

# CROSS-SECTORAL SUSTAINABILITY ARENA IN GDYNIA, POLAND



*The Gdynia Cross-sectoral Sustainability Arena focused on three topics to improve discussion and cooperation between local actors and the City:*

- 1) green urban spaces,*
- 2) improving waste management practices,*
- 3) and mapping existing sustainable initiatives in the city.*

*The process of three workshops was organised by the Gdynia City Hall in collaboration with the Baltic Institute for European and Regional Affairs (BISER).*

## WHO WAS INVOLVED?

About 50 local actors participated in the Gdynia Transition Arena, including city councillors, City Hall employees, individuals, NGOs, youth representatives and business owners.

## IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

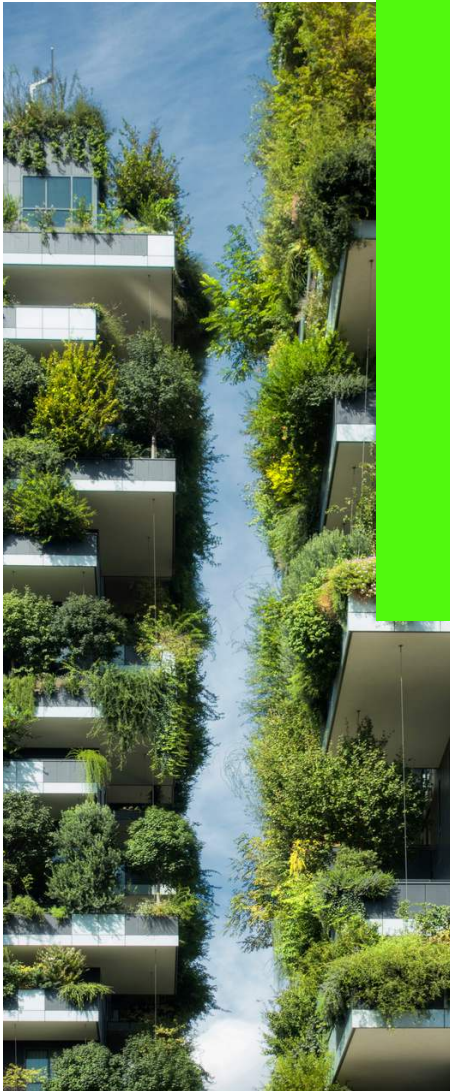
Gdynia Arena focused on the following challenges that were identified with the local actors:

- 1.City greenery – Poorly connected parks, limited accessibility, and low public awareness of their potential for community use.
- 2.Inefficient waste segregation – Lack of a unified system for waste segregation, weak enforcement, and excessive reliance on single-use utensils.
- 3.More visibility for sustainability services – Need for a central database for locating sustainable businesses, repair hubs or public water stations in the City.

In addition, systemic barriers such as unclear regulations, decision-makers' limited awareness of sustainability issues, and weak collaboration between stakeholders were discussed.

## ABOUT THE PROCESS

The process was planned and executed through a series of structured workshops. The preparatory phase included online and in-person meetings where the Transition Team, consisting of NGO and City representatives, defined the focus areas and invited around 100 participants from various sectors. The first workshop divided participants into three teams (greenery, zero waste, and mapping sustainable initiatives), and facilitated initial visioning exercises. The second workshop refined these ideas through pathways and backcasting exercises in smaller subgroups. In the third workshop, participants developed pilot projects, presented them, and conducted an anonymous vote to select one initiative for immediate implementation in the city.





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## RESULTS

The key outcome of the Gdynia Transition Arena is a pilot project aimed at reducing single-use items by establishing a shared dishware depot for public events. This initiative will encourage citizens to donate reusable plates and utensils, which will then be made available for rental to event organizers, food vendors, and community groups. Key considerations include logistics such as storage, marking the items, and coordinating the collection and cleaning process afterward.

Furthermore, a report compiling all the ideas developed during the arena was submitted to the City Council, providing a broader roadmap for future sustainability initiatives.

The Transition Arena process proved valuable as it strengthened local networks, encouraged collaboration, and created a space for meaningful discussions that may not have happened otherwise. Participants expressed a sense of inclusion in decision-making, and the pilot project will now serve as a practical test of the city's commitment to sustainability, revealing potential challenges and areas for improvement.

***"There were disagreements, lots of them, but that what the project is for: to challenge your expectations."***

***"Despite coming from different sectors, different city cells or NGOs or being local social actors, we have common goals, ideas."***

## CONTACT

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