











## We Make Transition!

 Use of Transition Arena method to empower cooperation between local authorities, civil society and business actors for a sustainable future

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# Societal transitions & Transition Arena

**Societal transitions** are complex, long-term processes of change happening at different levels of society.

The 'Transition Arena' is a participatory workshop method to engage people in a collective process of understanding, learning, visioning, and experimenting around specific societal transition challenges.

Transition Arena helps to reflect critically on a current societal system and to problematise unsustainable structures, cultures, and practices.

**Transition Arena** helps to identify transformative actions and realise new projects, collaborations, and experiments.

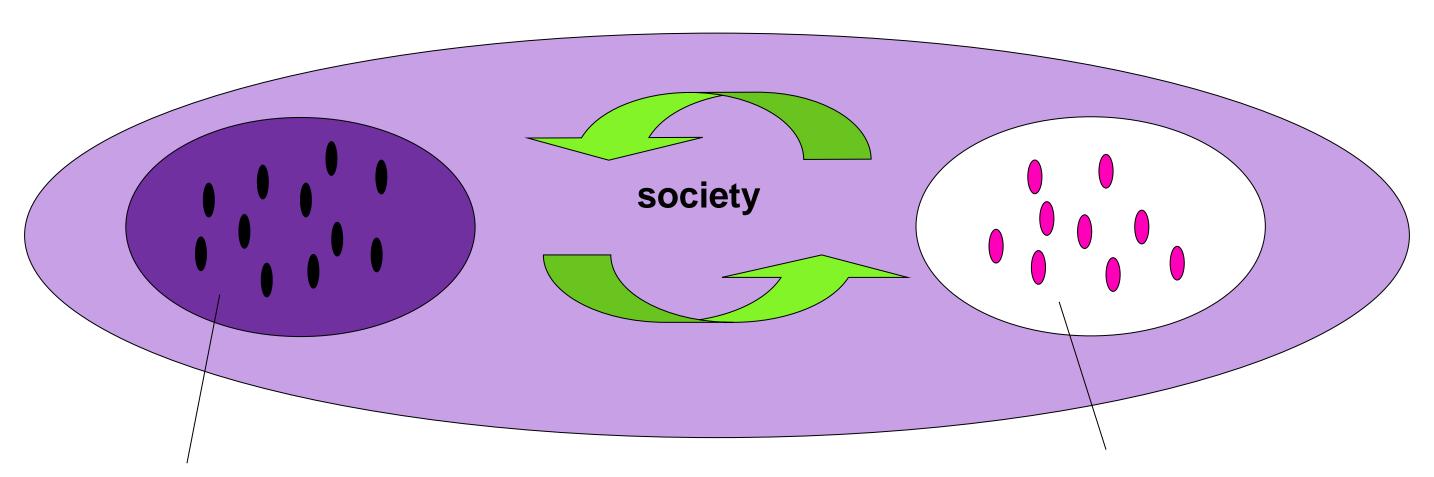


Derk Loorbach, Dutch Research Institute for Transitions (DRIFT)

# **Transition arenas:**

# space for experimental governance





#### Regular policy arena/business as usual

- short term
- incremental improvement
- problem solving

#### Transition Arena/systemic approach

- long term
- transition -systemic approach
- problem defining
- co-creating transformative solutions

Source: Derk Loorbach, Dutch Research Institute for Transitions

## **Transition Management Process**



Step 1: system and actor analysis & selection of participants

Step 2: formulating a transition challenge

Step 3: envisioning jointly a desirable future

Step 4: generation of transition paths towards the vision

Step 5: proposing & setting-up transition actions & experiments

Step 6: follow-up, monitoring & evaluation

#### Pay attention to:

- What is the purpose?
- What is the context?
- Selection of participants
- Politically neutral
- Cross-sectoral
- ngage different levels
- Avoid strengthening "bubbles" and polarisation
- Think jointly how to communicate results to the mainstream









# We make transition! background

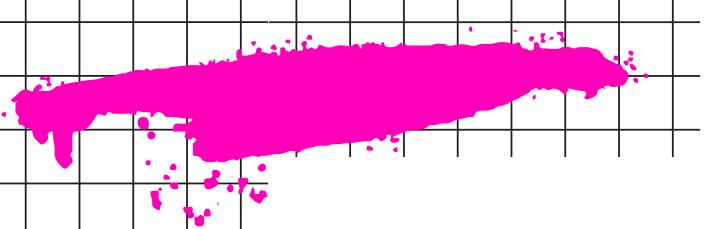
\*\*\* Ecological and social sustainability challenges are complex

\*\*\* Tendency to engage only "experts" to solve problems

\*\*\* Lack of systemic understanding

\*\*\* Polarisation in society







# We make transition! challenge

\*\*\* How to empower and enhance cooperation between local authorities, civil society and small business actors to foster ecological and social sustainability?

Adapt 'transition arena' participatory method with focus on involving local actors to co-create new public-people cooperation towards a sustainable future

Improve awareness of the expertise of grassroot actors in sustainability transition













#### 11 PARTNERS FROM 6 COUNTRIES

Germany

Norway

#### **Finland**

- The Baltic Institute of Finland
- Council of Tampere Region
- Regional Council of Helsinki-Uusimaa
- Regional Council of Southwest Finland

#### **Estonia**

DD Foundation

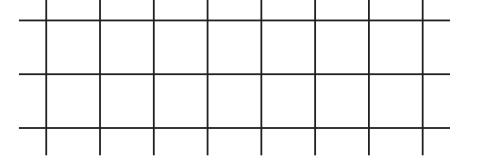
#### Latvia

- Social Innovation Centre
- Vidzeme Planning Region

#### **Poland**

- Baltic Institute for Regional Affairs BISER
- City of Gdynia







Local transition arenas were implemented in 12 locations focusing on sustainable food, circular economy, sustainable lifestyle, biodiversity

#### **FINLAND**

1. **Tampere**: Sustainable life (people and nature)

2. Hämeenkyrö: Sustainable agriculture

3. Helsinki-Uusimaa: Circular economy

4. **Uusikaupunki**: Biodiversity

5. Kemiönsaari: Youth involvement

#### **NORWAY**

6. Namsos: Circular economy

7. **Trondheim:** Sustainable food system

#### **GERMANY**

8. Bremen: Organic food transition in schools

#### **ESTONIA**

9. Tartu County: Circular economy

10. Lääne-Harju: Sustainability in

education

#### **LATVIA**

11. Cēsis: Organic food and Bioregion

#### **POLAND**

12. **Gdynia**: Cross-sectoral sustainability













## WE MAKE TRANSITION! PROCESS

System and actor analysis:
Local focus
group
discussions



Defining topic and identification of systemic challenges

Local
transition
arena
workshops in
12 cities and
municipalities



Initiating
local actions:
pilots & new
initiatives









### **HOW DID WE APPLY THE TRANSITION ARENA METHOD?**













STEP 1

STEP 2

STEP 3

STEP 4

STEP 5

STEP 6

**Identify topics** 

Choose sustainability topics relevant for local actors and the city, Focus group discussions

Invite local authorities, decision-makers local actors to identify challenges and collaboration needs.

Avoid complex language

Avoid complex, political and abstract terms so that all can participate.

Invite stakeholders

Variety of stakeholders:
1) already active,
2) willing to influence,

**3**) have ability to influence

Frame topic and organise workshops

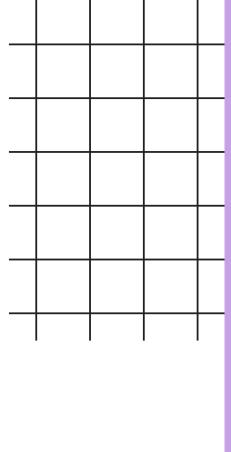
1) Vision

- 2) Pathways
- 3) Identify next steps
- 4) agree on concrete actions

Ensure follow-up

Organise follow-up meetings, support implementation









Listen people from different sectors and levels Co-create a shared sustainabilityVision



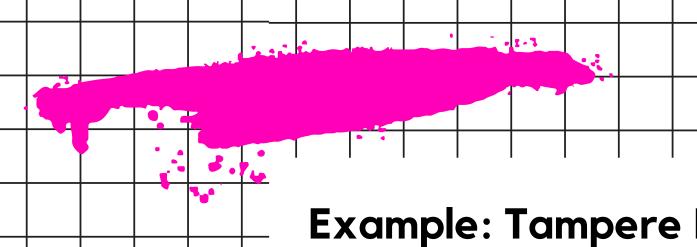


Identify immediate actions Support implementationof actions

Organise followup







#### WE MAKE TELESTEDITE

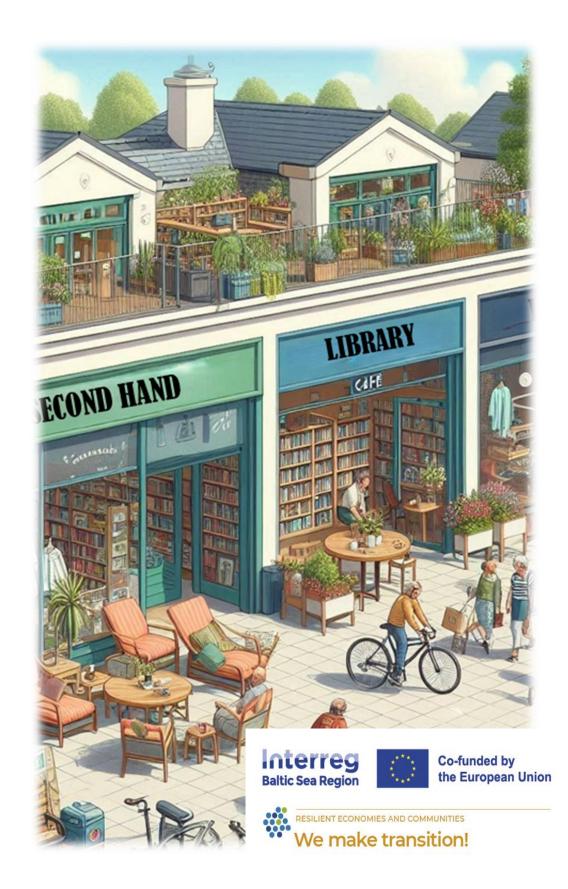
## Example: Tampere Future Arena of Sustainable Life

#### Participants:

City representatives from several departments, Youth Council, local politicians, individuals, students, cooperatives, associations, communities, small business actors

### Workshops:

- 1. Visioning workshop incl. case presentations and panel discussion
- 2. Pathway workshop
- 3. Solution/action plan workshop
- 4. Result event & follow-up meetings







#### Tampere Future Arena of Sustainable Life





#### Subtopics to enhance cooperation:

- 1) Use of urban spaces
- 2) Biodiversity
- 3) Secondhand and repair business
- 4) Civic participation in urban planning

#### Results & impact:

- "Culture Center of Sustainable Life" was piloted in 2025 +political discussion
- Nature Ambassador Network
- Visibility for secondhand business
- Recommendations to improve participation in urban planning



# Future triangle was used in groupwork to co-create a joint vision

#### Current push

Trends, ongoing changes in the society. drifts for change

Sustainable Life in Tampere 2035

#### Future pull

Future plans, strategies, hopes and dreams

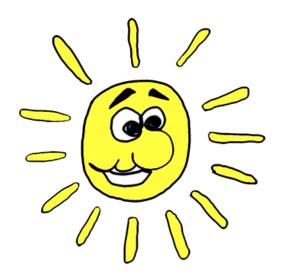


# Each group chose their specific topics:

- 1. Biodiversity
- 2. Circular economy
- 3. Sustainable business
- 4. Community building
- 5. Youth and education
- 6. Participation

### Weight of the past

Structures, systemic challenges, strong beliefs, attitudes, barriers of change.



## TAMPERE VISION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFE 2035

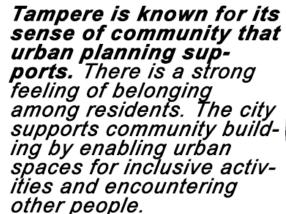
In 2035, Tampere is a sustainable city with strong community spirit that enhances citizen wellbeing.

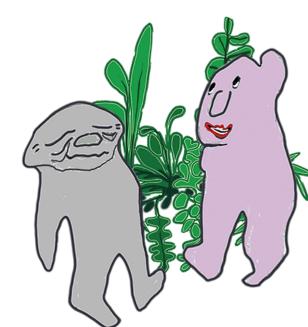
Pluralism of society and multilayeredness of culture are highly appreciated values.

Tampere is a center of sustainable business and civic action, where things get done together.



#### **COMMUNITY BUILDER**





# C.

TAMPERE CHERISES ITS LOCAL ASSETS

Traditions, local culture and local food are valued in Tampere. The multilayeredness of local culture is highly appreciated.









#### RESIDENTS ARE DOING WELL

Nature and inclusion are acknowledged as building blocks of mental health.
The voice and perceived well-being of residents have a significant influence in decision making. The voice of children and youth is heard. Tampere has ability to listen to different views



## THE LIMITS OF ONE PLANET ARE SUFFICIENT FOR TAMPERE

The impact of preserved nature and social wellbeing for economy is noted in decision making. Reasonable living is considered meaningful. Tampere is a forerunner of sustainable business and service innovations, and circular and repairing culture. This is an essential part of the Tampere image.







Human is seen as a part of nature and nature is seen as an integral part of urban environment. Urban planning is done on nature's terms. Meadows, wastelands, trees, and urban forests are valued as part of citizen wellbeing. Teachers are encouraged to teach children outdoors and enhance connection with nature.



















# Example: Organic food and Bioregion development in Vidzeme region, Latvia







#### **Challenges identified:**

- Lack of food skills
- Lack of knowledge about organic local food
- How to get more organic food to school catering?

**Participants:** Entrepreneurs, farmers, schools, politicians, municipalities, research institutions, municipalities, associations, civil society actors, parents

#### **Results & impact:**

- Enable organic food in public procurement
- Organic food recipe competition in schools
- School children's visits to organic farms and organic restaurant
- Integration of arena results into Vidzeme sustainable food strategy 2025-2035
- Annual Bioregion Forum



# Manual on practical use of transition arena process to engage local actors

- 1) Description of the WMT process
- 2) Stories of 12 local transition arenas
- 3) Key learnings and conclusions
- → Tips and examples for local authorities and other interested actors

#### More information:

https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/we-make-transition/













Practical use of the Transition Arena method to enhance cooperation between local authorities, civil society and business actors towards sustainability

- A manual for local authorities and other interested actors





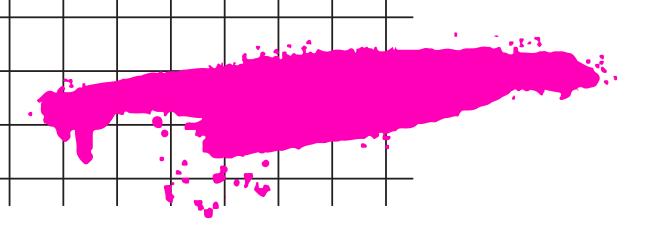












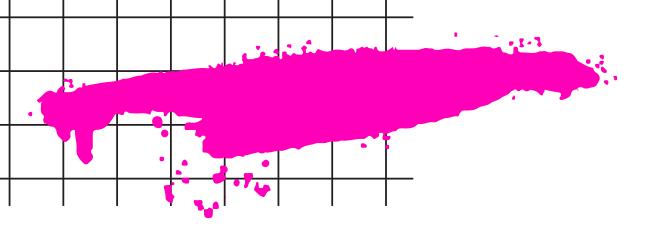
# Importance of a shared vision



- Joint envisioning helps to discuss beyond current structures and understand systemic challenges
- Co-created sustainability vision strengthened the bottom-up approach
- Listening to different views improved mutual understanding and enabled agree a common ground
- Motivated engagement and fostered a sense of ownership among stakeholders







# **Empowering concrete actions**



- From vision to pathways and identifying next steps and new cooperation
- Follow-up meetings
- Support for implementing actions





# Key learnings

- Avoid complexity and abstract terms
- Ensure political neutrality
- Strong involvement and commitment of local authorities important
- No pre-defined strategies or visions, looking beyond current structures
- No pre-defined results -> trust the process
- Support implementation of results and welcome also new people on board!







# Evaluation: Before and after questionnaires for participants

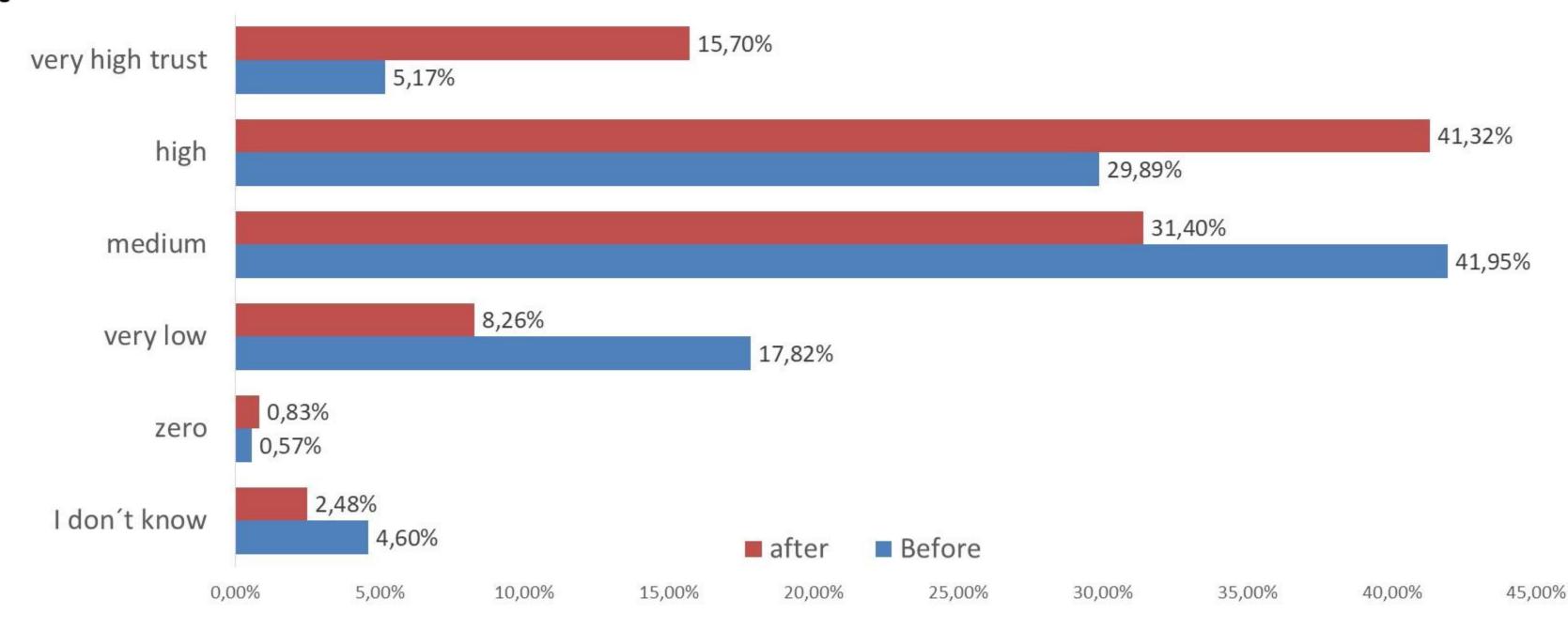
### Current

## Level of

Please rate the current level of trust between the local administration and the civil society in your city/region (DURING/AFTER LTA)



### **Trust**



# Read more about We make transtion! at project website



News & events



# **News**



News

05 May 2025

# Another inspiring WMT! project meeting was organised in Valmiera, Latvia

The meeting including study visits was organised on 23-24 April 2025



News

17 April 2025

### Nature in my Neighbourhood – a Transition Arena in Uusikaupunki, Finland

Uusikaupunki transition arena focused on biodiversity promotion.





News

26 February 2025

# Gdynia Transition Arena focused on key sustainability challenges identified with the local actors

The Gdynia Cross-sectoral Sustainability Arena had three topics to improve discussion and ...





# **THANK YOU!**







