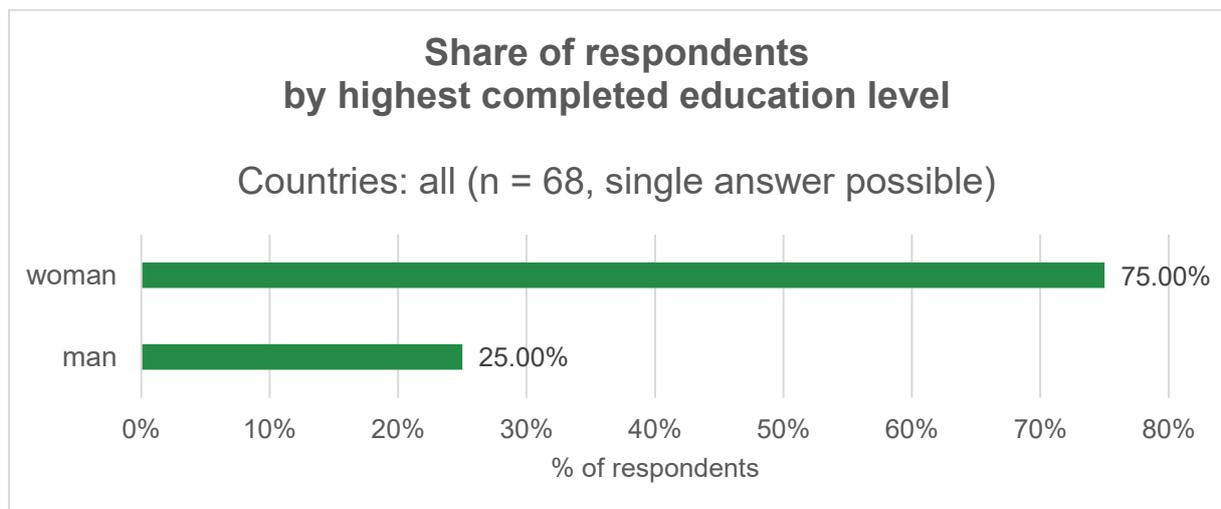


Figure 17 Educational attainment of pilot users who participated in the survey

Most pilot users represented working-age adults, particularly those aged 46–60 years (40%) and 31–45 years (34%) (Figure 18). Younger adults aged 18–30 constituted around 15%, while only 12% of respondents were aged 60+. This suggests that the pilot activities successfully reached individuals who are typically most engaged in household-level decisions and practical circular lifestyle behaviours. Among the 68 respondents who participated in pilot activities themselves, 9 respondents (16%) also reported that their child or children participated in at least one pilot activity – meaning that both the adult and their child engaged in pilot activities. This confirms that pilots not only activated individual participants, but in several cases also reached more than one member of single household, fostering intergenerational engagement in circular practices. In total, 11 respondents reported that their underage children also participated in pilot activities, with ages ranging from 3 to 17 years.

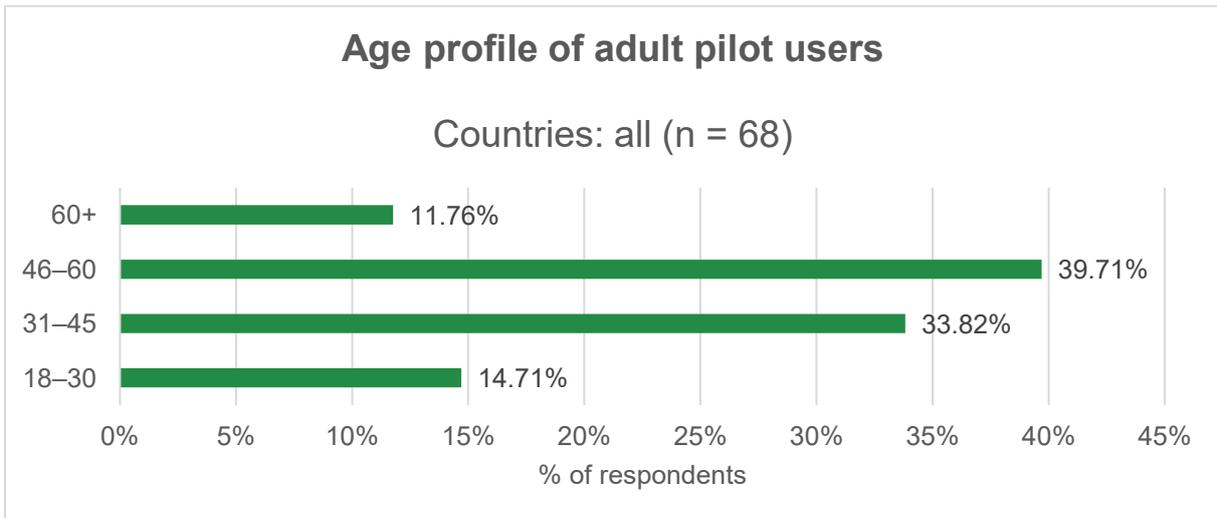


Figure 18 Age profile of adult pilot participants who participated in the survey

Women constituted 75% of all adult pilot users, while men represented 25% (Figure 19). This aligns with previous research indicating that women are often more engaged in community initiatives, creative workshops, and sustainability-oriented actions. The gender imbalance should be considered when designing the future scaling of pilot activities, particularly if targeting a more gender-balanced audience is desired.

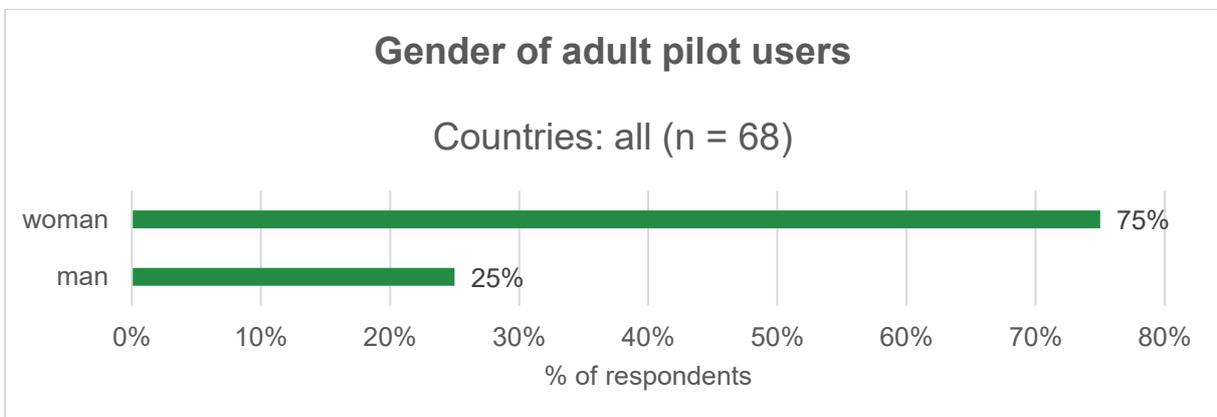


Figure 19 Gender of adult pilot users

The majority of adult pilot users assessed their financial situation as either average (47%) or good (31%) (Figure 20). Only a small share reported being in a very difficult (3%) or difficult (6%) financial situation. At the same time, 10% preferred not to answer, which may indicate sensitivity of the topic or uncertainty regarding one’s household economic stability. These results suggest that the pilot activities generally reached individuals with a stable financial background, who are more likely to be able to engage in circular practices such as repair, creative reuse or participation in workshops. However, the presence of respondents



facing financial challenges confirms that circular solutions can also appeal to and benefit more vulnerable groups.

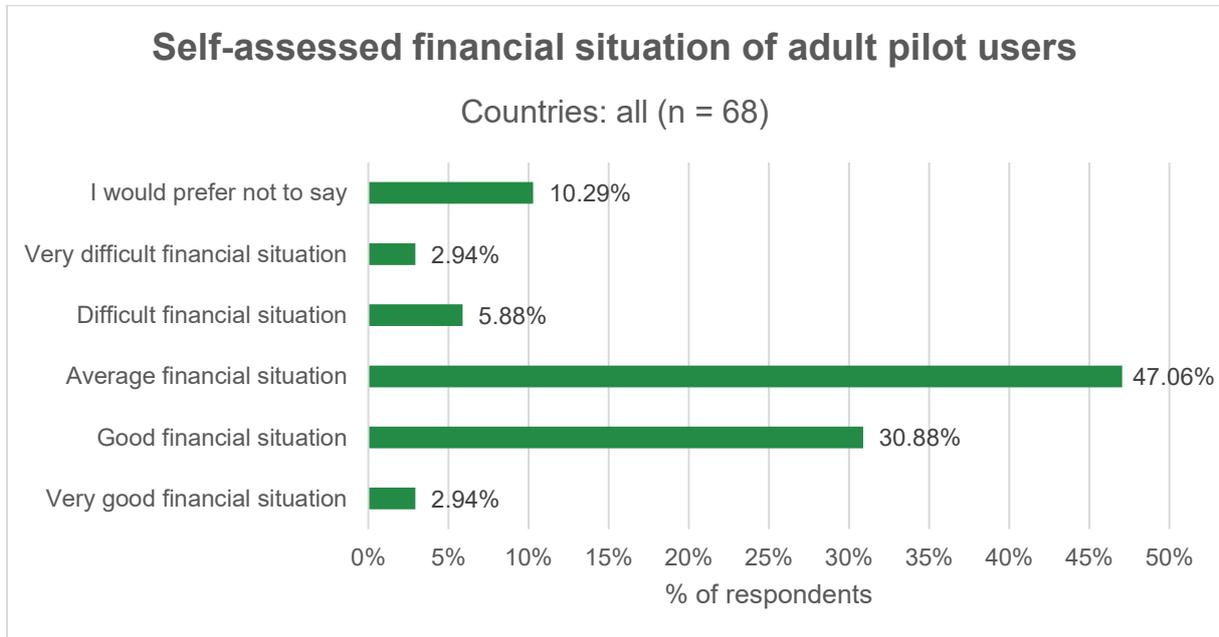


Figure 20 Self-assessed financial situation of adult pilot users

Most adult pilot users were employed (62%), indicating strong participation among economically active individuals (Figure 21). A smaller share of respondents identified as retired/pensioners (12%), which still shows good engagement among older adults. Only 4% were unemployed and 6% were students. Approximately 7% of respondents reported being self-employed, which reflects the involvement of small business owners and creative entrepreneurs – particularly relevant to pilot projects promoting circular entrepreneurship and local production. Additionally, nearly 9% preferred not to disclose their employment status, suggesting some privacy concerns or ambiguity regarding respondents’ economic classification. Overall, the pilots tended to attract financially active and professionally engaged citizens, who may already be more receptive to circular practices and community initiatives.

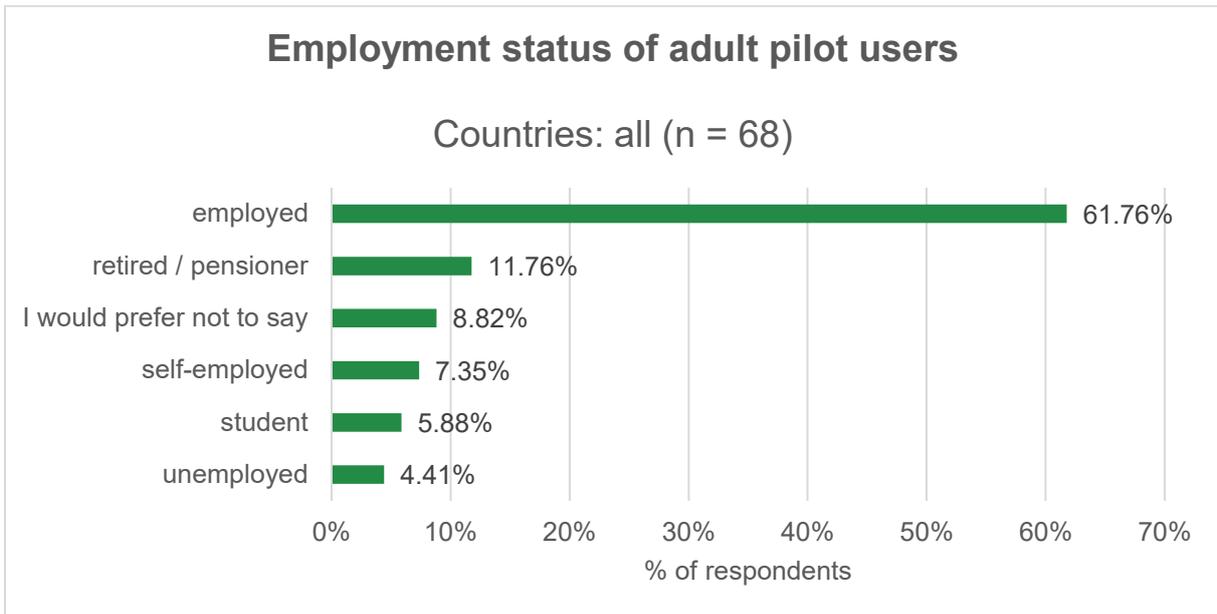


Figure 21 Employment status of adult pilot users

Most respondents (82%) lived in the pilot cities, confirming that the initiatives were highly successful in reaching their intended primary target group – local communities (Figure 22). At the same time, a non-negligible proportion of participants travelled from outside the city: 7% from rural areas and around 9% from towns of different sizes. This indicates that the pilots were not only locally relevant, but also capable of attracting interest from surrounding municipalities, thereby demonstrating potential for broader regional scaling of circular solutions.

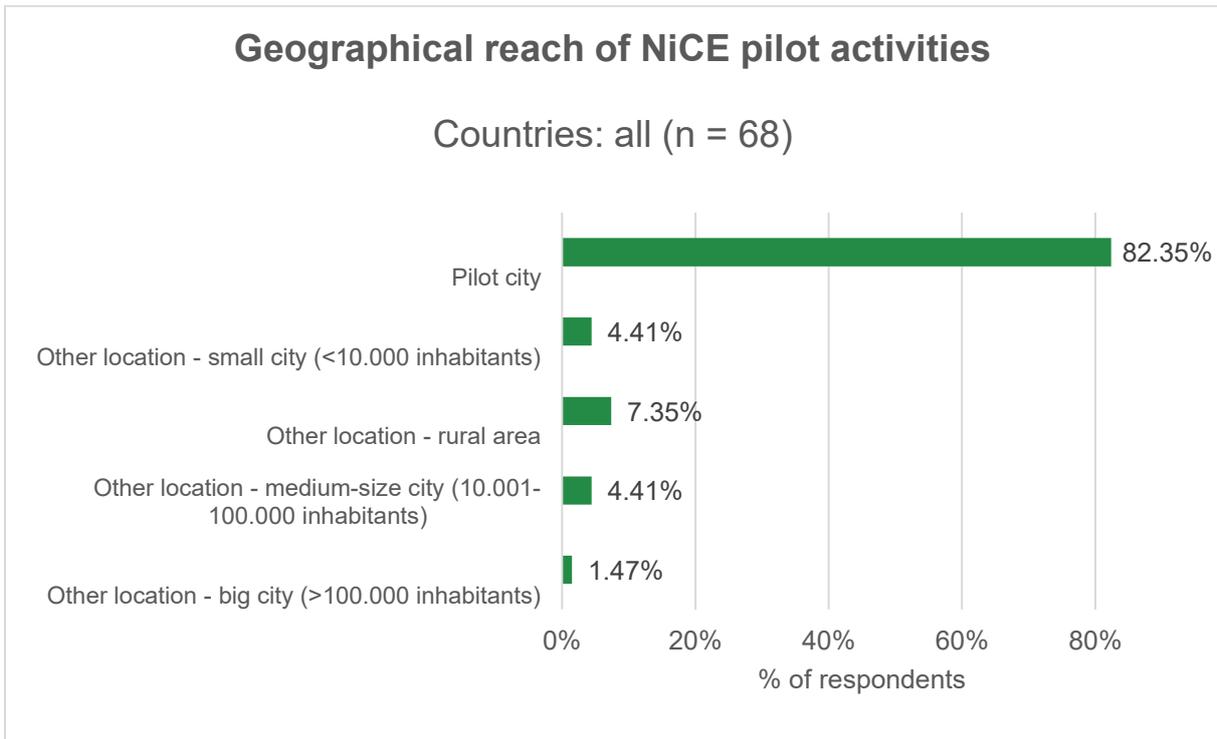


Figure 22 Place of residence of pilot users who participated in the survey

Overall, the socio-demographic profile of respondents shows that NiCE pilot activities successfully engaged predominantly local, economically active adults, who were generally well-educated and interested in circular lifestyles. Most pilot users lived within the pilot cities (82%), confirming strong local relevance of the interventions, while additional participation from nearby rural and urban areas indicates potential for broader regional uptake of circular solutions.

A large majority of respondents had tertiary education (81%), and the main age groups represented were 46–60 (40%) and 31–45 (34%), suggesting participation by socially and professionally active generations. Women constituted 75% of participants, highlighting the role of women as key actors in community initiatives and sustainable consumption behaviour.

In terms of economic situation, most respondents assessed their finances as average (47%) or good (31%), with very few reporting financial difficulties. Employment status results further support this pattern: 62% were employed and 7% self-employed, indicating strong engagement of working individuals, including entrepreneurs in some pilot projects.

Taken together, these findings suggest that NiCE pilots reached particularly motivated and resourceful early adopters of circular lifestyles. To ensure social inclusiveness in future scaling, further engagement of more economically vulnerable and gender-balanced groups could be explored.



5.2 Key findings from pilot users' feedback

5.2.1 Austria

In Austria, the respondents (n = 8) most frequently indicated that they took part in the pilot activities “out of curiosity” (50%) (Figure 23). A smaller group mentioned recommendations from local authorities, family, or friends (25% each) and obligation (25%) as reasons for joining. Only a few respondents cited affordability (13%) as a motivating factor. These findings suggest that participation in the Austrian pilot project was primarily driven by personal interest, rather than by external incentives or institutional pressures. The relatively high proportion of respondents mentioning recommendations also indicates the important role of local networks and word-of-mouth communication in attracting participants.

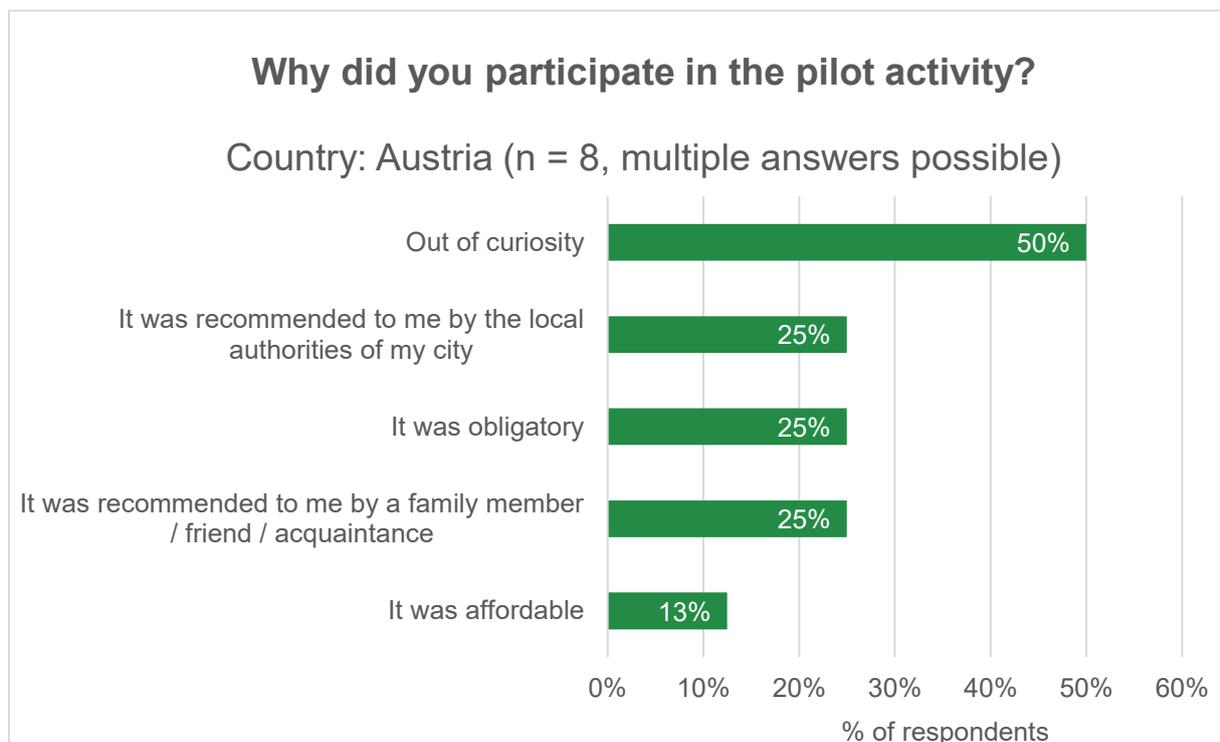


Figure 23 Motivations for participating in the pilot activity in Austria

Overall satisfaction with the pilot project in Austria was very high – over 87% respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their participation, and the vast majority indicated that they would recommend the pilot activities to others. Respondents also expressed strong agreement that participation was convenient and that they learned something new, reflecting the educational and inspirational character of the initiative.

By contrast, fewer participants felt that the pilot project helped them save time or money, which is consistent with the project’s emphasis on collaboration, creativity, and visibility rather than direct economic gain. The fact that not all respondents agreed that the location made them



visit the city centre more often suggests that the pop-up store primarily attracted existing visitors to Graz’s central area, rather than generating new traffic.

These findings align with the pilot project’s concept – a temporary revitalisation of a vacant inner-city space designed to give regional entrepreneurs a platform for experimentation and exchange. The high satisfaction levels and learning outcomes confirm that the initiative successfully fulfilled its goal of showcasing local circular economy businesses and fostering interaction between producers and visitors, as well as trust and cooperation among entrepreneurs.

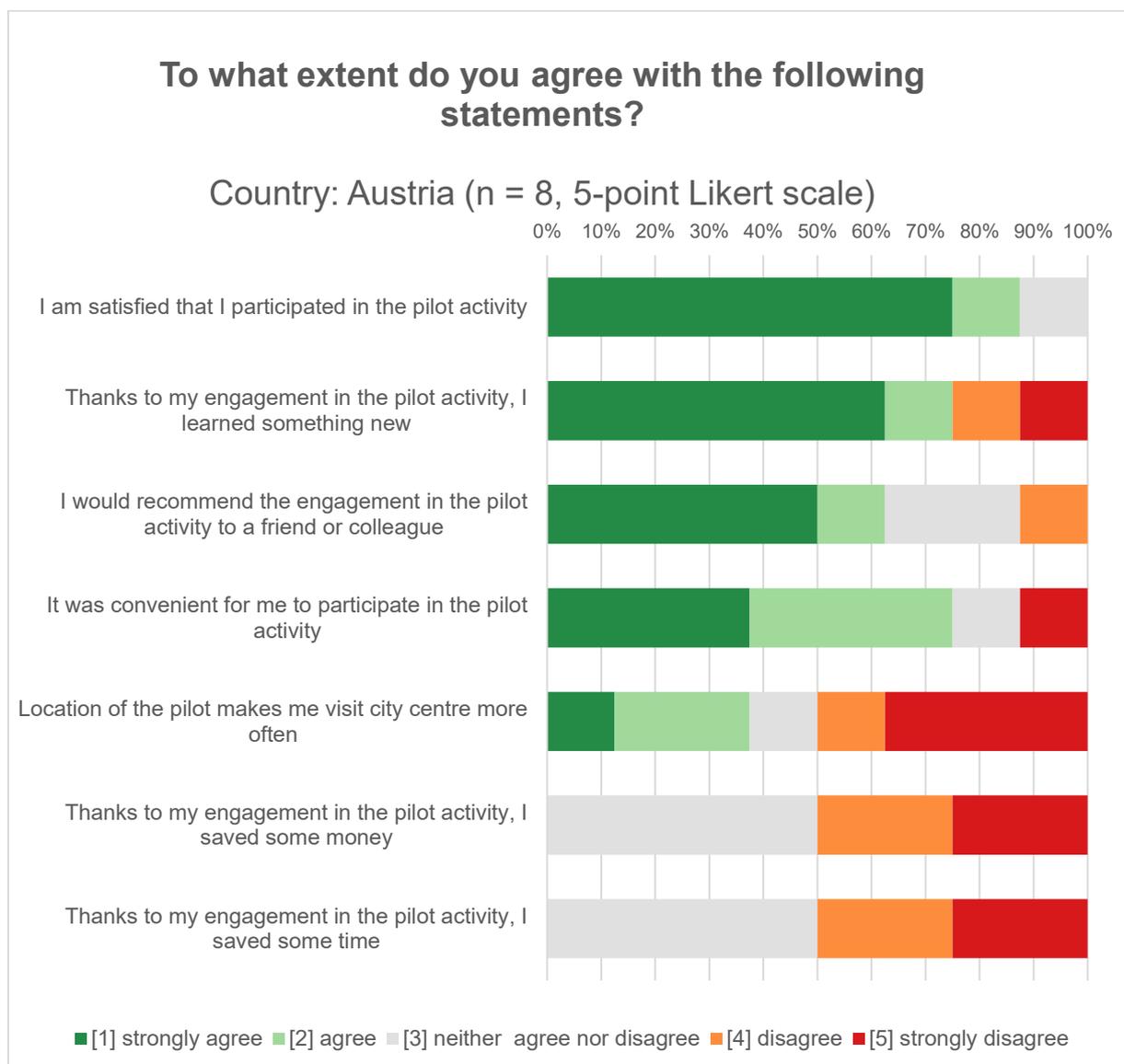


Figure 24 Participants’ level of agreement with statements about the pilot activity in Austria

Respondents in Austria were asked to indicate up to three aspects they liked the most about the pilot activity. Their open-ended responses were analysed thematically and grouped into



three main categories (Figure 25). The most frequently mentioned theme referred to the visibility of local and circular businesses, especially those led by regional female entrepreneurs. Participants appreciated the creativity and innovation emerging in the Graz area, as reflected in comments such as: *“Regional female entrepreneurs. It’s great to see the fantastic ideas people have and how much there is in Graz”*, *“Visibility of small businesses and products from the circular economy”*. Another recurring aspect was the central location and accessibility of the pilot project, which made participation convenient and encouraged visits to the city centre. Finally, respondents valued the learning component, highlighting opportunities for discovering new companies and gaining new knowledge: *“Discovery of new companies”*, *“New knowledge”*. Additional mentions included the positive atmosphere, people involved, and the overall idea of the pilot initiative, which were cited as contributing to a favourable experience.

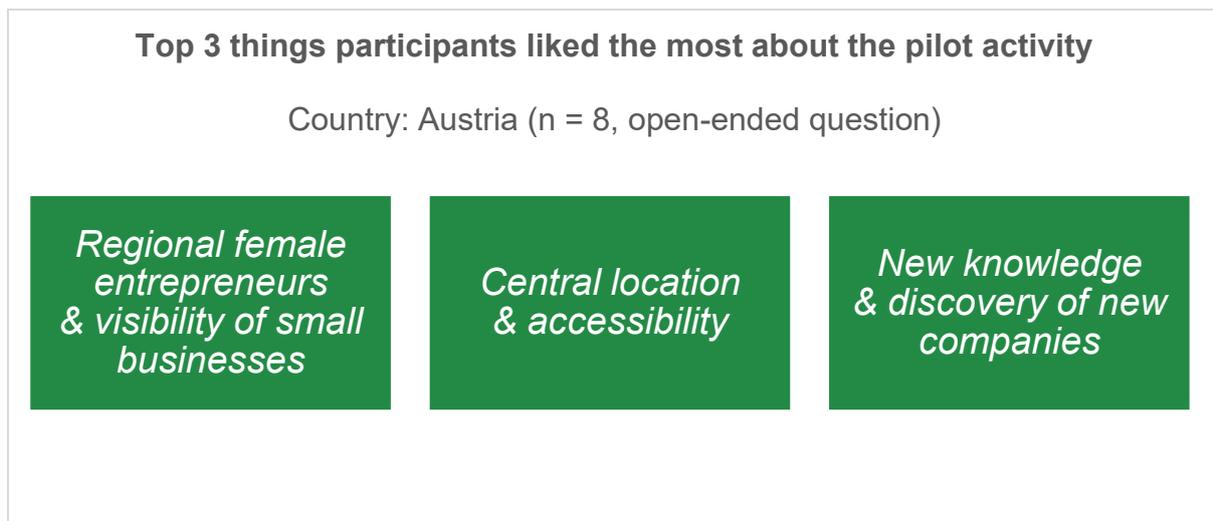


Figure 25 Top three aspects participants liked the most about the pilot activity in Austria

Respondents in Austria were also asked to indicate up to three aspects they would change or improve about the pilot activity. Their open-ended responses were analysed thematically and grouped into three main categories (Figure 26). Austrian participants most often emphasized the need for the pilot project to become a permanent initiative, rather than a temporary project. As one respondent put it, *“statt einem temporären Angebot, ein dauerhaftes Angebot einrichten”* (“instead of a temporary offer, create a permanent one”). They also highlighted the importance of engaging a broader range of stakeholders – for example, *“Eigentümer von leerstehenden Geschäften einladen, die sich inspirieren lassen”* (“invite owners of vacant shops who might get inspired”) – and the need to establish an umbrella organisation to support coordination among participants (*“Dachorganisation für die Teilnehmer:innen schaffen”*). Finally, participants expressed a desire for larger scale and improved organisation of the pilot



activities, calling for “*größer*” (“bigger”) events and more structured content with “*die richtigen Antworten auf die Fragen*” (“the right answers to the questions”) and “*keine Wiederholungen*” (“no repetitions”).

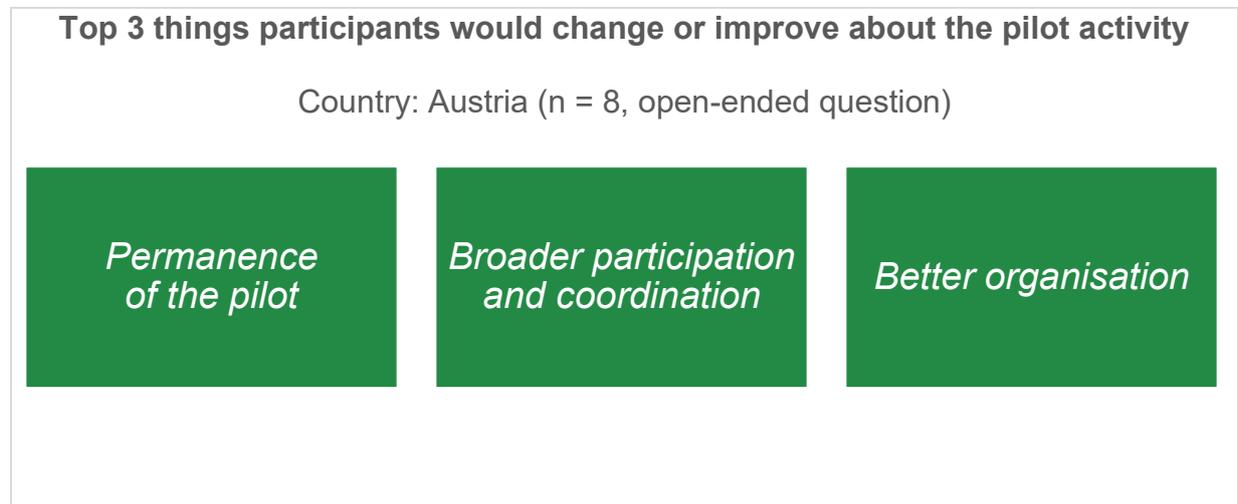


Figure 26 Top three aspects participants would change or improve about the pilot activity in Austria

5.2.2 Czechia

With only one response collected (n = 1), the Czech pilot project feedback is presented below for qualitative insight only. The results presented below reflect the perspective of a single pilot user and cannot be generalised to all participants of the pilot activity in Jihlava.

The respondent indicated that they chose to participate in the pilot activities out of curiosity. He expressed high satisfaction with participation in the pilot activity and stated that they would recommend engagement in the pilot activities to others. He also agreed that participation was convenient and that he learned something new as a result of their involvement. He identified time and money savings linked to participation, which is different than the findings from other pilot projects.

The participant particularly appreciated the information quality, the way it was presented, and the relevance of the pilot project topic to current sustainability challenges. These aspects were specifically mentioned as highlights: the breadth of information provided (“*rozsah informací*”), the way the content was presented (“*způsob prezentace*”), and the topicality and real-life relevance (“*aktuálnost*”). These insights confirm the importance of clear communication and engaging formats in raising awareness of circular lifestyles. The respondent did not identify any aspects requiring improvement.

This indicates a fully positive experience from the individual's perspective.



5.2.3 Germany

Only one response was collected from Germany ($n = 1$). Therefore, the findings presented below reflect the feedback of a single pilot user and should not be considered representative.

The respondent reported that they joined the pilot activity because it was recommended by colleagues. This suggests that informal communication and personal networks supported awareness-building and participation in the pilot activities.

The participant expressed a neutral level of satisfaction and convenience, selecting “neither agree nor disagree” for statements related to satisfaction, time, economic savings, and learning something new.

The respondent expressed mixed feedback regarding the pilot activities in Würzburg. They disagreed that participation was convenient, strongly disagreed that the pilot project made them visit the city centre more often, and disagreed with recommending the pilot project to others.

Overall, the neutral and negative responses may suggest a limited perceived value of the pilot project for this specific participant, although the single-response sample prevents broader conclusions.

The respondent did not provide specific comments on what they appreciated most about the pilot project. It may indicate either lack of strong positive impressions or simply reluctance to comment in an open-ended format. No suggestions for improvement were provided either. This limits the interpretive value of the feedback but may reflect the respondent’s low engagement or neutral stance toward the pilot activity. When interpreting these results, it is important to note the sample size ($n=1$). Therefore, the findings should be considered indicative rather than representative.

5.2.4 Hungary

In Hungary, the majority of respondents ($n = 5$) indicated that they participated in the pilot activities “out of curiosity” (60%), while smaller shares mentioned participation upon recommendation from a family member or acquaintance (40%) or because it was obligatory (20%) (Figure 27). This pattern suggests that the pilot project successfully attracted participants who were intrinsically motivated to learn and engage with the topic of circular lifestyles, rather than those driven by external requirements. The strong role of curiosity reflects the experimental and educational nature of the activities organised at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, which encouraged participants to explore new ideas related to sustainability and circularity.



The fact that some participants joined due to personal recommendations further highlights the value of informal networks and the pilot project’s visibility within the university community. Overall, these results confirm that the Hungarian pilot project effectively reached an audience open to learning and collaboration within the framework of circular economy education.

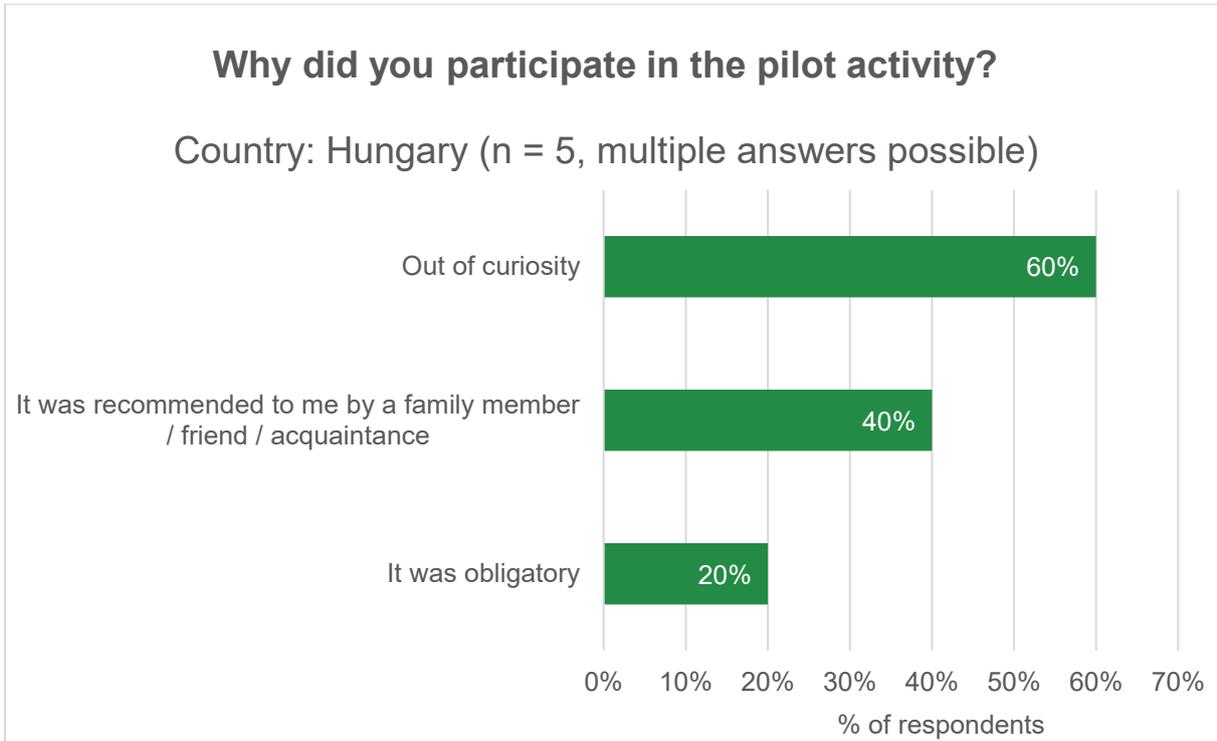


Figure 27 Motivations for participating in the pilot activity in Hungary

Overall satisfaction among Hungarian respondents was very high (Figure 28). All participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their participation, and that it was convenient to take part in the pilot project. Similarly, a strong majority indicated that they would recommend the pilot project to others and that they learned something new, underlining the educational and inspirational nature of the BME activities.

The results reflect the pilot project’s success in providing an interactive and engaging learning environment, consistent with the “learning by doing” approach implemented through university courses and workshops. Participants’ recognition of new knowledge acquisition and convenience suggests that the integration of co-creative elements into academic settings was well received.

On the other hand, few respondents agreed that the pilot project helped them save time or money, which aligns with its non-commercial, educational focus. Some participants also disagreed that the initiative encouraged them to visit the city centre more often – a logical



outcome given that the activities were campus-based and primarily targeted university students.

Overall, the Hungarian pilot project effectively demonstrated how co-creation and interdisciplinary learning can foster motivation, awareness, and collaboration around circular economy topics within a university context.

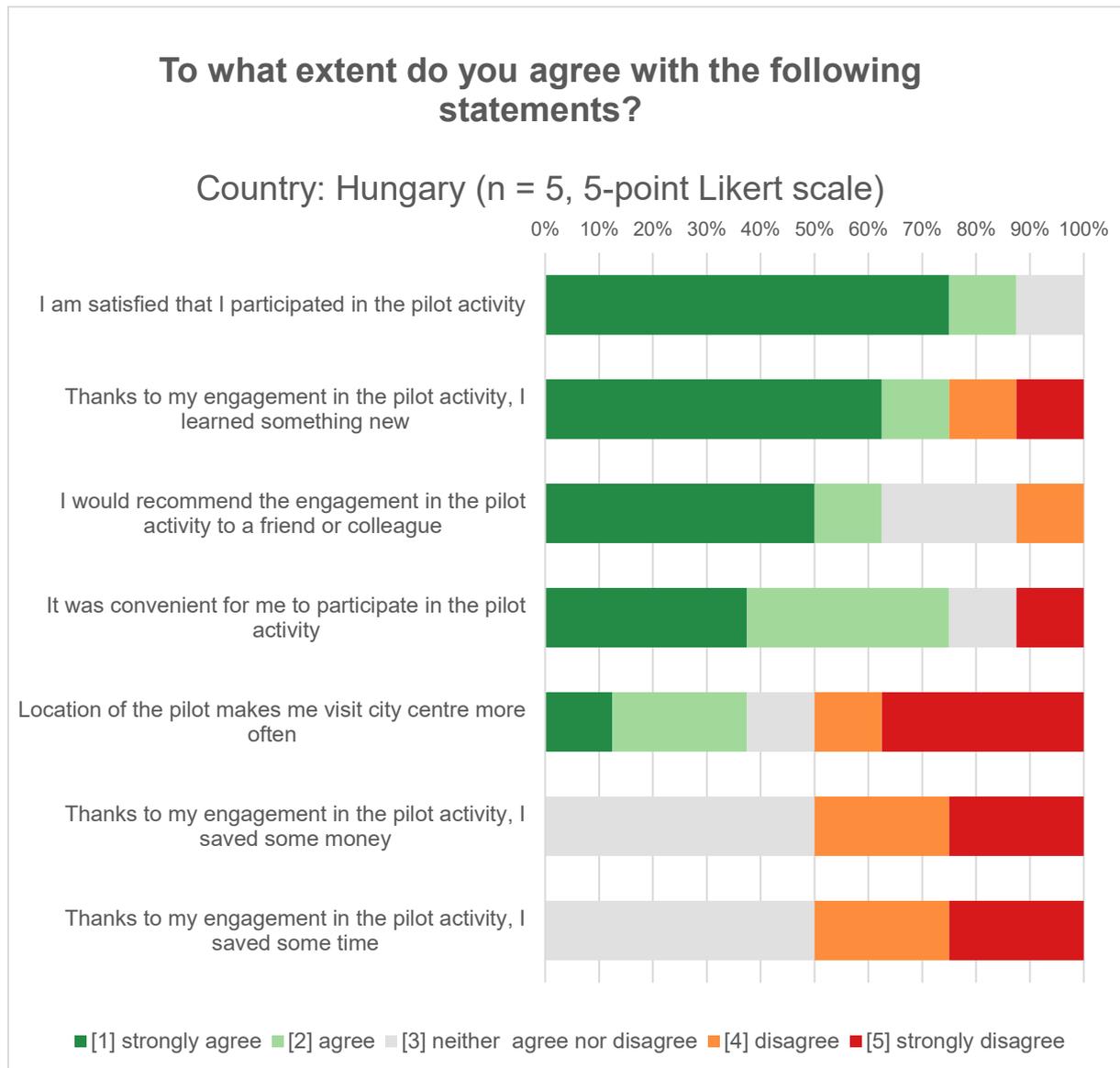


Figure 28 Participants' level of agreement with statements about the pilot activity in Hungary

Hungarian participants most appreciated the interactive, creative, and information-rich nature of the pilot activities (Figure 29). Respondents frequently mentioned the engaging discussions (*“diskusszió”*), interesting presentations (*“érdekes előadások”*), and the dedication of the people involved (*“elkötelezett emberek”*). Others highlighted the creative and



dynamic format (*“kreatív,” “interaktív”*), as well as the fact that the sessions required active attention and participation (*“figyelnem kellett”* – “I had to pay attention”).

These responses reflect the educational and co-creative orientation of the Hungarian pilot project at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, which successfully combined academic learning with hands-on collaboration. The appreciation for creativity, interactivity, and information density suggests that participants valued the “learning by doing” approach promoted within the University Living Lab. Moreover, the emphasis on discussion and personal engagement demonstrates the pilot project’s success in fostering a community of motivated and reflective participants – key for advancing circular lifestyles through education and collaboration.



Figure 29 Top three aspects participants liked the most about the pilot activity in Hungary

Hungarian respondents unanimously indicated that there was “nothing to change” about the pilot activity (*“nincs ilyen,” “semmi”*) (Figure 30). This strong positive feedback suggests that participants were fully satisfied with both the structure and the content of the initiative. It reflects the pilot project’s success in creating a well-balanced, engaging, and informative learning experience that met participants’ expectations without evident shortcomings.



Top 3 things participants would change or improve about the pilot activity

Country: Hungary (n = 5, open-ended question)



Figure 30 Top three aspects participants would change or improve about the pilot activity in Hungary

5.2.5 Italy

In Italy, the respondents (n = 12) most frequently reported joining the pilot activities out of curiosity (33%) or upon recommendation from local authorities (25%) (Figure 31). Smaller shares mentioned participation as stakeholders, facilitators, or researchers (17%), or cited other reasons such as obligation, affordability, importance of the topic, or recommendations from acquaintances (each 8%).

The prevalence of curiosity as a key motivation suggests that the pilot project effectively sparked public interest in circular water management and attracted individuals eager to learn about sustainable urban practices. The strong influence of recommendations from local authorities reflects the active institutional engagement of the Municipality of Bologna and other partners, whose involvement helped build trust and credibility for the initiative.

The participation of researchers and facilitators further indicates the collaborative, multi-actor character of the “Acqua in circolo” pilot project, which brought together citizens, academia, and practitioners to co-design and test practical solutions for water reuse and urban farming. Altogether, these results confirm that the Italian pilot project successfully combined citizen curiosity with institutional and expert engagement, creating a broad base of participants motivated by both learning and contribution.

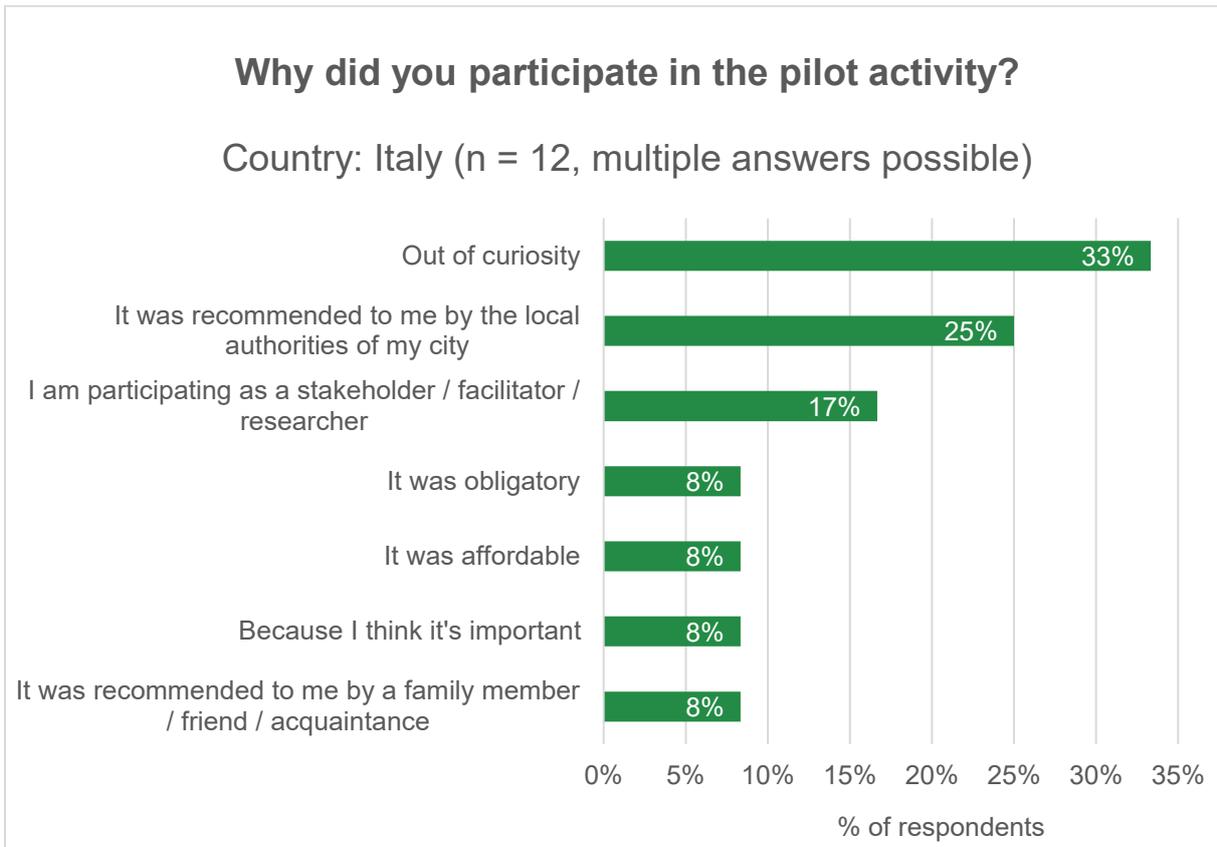


Figure 31 Motivations for participating in the pilot activity in Italy

Overall, participants in the Italian pilot project reported very high levels of satisfaction and strong learning outcomes (Figure 32). Almost all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their participation and that they learned something new thanks to the pilot project. This clearly reflects the educational and hands-on nature of the “Acqua in circolo” initiative, which enabled citizens to engage directly in water-saving and reuse experiments.

A large majority also agreed that the pilot project was convenient to participate in and that they would recommend the experience to others, confirming that the format and location were well designed to support inclusiveness and engagement. At the same time, very few participants felt that the pilot project helped them save time or money, which is consistent with its non-commercial and voluntary character. A small number of respondents disagreed that the location of the pilot project made them visit the city centre more often—an expected result given that activities were spread across multiple community and institutional sites, such as schools, universities, and shared gardens, rather than concentrated in central Bologna.



Overall, the results highlight that “Acqua in circolo” was perceived as a rewarding and educational experience, strengthening citizens’ awareness of circular water management and fostering collaboration among diverse urban stakeholders.

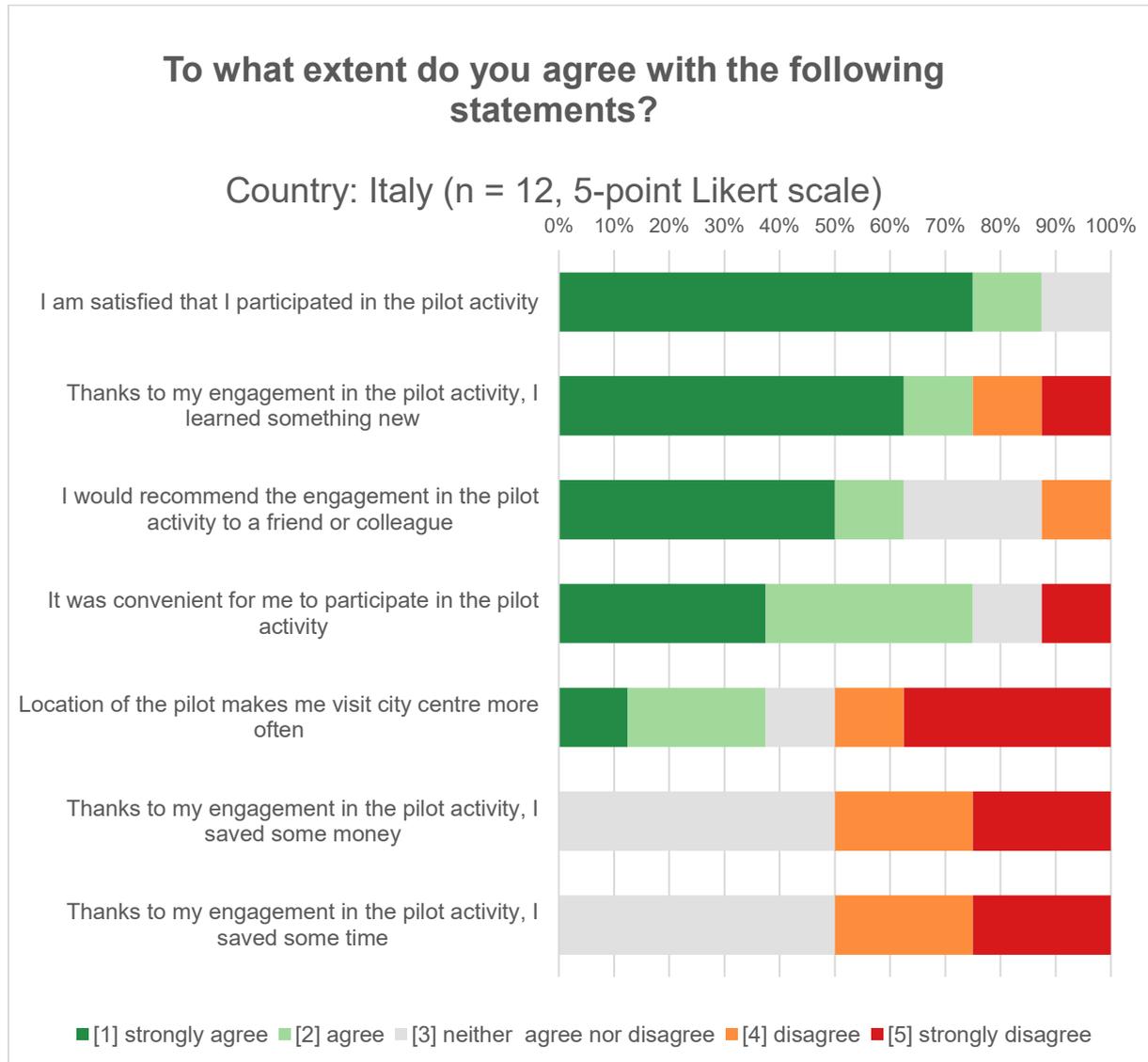


Figure 32 Participants’ level of agreement with statements about the pilot activity in Italy

Italian participants most frequently emphasized the quality of facilitation and co-design, noting the organizers’ availability and their ability to engage the audience (“la disponibilità dei relatori / organizzatori”, “coprogettazione”) (Figure 33). They also appreciated the clarity and simplicity with which key sustainability concepts were communicated (“la semplicità nella trasmissione dei concetti”). Finally, respondents highlighted the learning dimension of the pilot project, especially discovering new solutions for water saving, local sustainability initiatives, and the European perspective of the project.



Top 3 things participants liked the most about the pilot activity

Country: Italy (n = 12, open-ended question)

*Facilitation
& participant
engagement*

*Clarity
& accessibility
of content*

*Learning about local
and European
sustainability
initiatives*

Figure 33 Top three aspects participants liked the most about the pilot activity in Italy

Italian participants emphasized the need for more open, interactive, and participatory formats (Figure 34). They suggested organizing outdoor sessions when weather permits, shorter meetings, and leaving more time for participant questions (“lascerei più spazio alle domande dei partecipanti”). Several respondents also proposed increasing engagement and outreach to a broader audience and complementing workshops with topic-specific conferences (“ricercare maggiore partecipazione e condivisione con pubblico ampio”). Finally, some participants pointed to the potential for strengthening communication and analytical aspects, suggesting that improved facilitation could further enhance learning and collaboration.

Top 3 things participants would change or improve about the pilot activity

Country: Italy (n = 12, open-ended question)

*More interactive and
outdoor sessions*

*Broader public
engagement*

*Enhanced
communication
and exchange*

Figure 34 Top three aspects participants would change or improve about the pilot activity in Italy



5.2.6 Poland

The results from the Polish pilot project show that participation in the Multicentre Zero Waste initiative was driven primarily by curiosity and personal interest – a motivation cited by as many as 70% of respondents (Figure 35). This strong level of intrinsic motivation reflects the community's openness to exploring sustainable lifestyles and engaging in creative, hands-on learning activities such as upcycling and repair workshops.

A considerable share of participants also joined because they were personally invited by friends or family members (45%), indicating that word-of-mouth communication and peer influence played an important role in mobilising local engagement. This suggests that the pilot project effectively leveraged social networks and informal trust channels within the small-town context of Brzeg Dolny.

Financial accessibility was another relevant factor – 39% of respondents mentioned affordability as a key reason for joining, confirming that the free or low-cost access to workshops successfully removed economic barriers to participation. A smaller proportion pointed to recommendations from local authorities (25%) and convenience (10%), showing that while institutional communication contributed to awareness, personal curiosity and social connections were the main drivers of engagement.

Overall, these findings underline that the Polish pilot project's community-based approach, combining accessible, creative activities with peer-driven engagement, effectively motivated residents to participate and adopt circular behaviours in their daily lives.

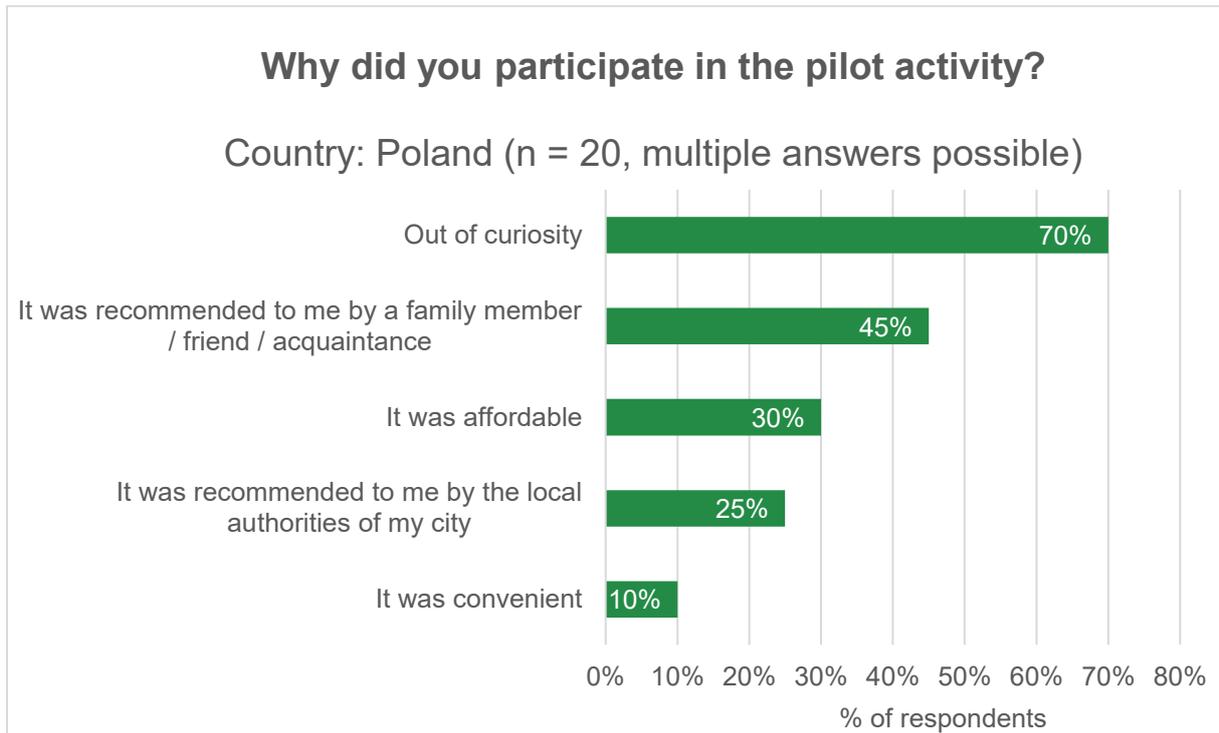


Figure 35 Motivations for participating in the pilot activity in Poland

Polish participants expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the Multicentre Zero Waste pilot project. Almost all respondents (95%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their participation and that they would recommend the activity to a friend or colleague, confirming the strong positive reception of the initiative within the local community.

A similarly high proportion agreed that they learned something new thanks to their engagement, highlighting the educational value of the workshops and the pilot project's success in promoting practical circular skills such as reuse, repair, and upcycling. Convenience also played a role: most respondents found it easy to participate, reflecting the central location and accessibility of the Multicentre. Only a small minority disagreed, suggesting that the initiative effectively removed logistical barriers for most users. Statements related to economic and time-saving benefits received more mixed responses, indicating that while participants valued the experience, their motivation was primarily educational and community-oriented rather than financial.

Overall, these results confirm that the pilot project in Brzeg Dolny successfully combined learning, engagement, and local accessibility, fostering strong participant satisfaction and motivation to continue circular practices beyond the project itself.

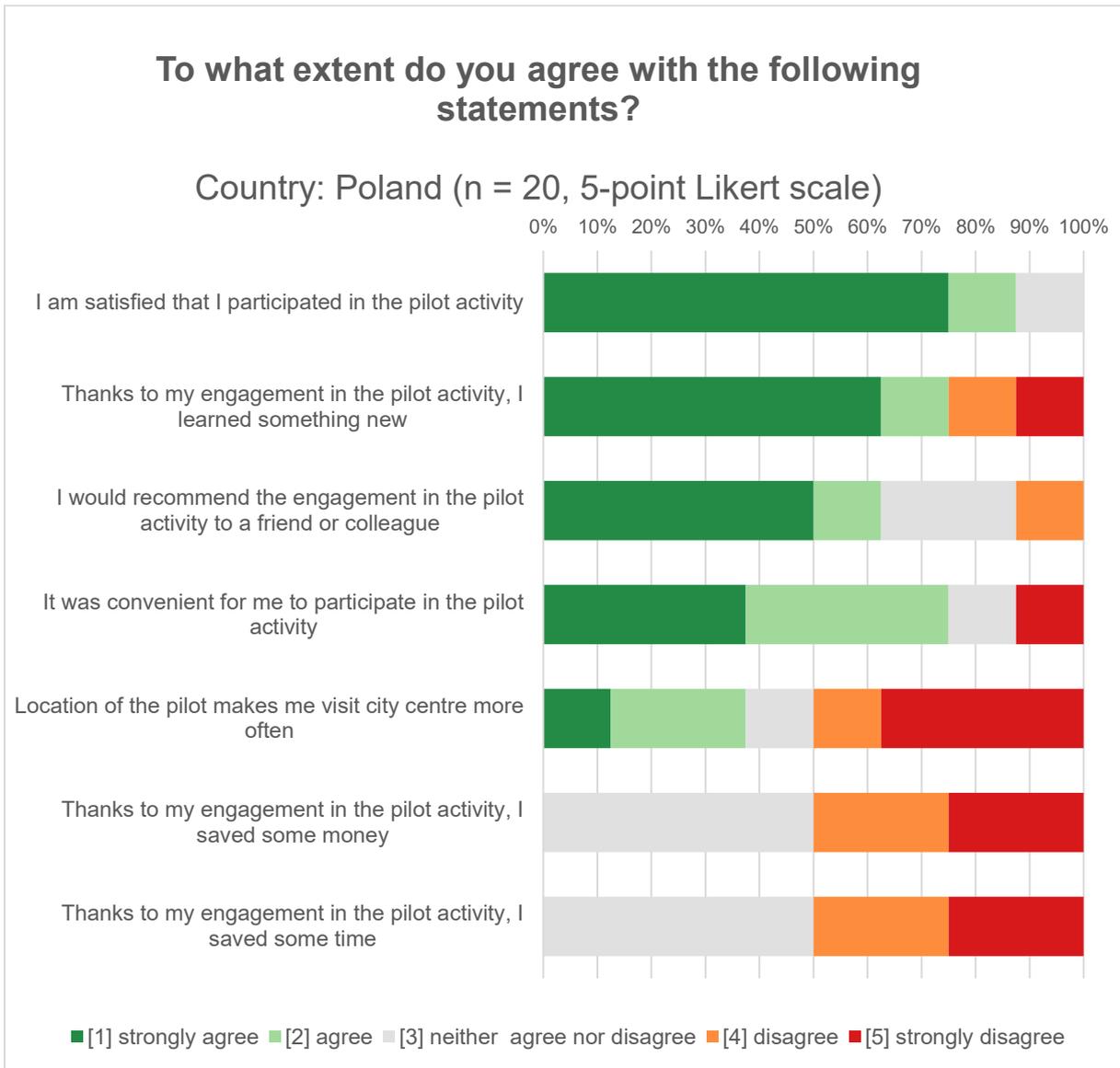


Figure 36 Participants' level of agreement with statements about the pilot activity in Poland

Polish participants most frequently mentioned learning opportunities, friendly atmosphere, and diversity of workshops as the most appreciated aspects of the Multicentre Zero Waste pilot project (Figure 37). Many respondents highlighted the chance to acquire practical skills such as sewing, cooking, or upcycling (“nauka nowych umiejętności”, “zdobyta wiedza i doświadczenie”). Others emphasised the welcoming and creative environment, describing it as a place for meeting new people and relaxation (“fajna grupa”, “miła atmosfera”, “odstresowanie”). The variety of topics and professional organisation were also praised (“różnicowana tematyka”, “dobrze prowadzone zajęcia”), showing that the pilot project successfully combined education, community building, and enjoyment in promoting circular lifestyles.



Top 3 things participants liked the most about the pilot activity

Country: Poland (n = 20, open-ended question)

*Learning new
and practical skills*

*Friendly atmosphere
& social connections*

*Variety and quality
of workshops*

Figure 37 Top three aspects participants liked the most about the pilot activity in Poland

Participants in the Polish pilot project were overwhelmingly positive but also offered constructive suggestions to make the Multicentre Zero Waste even more engaging and accessible (Figure 38). The most common recommendation was to increase the number and diversity of workshops, as places often filled up quickly (“więcej zajęć”, “więcej tematów”, “szersza oferta”). Many respondents also proposed longer opening hours and weekend sessions, to make participation easier for working adults and families (“działania w weekend”, “dogodne godziny”, “dłuższe godziny otwarcia”). Finally, participants suggested smaller group sizes and improved communication, noting that some workshops were very popular and occasionally overcrowded (“zbyt duża ilość osób”, “inna forma kontaktu oprócz mailowego”). Overall, these suggestions reflect the high demand and community enthusiasm generated by the pilot project – participants wanted more of what they already appreciated, confirming its success as a model for sustainable community engagement.



Top 3 things participants would change or improve about the pilot activity

Country: Poland (n = 20, open-ended question)



Figure 38 Top three aspects participants would change or improve about the pilot activity in Poland

5.2.7 Slovakia

The results from Slovakia indicate that curiosity was by far the strongest motivator for participation in the Košice Re-use Centre pilot project – mentioned by almost two-thirds of respondents (n = 10) (Figure 39). This shows that the initiative effectively attracted local residents interested in exploring new circular and community-oriented solutions, especially since the Re-use Centre represented a novel concept in the region.

A smaller but notable proportion of participants joined because they were personally invited or recommended by family, friends, or local authorities (20–10%), reflecting the value of word-of-mouth and local trust networks in encouraging participation. Other motivations, such as interest in the topic, social media outreach (Facebook), or professional engagement as facilitators or stakeholders, each accounted for about 10% of responses. This diversity of entry points suggests that the pilot project reached both general citizens and more experienced circular economy practitioners.

Overall, the data highlight that the Košice Re-use Centre successfully appealed to civic curiosity and personal connections, providing an inclusive entry point for people to experience circular living in a hands-on, community-based environment.

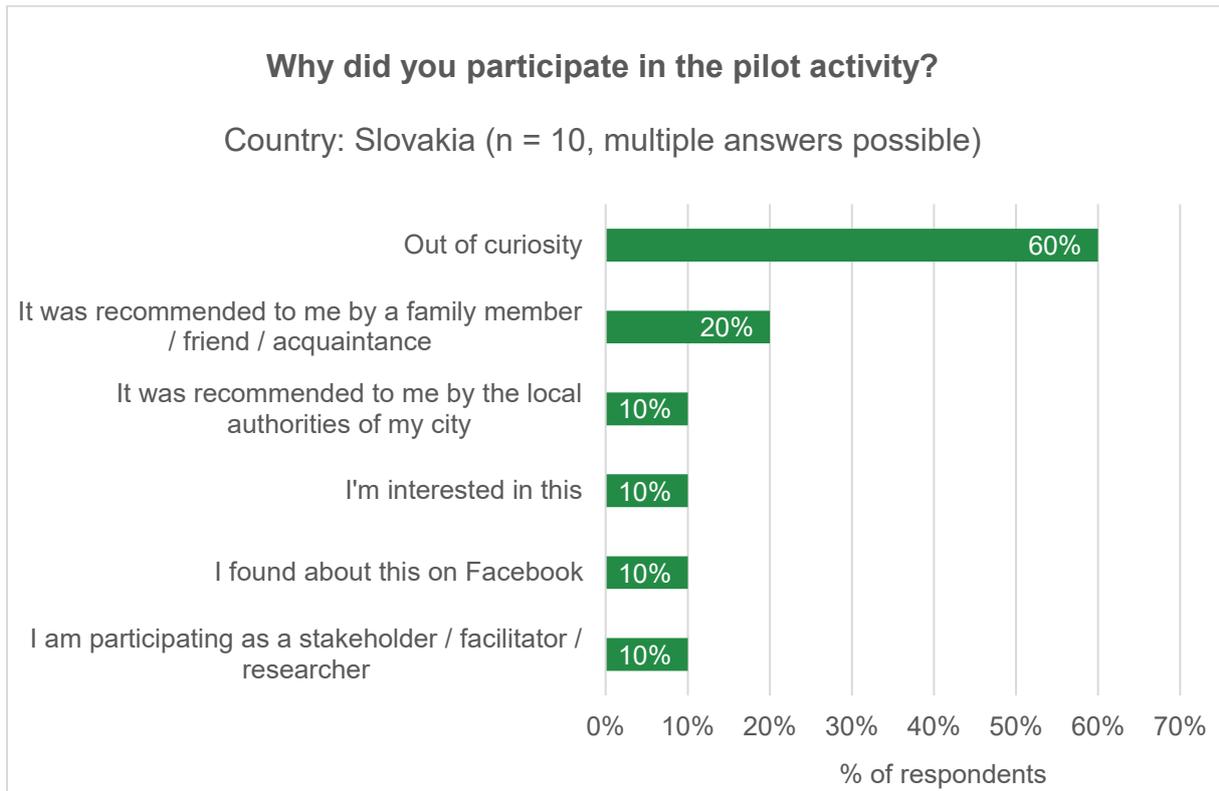


Figure 39 Motivations for participating in the pilot activity in Slovakia

The results from Slovak participants show a generally positive evaluation of the Košice Re-use Centre pilot project (Figure 40). Most respondents expressed satisfaction with their participation and agreed that the activity was both convenient and meaningful. Nearly all participants indicated that they learned something new, confirming that the pilot project achieved its educational objectives by promoting reuse and circular skills such as repair, donation, and creative upcycling.

A majority also stated that they would recommend participation to others, underlining the strong community appeal and perceived value of the initiative. These results reflect the Centre's success in combining environmental awareness with social engagement. On the other hand, respondents were less likely to associate the pilot project with direct time or financial savings, which is consistent with its primarily social and educational focus rather than an economic one.

Overall, the findings suggest that the Košice Re-use Centre effectively motivated learning, participation, and community involvement, establishing a strong foundation for future replication of similar circular hubs across Slovakia.

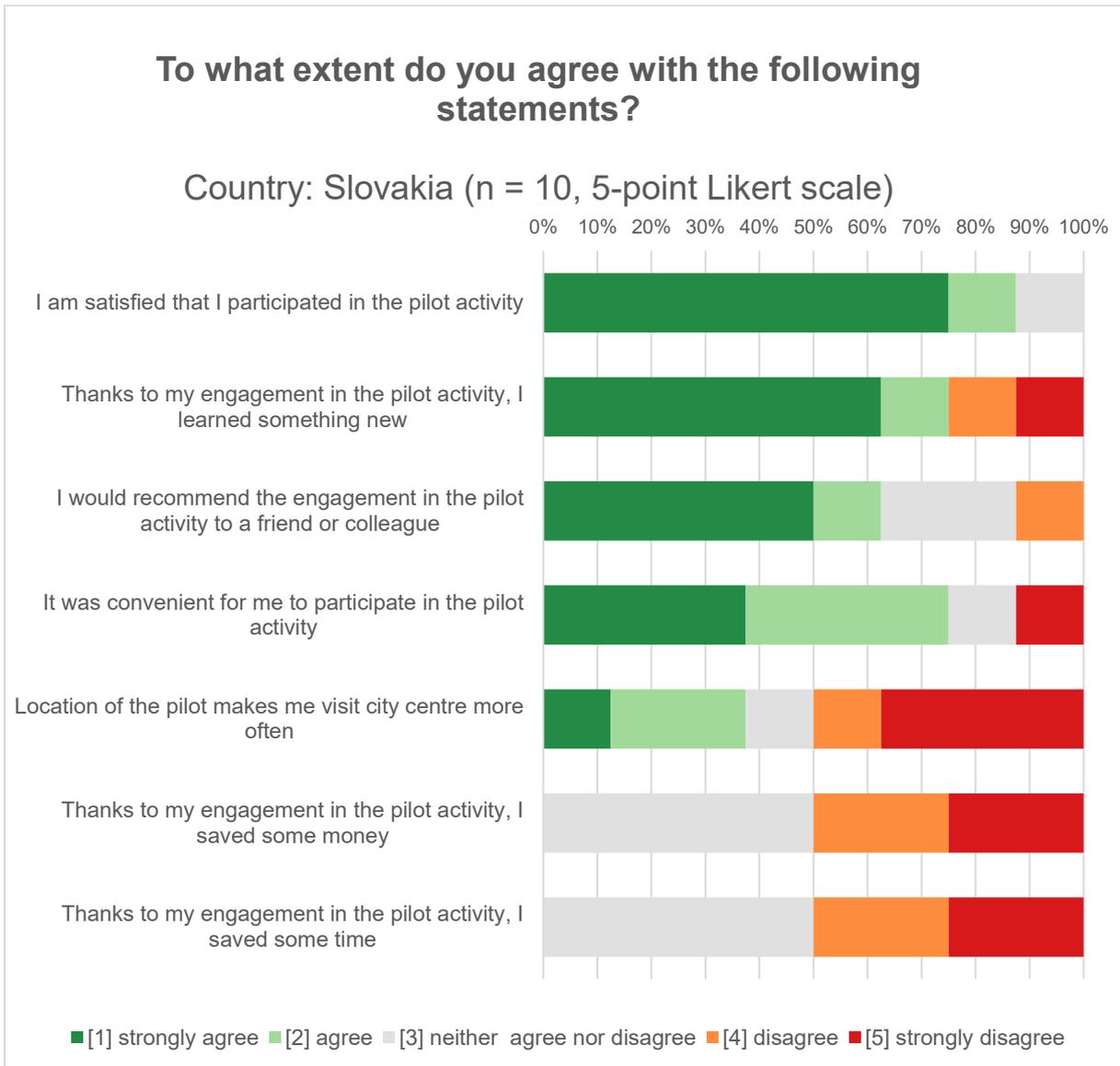


Figure 40 Participants' level of agreement with statements about the pilot activity in Slovakia

Participants in the Slovak pilot project most frequently appreciated the sense of community created through the Re-use Centre (Figure 41). Meeting “*new and interesting people*” and “*sharing experiences and ideas*” were mentioned repeatedly, reflecting the project’s strong social dimension and its success in connecting citizens with similar sustainability values.

The second key aspect was the hands-on and creative nature of activities, including upcycling workshops, donation campaigns, and manual repair sessions. Respondents highlighted their enjoyment of “*manual work*”, “*collections*”, and the “*opportunity to hand over surplus items to someone who needs them*”, showing that the pilot project’s practical format fostered both learning and empathy.



Finally, participants valued the educational and purposeful content of the initiative – “lectures about eco-lifestyles”, “variety of topics”, and “real help in building the centre” were cited as examples. These comments underline that the pilot project successfully combined environmental education with tangible community benefit, turning awareness into collective action.

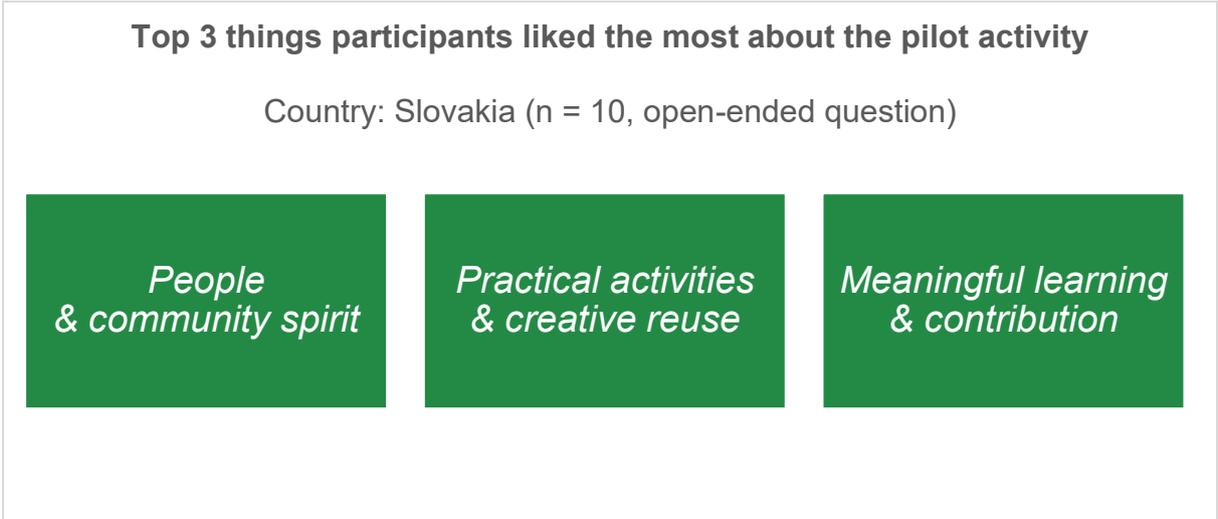


Figure 41 Top three aspects participants liked the most about the pilot activity in Slovakia

Feedback from participants in the Slovak pilot project focused primarily on improving the physical conditions of the Re-use Centre (Figure 42). Several respondents emphasized the need for “a better heated and more comfortable space” and “larger and cozier rooms”, showing that comfort and functionality were key to sustaining engagement, especially during colder months.

The second recurring suggestion was to enhance communication and visibility. Participants encouraged broader dissemination of information about the pilot project’s progress and achievements – for example “sharing updates publicly through social media or mailing lists” – to strengthen community awareness and attract new participants.

Finally, many respondents called for more learning opportunities and wider inclusion, such as “streaming lectures”, “organizing excursions”, and “involving as many students and the public as possible”. These insights indicate a strong desire to expand the pilot project’s educational reach and impact, positioning the Re-use Centre not only as a reuse hub but also as a catalyst for circular education and civic participation.



Figure 42 Top three aspects participants would change or improve about the pilot activity in Slovakia

5.2.8 Slovenia

The results from Slovenian respondents (n = 11) indicate that participation in the Ptuj circular pop-up store pilot project was driven primarily by local institutional and community networks (Figure 43). Nearly half of the respondents (46%) stated that they joined the activity because it was recommended by the local authorities, highlighting the strong role of the Municipality of Ptuj and its partners in mobilising citizens and promoting the initiative.

At the same time, curiosity was the second most frequent motivation (36%), showing that the pop-up store successfully attracted spontaneous visitors interested in exploring new and creative approaches to circular living. This aligns with the pilot project’s experimental and open format, which encouraged citizens to engage with sustainability through real-life examples of reuse, repair, and upcycling.

A smaller share of respondents mentioned personal recommendations (27%), reflecting the project’s growing visibility and positive word-of-mouth impact within the community. Only a few participants pointed to practical factors such as convenience or affordability (9% each), confirming that intrinsic interest and community trust were stronger motivators than economic or logistical reasons.

Overall, the findings suggest that the Ptuj pop-up store effectively combined institutional credibility with grassroots curiosity, successfully engaging a diverse group of participants and raising awareness of circular economy principles in an accessible and participatory way.

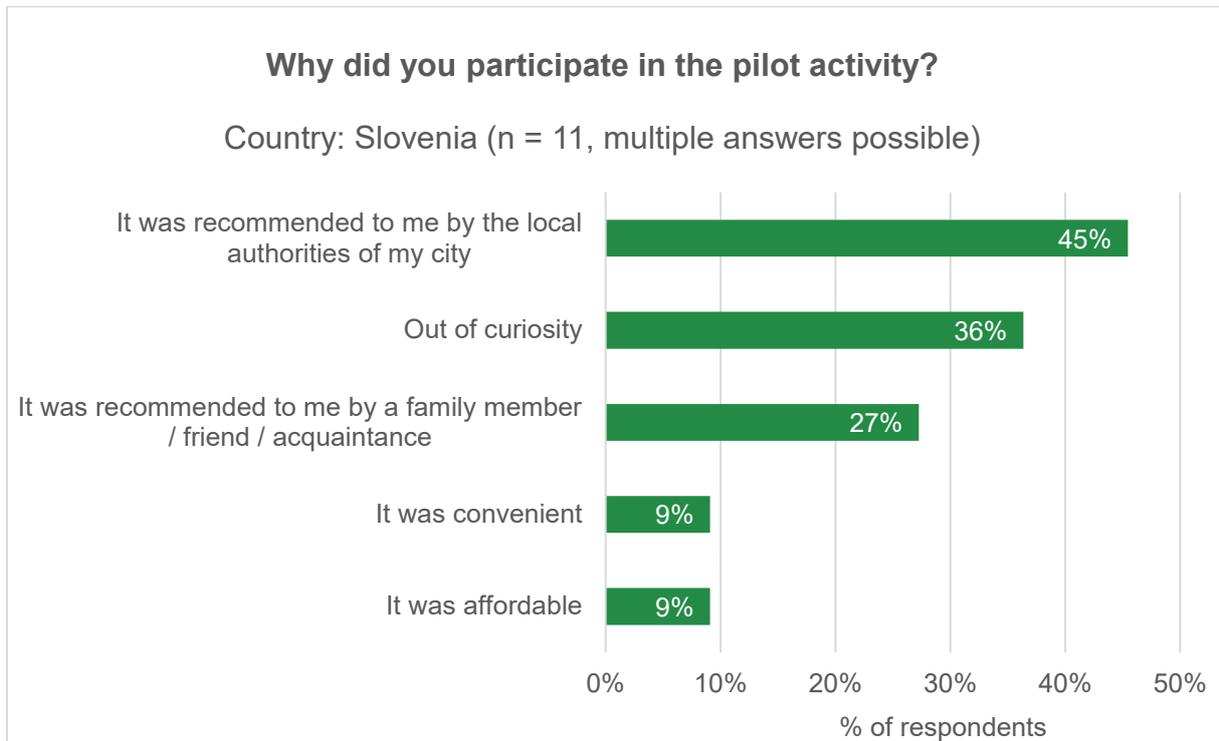


Figure 43 Motivations for participating in the pilot activity in Slovenia

The evaluation results from participants of Slovenian pilot project reveal very positive overall satisfaction with the Ptuj pop-up store (Figure 44). All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their participation, confirming that the initiative successfully met participants' expectations and delivered a meaningful experience.

A very high share of respondents agreed that they learned something new and that they would recommend participation to others, highlighting the pilot project's strong educational and inspirational value. The workshops and co-creation sessions with artisans, NGOs, and local creatives clearly enhanced learning and engagement, showing that the pilot project effectively combined awareness-raising with practical skill-building. Convenience also scored positively, suggesting that the central location in Ptuj's historic city centre made the pilot project accessible to a wide range of visitors.

On the other hand, statements related to economic or time-saving benefits – such as saving money or time – received lower agreement levels, which is consistent with the pilot project's focus on learning and community building rather than financial incentives.

Overall, the results confirm that the Ptuj pop-up store was highly appreciated for its learning opportunities, inclusiveness, and practical demonstration of circular principles, while also revitalising the city centre through an innovative, community-oriented approach.

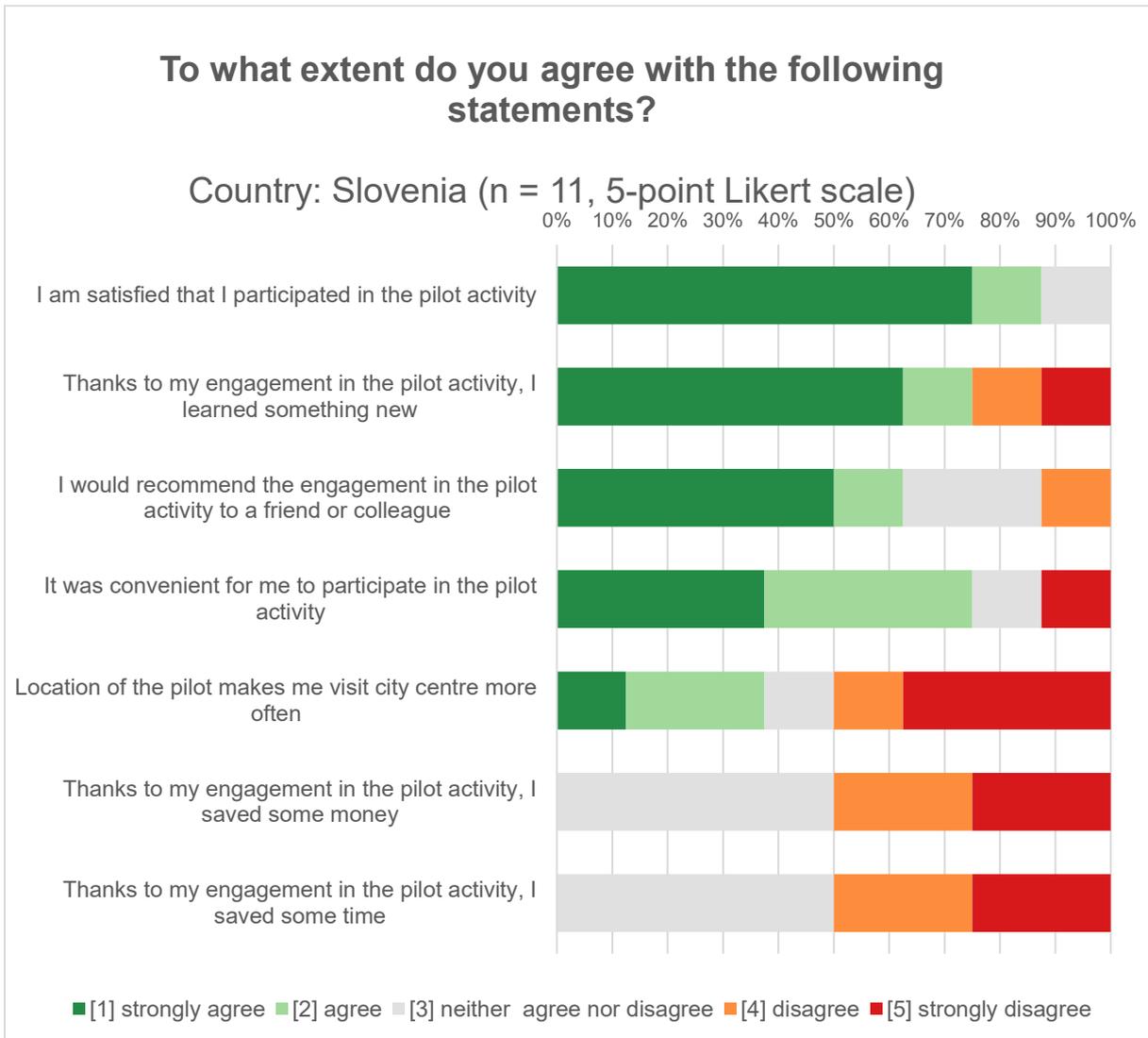


Figure 44 Participants' level of agreement with statements about the pilot activity in Slovenia

Participants in the Slovenian pilot project highlighted three key aspects they valued most about the Ptuj pop-up store (Figure 45). The most frequently mentioned theme was the idea of reuse and sustainability, reflecting appreciation for the store's focus on extending product life cycles and promoting circular practices in everyday life. As one respondent noted, they particularly liked *"the idea of reuse and sharing things"*, which shows that the initiative successfully inspired more conscious consumption habits.

The second theme centred around the diversity and local character of the offer. Respondents praised the *"variety of products," "local and creative selection,"* and *"well-arranged store"*, showing that the pilot project effectively combined aesthetic appeal with practical examples of circular economy in action. The physical design of the store – furnished entirely with reused items – reinforced this impression.



Finally, participants emphasized the social and educational dimension of the pilot project. Many valued “meeting new people,” “sharing ideas,” and “networking,” underlining that the pop-up store succeeded not only as a place of exchange of goods, but also as a community hub fostering dialogue, inspiration, and collaboration around sustainability and circular living.

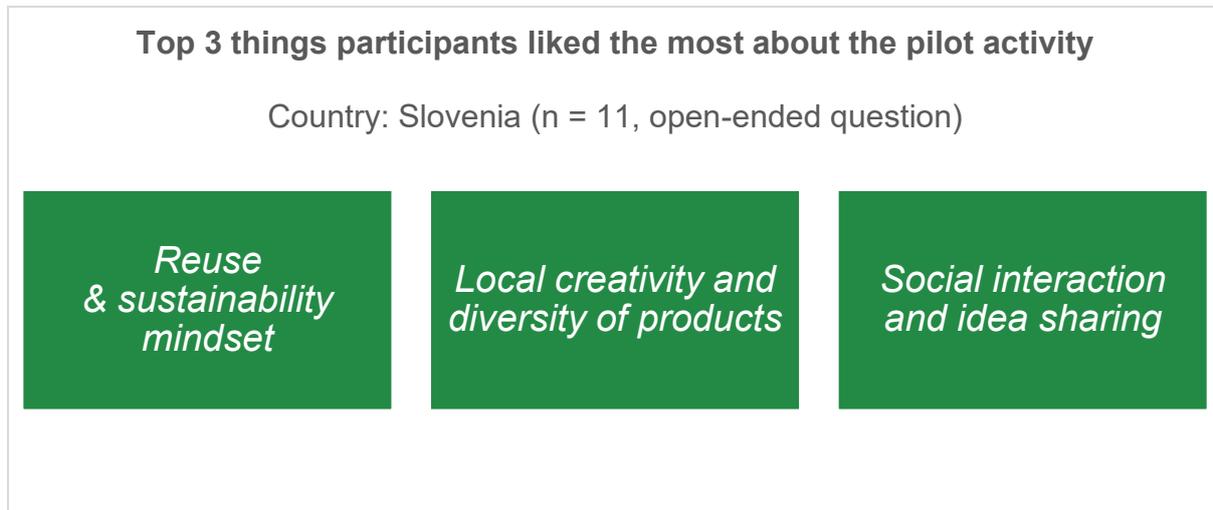


Figure 45 Top three aspects participants liked the most about the pilot activity in Slovenia

When asked about potential improvements, participants in the Slovenian pilot project most frequently pointed to the need for stronger promotion and wider outreach. Several respondents mentioned that “better promotion” and “more visibility in schools” could help attract a larger and more diverse audience (Figure 46). This feedback suggests that, while the pop-up store was well received by those who attended, future editions could benefit from enhanced communication strategies and stronger partnerships with local institutions and media.

The second most common suggestion was to transform the temporary store into a permanent space. One participant simply stated, “It should become a permanent shop,” reflecting a strong interest in maintaining the initiative beyond the pilot project phase. This aligns with the project’s aim to test the temporary use of vacant premises as a tool for city-centre revitalisation – and indicates that according to one of participants the concept was successful enough to warrant long-term continuation.

Finally, some participants recommended expanding the creative and educational aspects, such as “greater emphasis on redesigning used objects and waste materials.” This highlights a desire for more hands-on and transformative activities that deepen the learning experience and demonstrate circularity in practice.



Overall, the feedback shows that the Ptuj pop-up store has the potential to evolve from a temporary awareness-raising initiative into a lasting community hub, combining sustainability education, creative reuse, and local entrepreneurship.

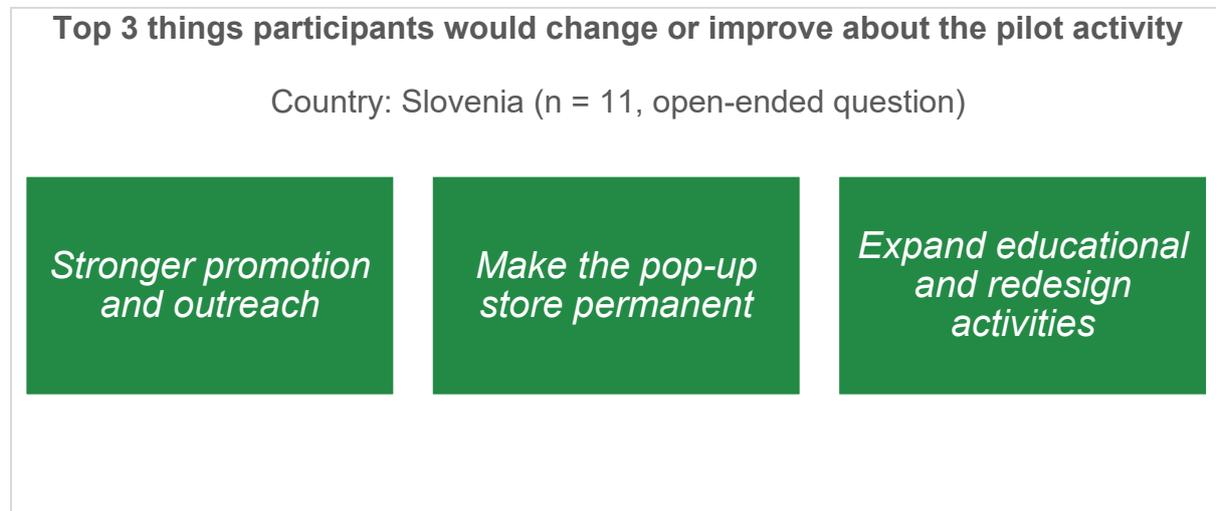


Figure 46 Top three aspects participants would change or improve about the pilot activity in Slovenia

5.3 Cross-pilot analysis: common trends and differences

This section compares feedback provided by pilot users across the NiCE pilot locations. While the evaluation samples vary in size and are not statistically representative, the findings offer valuable directional insights into users' experiences, motivations, benefits, and areas for improvement. Across countries, several strong patterns emerged:

- **High satisfaction and strong recommendation potential:** In all locations with available data, the majority agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with participating and would recommend the pilot to others.
- **Learning and inspiration as the main perceived benefits:** Users frequently indicated that they learned something new, gained new skills, or discovered new circular solutions and local businesses.
- **Participation driven primarily by intrinsic motivation:** "Curiosity", "interest in the topic" and personal invitations via local networks or family/friends were the main triggers for engagement in all pilots.
- **Limited direct economic effect:** Participants rarely agreed that they saved time or money through the pilot – confirming that pilots primarily delivered social and educational, not financial, value.
- **Strong appreciation of social aspects:** Users emphasised meeting new people, working together, community atmosphere and supportive facilitators.



- **Circularity understood through practice:** Hands-on activities (workshops, co-creation, direct encounters with producers) were consistently praised as the most meaningful part of participation.

These trends indicate that NiCE pilots succeeded not only in testing circular initiatives, but also in empowering citizens as co-creators and awakening interest in circular living.

Despite the shared positive outcomes, users' motivations and experiences differed in line with pilot formats:

- Retail-based pilot projects (Austria, Slovenia) using city-centre pop-up stores had strong appreciation for location, visibility of circular SMEs, and discovering new companies, and less impact on savings or changing city-centre visitation patterns.
- Educational/community pilot projects (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia) had strong impact on learning outcomes, hands-on skills, atmosphere and community interaction. Most improvement requests related to more events, more space and better scheduling.
- Where pilot projects were temporary, participants often asked for permanent or more frequent activities (Austria, Slovenia, Poland, Slovakia).
- In some locations (Slovakia, Slovenia), users explicitly requested improved promotion to reach a broader audience.

Overall, the pilots performed best when they matched local expectations and provided active engagement formats, but there is still room to grow in terms of continuity, accessibility, and communication.

Although pilot formats varied substantially across the participating Central European cities, participants' responses reveal several shared mechanisms shaping engagement and perceived value.

First, citizens engage most strongly with circularity when it becomes tangible in their everyday lives. Hands-on activities – such as sewing, woodworking, repairing, growing food, testing hydroponic systems or purchasing upcycled items – were consistently described as the most meaningful elements of participation. These experiences allow users to “see” and “feel” the benefits of circularity, transforming an abstract concept into something practical, creative and personally relevant. This suggests that future circular initiatives should continue to prioritize experiential learning and direct interaction with products, materials and local entrepreneurs.

Second, the pilots demonstrated that temporary interventions can successfully spark curiosity and enthusiasm – but they are rarely seen as sufficient on their own. Across Austria, Slovenia, Poland and Slovakia, respondents explicitly expressed a desire for continuation: more events,



more regular workshops, and permanent spaces for circular activities. This demand signals that the pilots created value that users wish to preserve and expand. It also highlights the importance of planning for sustainability of engagement beyond the project timeframe, including business models that allow pilots to evolve into lasting community assets.

Third, participation in circular initiatives appears to spread primarily through local social networks rather than broad marketing campaigns. In nearly every location, “a recommendation from someone I know” was among the most common reasons for joining. Smaller communities in particular relied on word-of-mouth, informal trust and personal invitations. This indicates that circular city strategies should not only invest in communication channels, but also intentionally activate community connectors – engaged citizens, educators, entrepreneurs and municipal supporters – who can champion initiatives within their own networks.

Taken together, these findings suggest that successful circular city pilots are those that:

- connect circularity with everyday practice,
- build continuity and local ownership, and
- leverage trusted relationships within the community.

These insights provide a foundation for scaling local NiCE pilots into broader circular lifestyle transitions.



6 LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of key findings across all assessment components

The results of the self-assessment, cross-tandem evaluation, and pilot user feedback collectively demonstrate that the NiCE pilots successfully showcased diverse approaches to promoting circular lifestyles in urban centres. Although each pilot project reflected different local priorities, all shared a common goal of encouraging citizens to engage with sustainability, sustainable consumption and circular lifestyles in practical, visible ways. Together, they confirmed that community-based engagement remains the strongest driver of behavioural change, especially when combined with hands-on activities such as reuse workshops or sharing events.

The assessments consistently emphasized that collaboration between municipalities, local organizations, businesses, and citizens was fundamental to success. Such cross-sector partnerships not only lent credibility to the initiatives but also laid the groundwork for their long-term continuation beyond the pilot phase. While digital tools expanded outreach, they proved most effective when coupled with in-person activities that fostered direct social interaction and learning. Educational and awareness-raising elements were particularly valuable, as they deepened user understanding and reinforced behaviour change over time. Those formats, especially living labs, where the educational aspect is combined with community development are highly valuable for advancing the circular society.

At the same time, several recurring challenges were identified across all assessment components. The short duration of the pilot phase and limited financial resources often constrained the ability to reach wider audiences or assess long-term impacts. Many pilots relied heavily on the dedication of individual coordinators or local champions, which sometimes created vulnerabilities when staff changed or engagement waned. Administrative barriers related to reuse regulations, waste management, or the temporary use of spaces also complicated implementation. Moreover, the lack of stable institutional and financial support emerged as a significant obstacle to maintaining activities after the formal project period ended.

Despite these limitations, the collective evidence from all three assessments confirmed that the pilots served as effective testbeds for new models of circularity. They provided concrete examples of how cities can connect citizens with sustainable practices in ways that are both meaningful and replicable, demonstrating that small-scale actions can catalyse broader systemic change.



6.2 General lessons for circular lifestyle pilots implementation

The pilots' implementation experiences offer valuable insights into the practical aspects of designing and running circular lifestyle initiatives. One of the most important lessons concerns the need for clearly defined target groups and well-tailored engagement strategies. Initiatives that involved specific communities, such as families, schools, or local entrepreneurs, were generally more successful in sustaining active participation. Embedding pilot activities in existing local structures, including municipal facilities, community hubs, or associations, proved to be another success factor, as it enhanced visibility, simplified coordination, and increased the likelihood of long-term continuity.

The pilots also showed that flexibility and adaptability are essential qualities in project management. Those that regularly adjusted their activities in response to participant feedback or changing circumstances maintained stronger community engagement. Simple and practical formats, such as exchange events or repair workshops, attracted more consistent participation than complex or highly technical activities. Hands-on participation was particularly effective in encouraging behavioural change, suggesting that citizens learn best by doing rather than by listening.

Different engagement approaches had a clear influence on participation patterns. Activities that relied on direct involvement, co-creation, and peer learning were more successful than traditional awareness campaigns. The use of temporary or pop-up models, as tested in Slovenia and Austria, proved to be an especially effective way to experiment with new ideas and reach diverse audiences. Digital tools such as websites, applications, or social media platforms supported these efforts by extending communication and outreach, though they worked best as complementary rather than standalone measures.

A number of unexpected factors also affected the pilots' outcomes. Seasonal variations and weather conditions influenced attendance at outdoor events, while media coverage and local influencers sometimes unexpectedly amplified visibility and impact. Administrative delays and technical challenges occasionally disrupted implementation timelines, yet these situations also demonstrated the value of flexibility and contingency planning. Interestingly, several pilots revealed that the symbolic and community-building aspects of circular activities (e.g. reuse as a sign of community solidarity) were often as influential as their measurable environmental benefits.



6.3 Recommendations for scaling and replicability

The replication and scaling of circular lifestyle initiatives require a comprehensive approach that combines practical, organizational, and strategic considerations. One of the fundamental lessons emerging from the NiCE project is the importance of resilient infrastructure and contingency planning. Future pilots should be based in accessible, well-equipped spaces that can adapt to growing participation and withstand disruptions such as temporary closures or technical failures. Reliable physical settings, coupled with clear contingency measures, provide the stability needed to maintain community trust and operational continuity.

Equally critical is the adoption of participatory and co-creation methods. Engaging citizens, students, and local stakeholders from the earliest stages of project design and implementation fosters ownership, relevance, and long-term commitment. Formats such as living labs, workshops, and pop-up spaces have proven particularly effective in translating circular economy principles into tangible experiences and behaviors. By creating opportunities for co-design and experimentation, pilots can nurture a sense of community around circular values and stimulate behavioral change.

Digital tools also play a key role in strengthening both the management and reach of circular initiatives. Strategically integrating online platforms and management systems allows organizers to streamline operations, monitor activities in real time, and improve communication among partners and participants. Moreover, digital innovations support efficient data collection and impact reporting, which in turn facilitates replication and funding applications.

Understanding users' motivations and needs remains a cornerstone of successful pilot implementation. Conducting user-centered research before scaling up helps identify behavioral patterns, preferences, and perceived value of services. Co-designing offers with target audiences and tailoring communication, pricing, and incentives to their expectations ensures broader adoption beyond the initial circle of environmentally motivated participants.

To support replication and policy uptake, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be strengthened. Systematic tracking of environmental, social, and economic outcomes generates the evidence base needed to inform decision-making, justify investments, and guide long-term policy frameworks. Transparent reporting also enhances credibility and encourages cross-city learning.

Financial and institutional resilience is equally essential. Future pilots should diversify their funding and partnership models, reducing dependency on a single institution or municipal budget. A balanced mix of grants, sponsorships, and self-sustaining activities, combined with



cooperation with local businesses, NGOs, and educational institutions, can create more durable and resource-efficient ecosystems.

Embedding circular initiatives within broader policy frameworks ensures their continuity and wider impact. Linking pilots with municipal development strategies, educational programs, and sustainability agendas strengthens institutional support and accelerates the normalization of circular practices in everyday life. Finally, facilitating knowledge exchange across cities and countries remains a crucial step in scaling circular solutions. Documenting experiences, producing practical toolkits, and sharing lessons learned allow successful approaches to spread and adapt to different contexts.

By following these recommendations, future circular lifestyle pilots can achieve greater operational effectiveness, inclusivity, and measurable impact. In doing so, they will contribute to shaping more sustainable, circular urban environments that integrate environmental responsibility with community well-being and innovation.



7 ANNEXES

7.1 Annex 1: Cross-tandem assessment questionnaire

Section 1: General information

1) Assessed pilot

Which pilot do you assess?

- Austria - Future House S in Graz
- Czechia - Integrating digitalization and e-commerce into reuse centre operation in Jihlava
- Germany - Linking e-commerce and circular lifestyle offers in city centre in Würzburg
- Hungary - Co-creation for more circular cities at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics
- Italy - Testing circular water management solutions in Bologna
- Poland - Multicentrum Zero Waste in Brzeg Dolny
- Slovakia - Reuse centre Košice
- Slovenia - Pop up store Ptuj

2) Assessing partners

Which partners do you represent?

- UBA
- ENVIROS
- StadtLABOR
- CIKE
- ENEA
- BME
- ZRS Bistra Ptuj
- Brzeg Dolny



Section 2: Key success factors and barriers

- 3) What were the key factors that contributed to the success of the pilot or were helpful for the pilot implementation in its current city?

Describe the conditions that made the pilot work well. Examples:

- Strong partnerships with local authorities, businesses, or NGOs.
- High public interest and participation.
- Existing policies that supported circular economy initiatives.
- Availability of necessary infrastructure (e.g., vacant spaces for reuse).

- 4) What challenges or barriers did the pilot face during its implementation?

Consider difficulties encountered during the project. Examples:

- Resistance from stakeholders (e.g., businesses reluctant to participate).
- Bureaucratic hurdles (e.g., lengthy permit approvals).
- Limited financial resources.
- Low public awareness or engagement.
- Low interest among target groups.

- 5) How were these challenges addressed or overcome?

Provide examples of how problems were solved. Examples:

- Adjusting the engagement strategy to involve key stakeholders more effectively.
- Securing alternative funding sources or grants.
- Running awareness campaigns to increase public interest.

Section 3: Replicability of pilot activities

- 6) How easily do you think the pilot activities can be replicated in other cities?

- Very easily
- Somewhat easily



- Neutral
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult

7) What specific factors would need to be considered when replicating the pilots in another city?

List elements that must be carefully assessed before attempting to transfer the pilot elsewhere.

Examples:

- Regulatory and policy framework: Are there existing policies that support or hinder circular initiatives?
- Local infrastructure: Does the city have the necessary physical and digital infrastructure to support the pilot?
- Stakeholder landscape: Who are the key actors (e.g., local government, businesses, NGOs) that need to be involved, and how engaged are they?
- Community readiness: Is there public interest or awareness of circular practices in the new location?
- Economic and financial factors: Are there funding opportunities or business models that can sustain the pilot?

8) What specific aspects of the pilot have the potential to be widely applicable in different urban settings?

Identify elements of the pilot that could work well elsewhere. Examples:

- Stakeholder engagement strategies: How local communities were successfully involved.
- Circular economy models: Approaches to reusing materials, sharing resources, or minimizing waste.
- Community outreach: Methods used to encourage behavioral change.
- Exploitation strategy: Approaches to maintaining the initiative after the financing from the EU Funds ends.



Section 4: Innovative concepts

9) What unique solutions or practices have emerged from the pilot?

Consider new methods, technologies, or collaboration models that developed during implementation. How did these innovations contribute to the success of the pilot?

10) How does the pilot foster creativity and experimentation in developing circular solutions?

Consider whether it allows for testing new ideas, encourages community-driven innovation, or integrates flexible, evolving concepts.

Section 5: Overall evaluation and recommendations

11) What lessons learned from this pilot could be applied to future projects/ pilots in other cities?

Think about key takeaways that could benefit similar initiatives, such as:

- Strategies that were particularly effective.
- Mistakes that should be avoided.
- Insights about community involvement or policy engagement.

12) Additional comments or observations:



7.2 Annex 2: Pilot users survey questionnaire

Survey content

Section 1: Welcome

Welcome to the NiCE survey!
Why is this research being carried out?
 A group of public authority institutions in collaboration with scientific and technical partners listed below is conducting research about consumption patterns in Central Europe. The research is implemented within the project "NiCE: From Niche to Centre - City Centres as Places of Circular Lifestyles". The project is supported by the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme with co-financing by the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund.

The data collected in this research will be used for scientific insights into people's consumption behaviours in relation to a circular economy and new services facilitating circular lifestyles in cities, as well as input for improving public policies in countries of Central Europe.

The partners involved in the NiCE project are:

- 1) German Environment Agency, Germany
- 2) ENVIROS, Czech Republic
- 3) CityLAB Innovations for urban quality of life, Austria
- 4) Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj, Slovenia
- 5) Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development, Italy
- 6) Research and Innovation Centre Pro-Akademia, Poland (survey coordinator)
- 7) Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Hungary
- 8) Creative Industry Košice, Slovakia
- 9) Municipality of Brzeg Dolny, Poland

Do I have to participate?
 Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw your participation at any time by closing the questionnaire close. If you complete the survey and provide your consent for processing your data, you will have the opportunity to answer an additional question. Participants who provide the most creative answers will be selected to receive gift cards for grocery shopping.

What do we ask of you?
 The questions in this survey are about various consumption-related behaviours from your daily life. Filling in of the questionnaire will take about 20 minutes. RIC Pro-Akademia, survey coordinator, will deliver the data from this survey in anonymised form to the other project partners involved, listed above.

How will we handle your data?
 The data collected in this survey will be securely stored according to the NiCE project data storage protocol. The data will be used for academic publications and reports in the NiCE project. All results will be anonymised and will be reported at group level, so it will be impossible to identify individual respondents or draw conclusions about individual respondents. The information clause regarding the processing of your personal data is available below.

Questions?
 For questions about this study, please contact the researchers coordinating this survey, Dr. Max Kochanski (maksymilian.kochanski@proakademia.eu) or Katarzyna Korczak (katarzyna.korczak@proakademia.eu).

Information clause about personal data processing

In accordance with Article 13(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (EU L 119 of 04.05.2016, p. 1), hereinafter referred to as "GDPR", we would like to inform you that:

the joint controllers of your personal data are the Partners of the Consortium implementing the NiCE project:

- a. Research and Innovation Centre Pro-Akademia, with its registered office in Konstancin Łódzki, at 9/11 Innowacyjna Street, 95-050 Konstancin Łódzki, Poland – survey coordinator, which is a designated contact point for data subjects (in accordance with Article 26(1) of the GDPR);
- b. German Environment Agency, with its registered office in Wörlitzer Platz 1, 06110 Dessau, Germany
- c. ENVIROS, Dykova 53/10, 101 00 Prague, Czech Republic



- d. StadtLABOR, with its registered office in Griesgasse 40, 8020 Graz, Austria
 - e. Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj, with its registered office in Slovenski trg 6, 2250 Ptuj, Slovenia
 - f. Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development, with its registered office in Lungotevere Grande Ammiraglio Thaon Di Revel 76, 00196 Rome, Italy
 - g. Budapest University of Technology and Economics, with its registered office in Műegyetm rkp. 3, H-1111 Budapest, Hungary
 - h. Creative Industry Košice, n.o., with its registered office in Kukučínova 2, 04001 Košice, Slovakia
 - i. Municipality of Brzeg Dolny, with its registered office in Kolejowa 29, 56-120 Brzeg Dolny, Poland
- Information about your personal data is provided by the Personal Data Protection Specialist at the Research and Innovation Centre Pro-Akademia, who can be contacted in writing by providing information via e-mail to the address iod@proakademia.eu or to the address given above.

Personal data collected as part of the survey are processed solely to enable interested persons to participate in the survey and are collected on the basis of Art. 6(1)(a) of GDPR.

The data may be transferred only to: Managing Authority of INTERREG Central Europe, authorized employees and associates of the Project Partners, entities cooperating with the Partners in the implementation of the Project, entities providing HR and accounting services to the Project Partners, e-mail hosting services, entities providing IT services or legal services, banks, and if required by law, also public administration bodies.

Your personal data will be processed until the end of the NiCE project, i.e. 30/04/2026.

Your personal data will not be transferred to a third country or an international organization. The GDPR applies in all countries belonging to the European Union.

Providing personal data is voluntary.

Pursuant to Art. 22 GDPR, in relation to your personal data, decisions will not be made in an automated manner. You have:

- a. pursuant to Article 15 of the GDPR, the right to access your personal data concerning you;
- b. pursuant to Article 16 of the GDPR, the right to rectify your data (exercising the right may not result in a change in the outcome of the procedure for the selection of the Host Institution or a change in the provisions of the contract)
- c. pursuant to Article 18 of the GDPR, the right to request the joint controllers to restrict the processing of personal data, subject to the cases referred to in Article 18(2) of the GDPR (the right to restriction of processing does not apply in relation to storage, to ensure the exercise of legal remedies or to protect the rights of another natural or legal person, or for important reasons of public interest of the European Union or a Member State);
- d. the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority, when you consider that the processing of your personal data violates the provisions of the GDPR. In such a case, you may lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority in the Member State of your habitual residence, place of work or place of the alleged infringement. You can find the contact details of the relevant authority here: https://www.edpb.europa.eu/about-edpb/about-edpb/members_en
- e. pursuant to Article 17 of the GDPR, the right to erasure of personal data;
- f. the right to transfer personal data referred to in Article 20 of the GDPR;
- g. pursuant to Article 21 of the GDPR, the right to object to the processing of personal data.

Terms and conditions for the provision of electronic services in the framework of the NiCE project surveys - privacy policy

§ 1

(1) These Terms and Conditions (hereinafter referred to as 'Terms and Conditions') set out the rules for Users to use the services provided by the Service Provider via a survey questionnaire located on the Jotform platform (hereinafter referred to as 'Survey Questionnaire') using the functionalities provided by the Service Provider.

(2) In the following terms shall be understood as:

- a. "Survey Questionnaire" - the Service Provider's online questionnaire located on the jotform.com platform together with the functionalities made available through it, enabling the execution of surveys;
- b. "Service Provider" - the operator of the Survey Questionnaire, i.e. the Research and Innovation Centre Pro-Akademia with its registered office in Poland, in Konstantynów Łódzki, 95-050, at ul. Innowacyjna 9/11, registered in the Register of Associations of the National Court Register under the number KRS: 0000171789, NIP: 7281919068, REGON: 471342017; telephone: +48 42 636 12 26;
- c. "User" - an individual who has entered into an agreement with the Service Provider to use the functionalities found in the Survey Questionnaire;
- d. "Consumer" - a natural person who performs a legal transaction with the Service Provider that is not directly related to his/her economic or professional activity;
- e. "Project" - the project entitled "NiCE: From Niche to Centre - City Centres as Places of Circular Lifestyles" implemented by the Service Provider together with its partners on the basis of grant agreement no. CE0100312 concluded on 25/04/2023 with the Managing Authority of the European Union programme Interreg Central Europe;
- f. "Survey Participation" - information provided by the User by completing and submitting the Survey Questionnaire provided by the Service Provider as part of the Project.



§ 2

- 1 These Terms and Conditions are the regulations referred to in Article 8 of the Polish Act of 18 July 2002 on the provision of services by electronic means in force.
2. Provision of services by the Service Provider consists in enabling Users to use the Survey Questionnaire functionality in order to participate in the survey.

§ 3

- 1 In order to use the Survey Questionnaire correctly it is necessary to:
 - a. possess a computer, laptop or other multimedia device;
 - b. have access to the Internet;
 - c. use of standard software in the form of an operating system and a web browser.
 If the above requirements are not met, the use of the survey questionnaire may be difficult or impossible.

§ 4

- (1) The use of the Questionnaire and participation in the survey are free of charge.
- (2) The survey questionnaire may only be used by natural persons with full legal capacity, i.e. not incapacitated adults or persons who came of age through marriage.
- (3) Use of the Questionnaire and participation in the survey requires prior acceptance of the Terms and Conditions by the User.
- (4) Acceptance of the Terms and Conditions is voluntary, but necessary to participate in the survey.

§ 5

- (1) A person wishing to participate in the survey shall complete and send to the Service Provider the Survey Questionnaire provided by the Service Provider.
- (2) In the Survey Questionnaire the User is required to provide the following data marked with an asterisk:
 - a. Consent to participate in the survey and to process personal data
 - b. Information about the place of residence (without providing details, e.g. street, apartment number)
 - c. Information on consumer awareness and attitudes towards the circular economy.
 - d. Self-assessment of knowledge of sustainability principles and skills useful for the circular economy.
 - e. Information on purchasing decisions and use of different products in the household.
 - f. Assessment of the availability of services for purchasing, repairing and recycling products.
 - g. Information regarding interest in participating in the Project's pilot activities.
 - h. Basic sociodemographic information.
- (3) Failure to provide data marked with an asterisk will prevent participation in the survey.
- (4) Adding unlawful content to the Survey Questionnaire is prohibited.
- (5) In order to participate in the survey it is necessary to accept the Terms and Conditions and confirm that you have read the information clause on the processing of your personal data.

§ 6

Complaints regarding the functioning of the Questionnaire Survey may be submitted by e-mail to: proakademia@proakademia.eu or in writing to the Service Provider's address provided in the Terms and Conditions.

§ 7

In all matters related to the use of the Survey Questionnaire the User may contact the Service Provider:
 - by e-mail to: proakademia@proakademia.eu
 - by phone at: +48 42 636 12 26

§ 8

- (1) Matters not covered by these Terms and Conditions shall be governed by generally applicable law.
- (2) These Terms and Conditions may be amended by the Service Provider by means of a new version included in the questionnaire.
- (3) Users who are Consumers have the possibility to use out-of-court complaint and redress procedures. Contact details of institutions dealing with consumer advice and assistance in the European Union countries can be found at https://commission.europa.eu/live-work-travel-eu/consumer-rights-and-complaints/resolve-your-consumer-complaint/european-consumer-centres-network-ecc-net_en
- (4) These Terms and Conditions are effective as of 13.06.2024.

Q1.1: I have read the above information. I am aware that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my participation at any time. I consent to participate in the study

yes

no



If no: display message: "You cannot participate in this survey, sorry."
Q1.2: I consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. April 30, 2026
If no: display message: "You cannot participate in this survey, sorry."
Q1.3: What country do you live in?
Austria
Czech Republic
Germany
Hungary
Italy
Poland
Slovakia
Slovenia
Section 6: Pilot activities in NiCE
Conditional section: section asked only to participants of pilot activity
if respondent resides in Poland: In Poland, the NiCE project is launching a pilot of a new service facilitating a circular lifestyle in Brzeg Dolny. As part of this initiative, a circular multi-center is being established in Brzeg Dolny. This center features workshops, meetings (such as exchanges, swaps for plants and clothes), accompanying events, educational programs, and expert services including sewing, woodworking, and bicycle repair.
if respondent resides in Germany: In Germany, the NiCE project is launching a pilot of a new service facilitating a circular lifestyle in Wurzburg. As part of this initiative, a new carbon neutral delivery service is tested. The delivery service is for renting goods and for products which need repairs. This is intended to increase citizens' participation in sustainable consumer offers.
if respondent resides in Czech Republic: In Czech Republic, the NiCE project is launching a pilot of a new service facilitating a circular lifestyle in Jihlava. As part of this initiative, we are expanding the activities of existing multifunctional center, organizing new events and engaging more residents in a circular lifestyle.
if respondent resides in Hungary: In Hungary, the NiCE project is launching a pilot of a new service facilitating a circular lifestyle in Budapest. As part of this initiative, through a new course introduced for Masters students, we are enabling students of BME to use business innovation to promote CE transformations, and to become more sustainable in own lifestyles.
In Austria, the NiCE project is launching a „house of future“ facilitating a circular lifestyle in Graz. As part of this initiative, a circular multi-center shall be established, offering products and services, workshops, sharing offers, meetings (such as exchanges, swaps for plants and clothes), accompanying events, educational programs with a wide variety of partners in a vacant store in the city center. As a first, small version of the „house of future“ a small space close to the main square is used from June till September offering sustainable and circular products from local actors.
if respondent resides in Slovakia: In Slovakia, the NiCE project is launching a pilot of a new service facilitating a circular lifestyle in Košice. As part of this initiative, we are promoting sustainable consumption through a new reuse center in Echo pavilion in Kulturpark.
if respondent resides in Slovenia: In Slovenia, the NiCE project is launching a pilot of a new service facilitating a circular lifestyle in Ptuj. As part of this initiative, we're waking up the sleeping beauty: reviving the city center through a new pop-up store, offering circular products to residents and tourists.
if respondent resides in Italy: In Italy, the NiCE project is launching a pilot of a new service facilitating a circular lifestyle in Bologna. As part of this initiative, do-it-yourself water solutions are being tested in various contexts, to support sustainable water management.



Q6.0.1: Did you participate in any activity of this pilot (in person)?
Yes
No
Q6.0.2: Are you interested to participate in some activity of this pilot (in person)?
Yes
No
Q6.0.3: Do you have any children?
Yes
No
I would rather not say
Q6.0.4: Did your child participate in any activity of this pilot?
Yes
No
Q6.0.5: Would you like your child to participate in some activity of this pilot?
Yes
No
I don't know/ maybe
Section 6A: direct engagement of respondent
If Q6.0.1 = Yes
In this part of the survey, we will ask you questions about your engagement in the NiCE pilot activity.
Q6.A.1. Why did you participate in the pilot activity? (multiple answers possible)
It was recommended to me by the local authorities of my city
It was recommended to me by a family member / friend / acquaintance
It was obligatory
It was convenient
Out of curiosity
It was affordable
Other, namely
Q6.A.2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:
5-point Likert scale, where 1- strongly disagree, and 5 – strongly agree
1) I am satisfied that I participated in the pilot activity
2) It was convenient for me to participate in the pilot activity



- 3) Location of the pilot makes me visit city centre more often
- 4) I would recommend the engagement in the pilot activity to a friend or colleague
- 5) Thanks to my engagement in the pilot activity, I saved some time
- 6) Thanks to my engagement in the pilot activity, I saved some money
- 7) Thanks to my engagement in the pilot activity, I learned something new

Q6.A.3. What are the top 3 things you liked the most about this pilot activity? [Open-ended, not obligatory to answer]

Q6.A.4. What are the top 3 things that you would change or improve about this pilot activity? [Open-ended, not obligatory to answer]

Section 6B: indirect engagement of respondent (e.g., via child)

In this part of the survey, we will ask you questions about the engagement of your child in the NiCE pilot activity.

In case more than one child of yours participated in the NiCE pilot activity, please answer the questions below thinking about the child that participated as the last one.

Q6.B.1. Why did your child participate in the pilot activity? (multiple answers)

- It was recommended by the local authorities of my city
- It was recommended by a family member / friend / acquaintance
- It was obligatory
- It was convenient
- Out of curiosity
- It was affordable
- Other, namely:

Q6.B.2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

5-point Likert scale, where 1- strongly disagree, and 5 – strongly agree

- 1) I am satisfied that my child participated in the pilot activity
- 2) It was convenient for my child to participate in the pilot activity
- 3) Location of the pilot makes my child visit city centre more often
- 4) My child would recommend the engagement in the pilot activity to a friend or colleague
- 5) Thanks to engagement in the pilot activity, my child learned something new

Q6.B.3. What are the top 3 things that you and your child like the most? [Open-ended, not obligatory to answer]

Q6.A.4. What are the top 3 things that you would change or improve about this pilot activity? [Open-ended, not obligatory to answer]

Section 8: Socio-demographic information on the respondent

Q8.5 Education



primary
secondary
tertiary
no education
Q8.6 Place of residence:
If Q1.3= Austria: <input type="checkbox"/> Graz
If Q1.3= Czech Republic: <input type="checkbox"/> Jihlava
If Q1.3= Germany: <input type="checkbox"/> Würzburg
If Q1.3= Hungary: <input type="checkbox"/> Budapest
If Q1.3= Italy: <input type="checkbox"/> Bologna
If Q1.3= Poland: <input type="checkbox"/> Brzeg Dolny
If Q1.3= Slovakia: <input type="checkbox"/> Košice
If Q1.3= Slovenia: <input type="checkbox"/> Ptuj
Other: Big city (>100.000 inhabitants)
Other: City (10.001-100.000 inhabitants)
Other: Small city (<10.000 inhabitants)
Other: Rural area
Q8.7 Your age
If Q6.0.3 = YES:
Q8.8 Age of your child/ children
Q8.9 Gender of your child
girl
boy
non-binary
would prefer not to say
Q8.10 Self-assessed financial status
Very difficult financial situation: I have trouble covering basic expenses such as food and housing. I sometimes need to borrow money or rely on social assistance.
Difficult financial situation: I manage to cover basic expenses, but I can't afford larger purchases or savings. Sometimes I have to forgo certain needs.
Average financial situation: I can cover all basic expenses and sometimes afford additional purchases or savings. I can afford some pleasures, such as dining out or short vacations.
Good financial situation: I can easily cover all expenses, save regularly, and afford larger purchases. I can enjoy things such as frequent vacations or buying expensive items.
Very good financial situation: I have substantial savings and investments, and I can afford a luxurious lifestyle. I don't worry about my financial future and can support others financially.
would prefer not to say



Q8.11 Professional status
student
employed
retired / pensioner
unemployed
maternity / parental leave
would prefer not to say
other