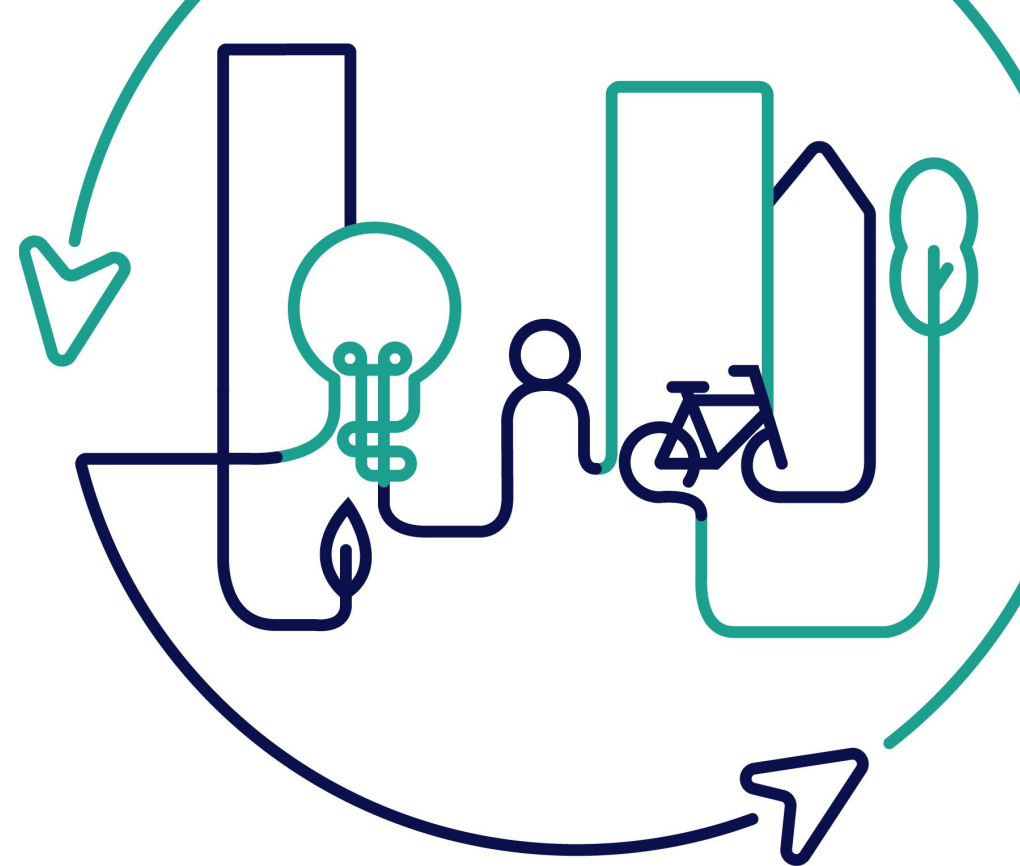


EUROPEAN U R B A N INITIATIVE

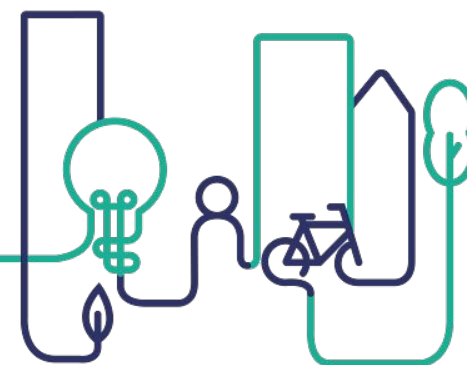


Co-funded by
the European Union

MAG-NET. Changes and influences beyond the project

Celje, Zasavje region, Slovenia

Welcome!



Co-funded by
the European Union



"Behind me vanished the rust-brown roof tiles with their light crust of salt that beautify every roof, the bare Karst, the sombre cypresses, the umbrella pines - and with them vanished the last little piece of home.,,"

Alma Karlin, Celje born global traveler , mystic and a writer



Session Plan

14:00

Introduction

14:05

**Presentation by Monika Tominšek,
Anja Šerc**

14:25

Group work

15:10

Wrap-up & Close



Session Aims

1

To open the fundamental questions MAG-NET will face after 2028 and to gather participants' insights and recommendations on transforming it from a time-limited project into a durable development model for the city of Celje and into good practice with a regional dimension for Zasavje and beyond.

2

Through reflective, peer-to-peer exchange, we will seek credible directions for what should survive, be integrated or reinvented, and explore how to attract national interest in a shared policy response to depopulation.



About the method

The Balint method is a specialized, peer-led reflective practice where professionals, originally physicians, but now widely used in coaching and counseling, explore the emotional dynamics of their most challenging cases. Instead of offering traditional advice, the group uses empathetic speculation to help the presenter uncover unconscious blind spots, reduce stress, and prevent burnout.

While used originally in interpersonal problems, the method is well suited for exploring policy and political related issues that connect closely with interpersonal and interorganizational cooperation and dynamics. In short, it emphasizes not the implementation of the results from its content perspective, but rather the management and human side of the implementation



Have you managed a project that was really outside the box for your city's agenda?



Have you drafted a policy based on an innovative pilot project in your city?



Hands up if, as your project was ending, you asked yourself what would need to change permanently for it to matter.



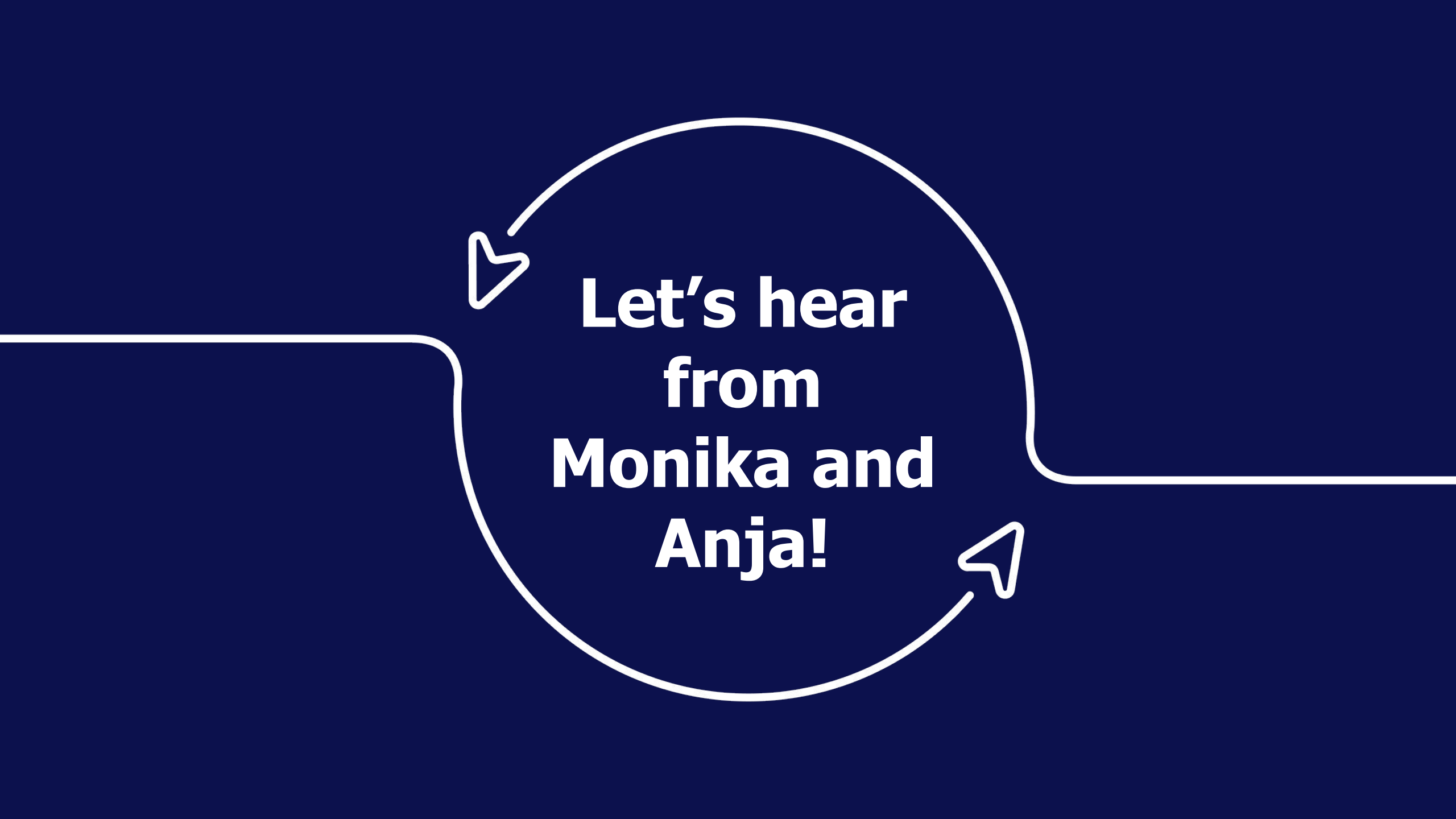
Project management has a difficult position in my city. Things are run by departments and by policies or politicians, not by projects.



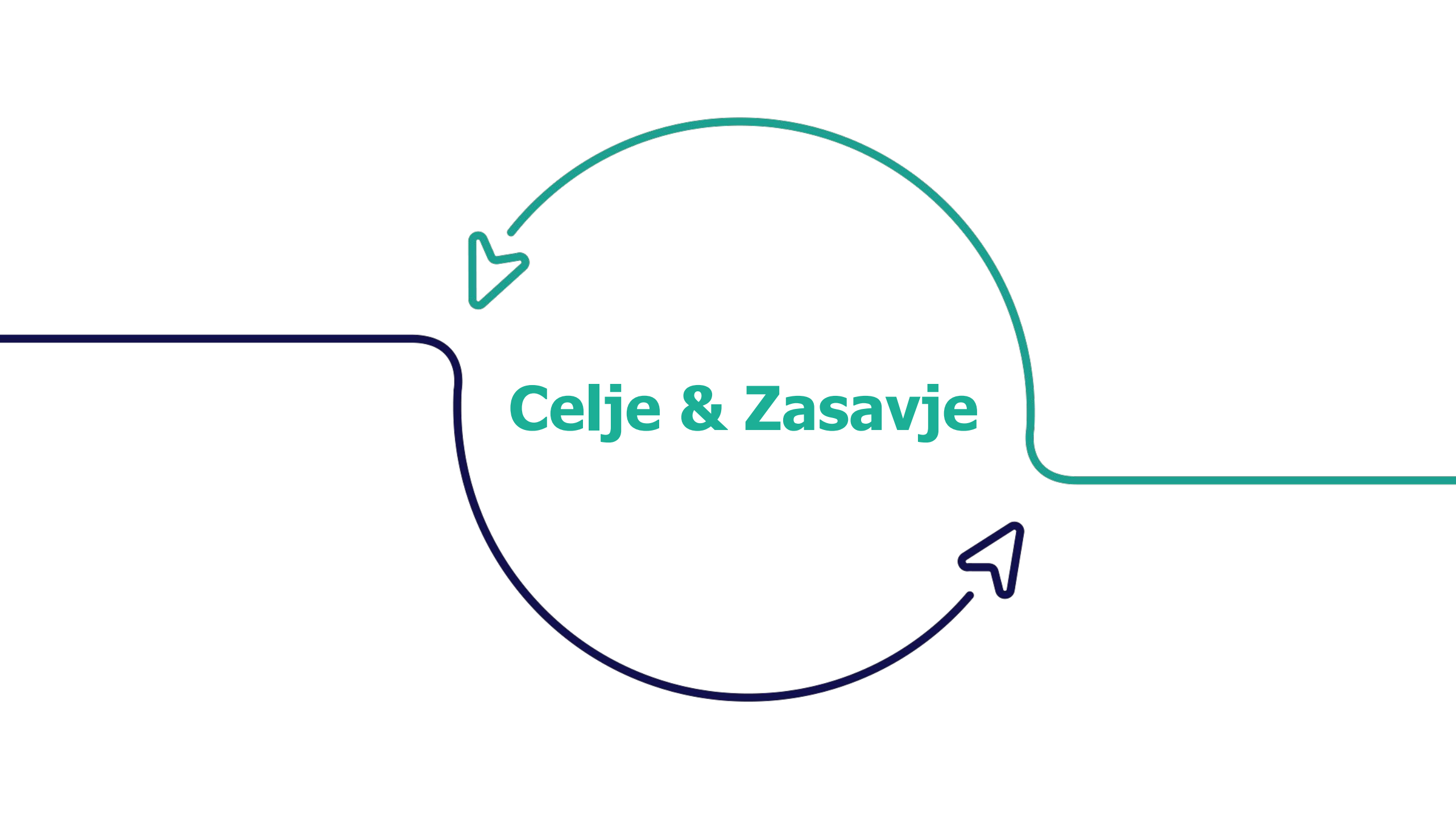
Have you seen a pilot successfully transferred into a permanent improvement, something that outlived the project?



Have you seen the opposite: a pilot that did not prove itself, and quietly disappeared?



**Let's hear
from
Monika and
Anja!**



Celje & Zasavje

1 WHY WE PRESENT TOGETHER

One question, two scales: a city and a region.

CELJE - a city asking what should survive when the project ends in 2028.

ZASAVJE - a former brown-coal region actively working on regional development narrative beyond 2027 incorporating lessons learned from Just transition mechanism.

FEW FACTS - JUST TRANSITION REGION ZASAVJE

- €92 million of secured public investment in the region 2021–2027 (Just transition fund and Agreement for the development of regions 2021-2027);
- a regional development programme now being written for 2028-2034;
- lowest GDP per capita in Slovenia and the highest rate of daily out-commuting, alongside above-average satisfaction with quality of life;
- already connected: Territories in ACTION, New European Bauhaus, shared working groups.

So the question we bring you is deliberately double:
what is worth carrying forward — and at which level does each piece belong, city or region?



NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS IN REGIONS AND CITIES



2 WHY MAG-NET?

Beyond demographics: a question of attractiveness.

Young and skilled people leave for education and work, the population is ageing, as in many medium-sized European cities.

But shrinkage is **not only a demographic issue.**

It is also a question of **attractiveness:**

→ **do people have enough reasons to stay, return or choose Celje?**

The question behind MAG-NET is simple:

“What makes a medium-sized city a place where people want to build their future?”



3 SO, WHAT IS MAG-NET?

FIVE CHALLENGES - ONE DEVELOPMENT QUESTION.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

More accessible and diverse ways of living.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

Alternatives to car dependency.

INDUSTRY 4.0

Talent, innovation and higher-value work.

ENERGY COMMUNITIES

Local participation in the energy transition.

URBAN VIBE

A more attractive and connected city.

Different themes, one ambition: a city people choose to live, work, create and stay in.

EUI Innovative Actions 2nd Call · 2024-2028 · City of Celje & Town of Prebold + 8 partners

5 Real-Life Learning Labs · 5 MAG-NETic Teams · Hub + Mini-Hub · Digital Platform

4 THE REAL EXPERIMENT IS NOT THE 5 CHALLENGES

It is how we work across them.

Five complex themes can easily become five new silos. → **We are trying to do the opposite.**

THE EXPERIMENT IS HOW WE WORK ACROSS THEM.

CONNECT existing people, projects and knowledge

UNDERSTAND challenges before jumping to solutions

CO-DESIGN with those who are affected

TEST ideas in real conditions with small pilots

CONNECT AGAIN with policies, investments and other initiatives

MAG-NET is therefore also an experiment in how our city works.

5 WHAT THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE

Two examples, one connecting role.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Celje has **2,000+ vacant apartments**, despite strong demand.

We linked the housing challenge to research by the Urban Planning Institute on why they the vacant apartments stay off the market.

The findings feed the Housing Programme 2025–2032.

Next: shaping the model to activate vacant apartments.

research + housing policy + existing housing stock

→ a new intervention



Living
in Celje?

Anonymous survey
on vacant homes in Celje

5 WHAT THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE

Two examples, one connecting role.

ENERGY COMMUNITIES

The **Celje Energy Alliance** brings companies, utilities and institutions to one table.

It has identified opportunities in storage, surplus electricity, waste heat and direct producer–user links.

Next: energy mapping and joint projects

actors + assets + data → shared projects

The point is not to place everything under MAG-NET.

→ The point is to connect what already exists so that something new becomes possible.



**BUILDING THE CITY
ENERGY ALLIANCE**
THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

6 OWNERSHIP IS STARTING TO SPREAD

The project team is no longer the only one pushing.

AT THE BEGINNING

we invited · we explained · we connected · we kept things moving

NOW

colleagues bring their own ideas

partners connect their projects to MAG-NET

new actors approach us with opportunities

people talk about and promote MAG-NET without being asked

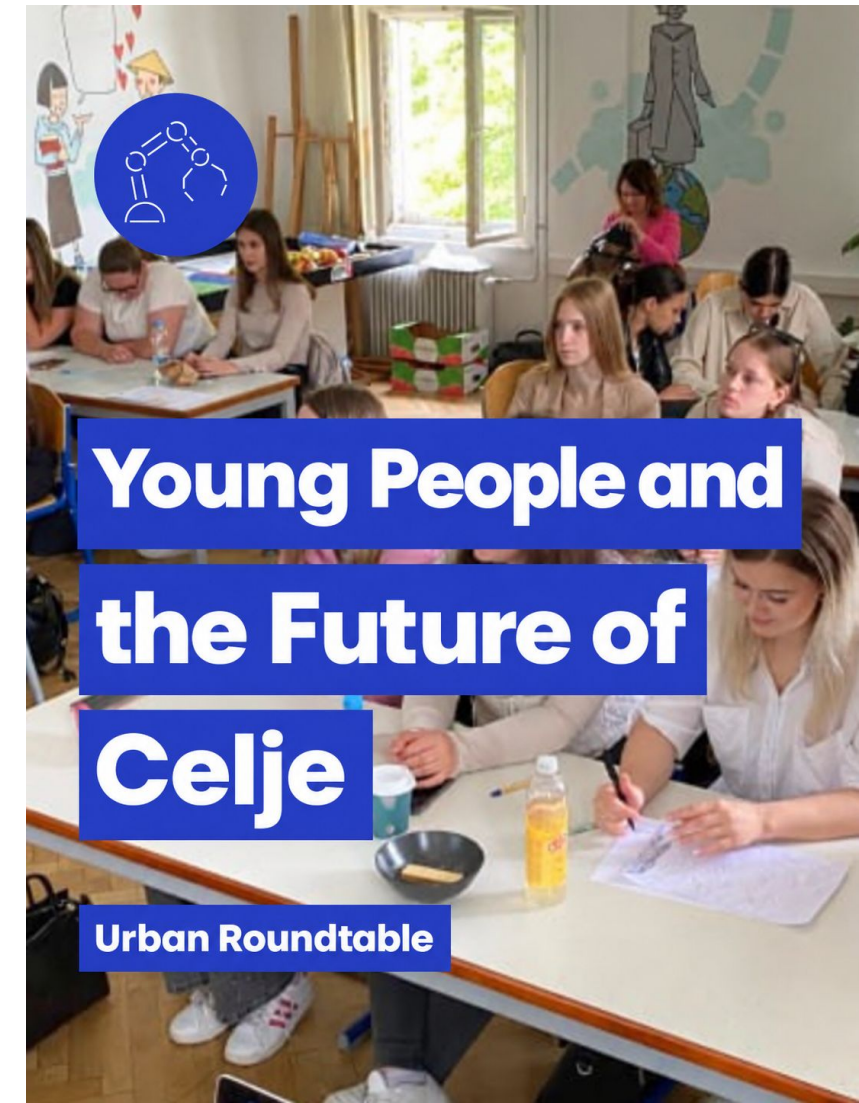
60+ people active in 5 MAG-NETic teams

5,000+ people reached in 20 months

10+ new partnerships or pilot concepts

More people see MAG-NET as something they can contribute to

– not only something the project team has to deliver.



**Young People and
the Future of
Celje**

Urban Roundtable

7 BUT A LOT OF THIS STILL DEPENDS ON THE PROJECT

This is where the uncertainty begins.

For now, MAG-NET provides

→

MANDATE

a reason and framework to bring people together

PEOPLE AND TIME

a core team that keeps the process moving

COORDINATION

someone connecting different fields, projects and actors

FUNDING

resources for research, participation, testing and implementation

STRUCTURE

deadlines, responsibilities and a shared programme until 2028

What happens when this framework disappears?

Which parts would continue on their own → **and which would simply stop?**

8 PROJECT OUTPUTS ≠ DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

MAG-NET is producing both.

THE PROJECT DELIVERS

- pilots and services
- policy proposals
- Hub + Mini-Hub + digital platform
- research and project outputs

→ **Project outputs have an end date.**

BUT WE ARE ALSO BUILDING

- gathering the right people around each of the challenges
- connecting projects and strategies
- local decisions based on research
- space to test concepts before committing to projects
- connections that become new projects

→ **Development capacity may have value far beyond the project!**

Which of these capacities will Celje need after 2028?

9 SO, WHAT HAPPENS AFTER 2028?

This is where the project question becomes a governance question.

We know what MAG-NET has to deliver until 2028.

We DO NOT KNOW what should happen to the capacity built around it.

Which functions have real value beyond the project?

Who needs them – and who benefits from them?

Who has the mandate to carry them forward?

What still depends too much on a few people?

What belongs inside the municipality – **what might work better in another form?**

We do not want to preserve MAG-NET just because it exists.

→ **We want to understand what is worth carrying forward.**

10 THERE IS NO SINGLE MODEL

Others have taken very different paths.

MIB - METROPOLITAN INSTITUTE OF BRATISLAVA

City-owned professional capacity: a permanent city organisation with expertise in urban planning, architecture, participation and strategic development.

FUTURE BY LUND

Multi-partner innovation ecosystem: a platform connecting the municipality, university, business and other actors around shared innovation challenges.

CREATIVE INDUSTRY KOŠICE

Independent development organisation: an organisation that evolved beyond the original European Capital of Culture project and continued building networks, programmes, knowledge and development capacity together with the city of Košice.

Three different directions = references, not ready-made models for Celje.



11 FIRST THE FUNCTIONS, THEN THE FORM

When we say that MAG-NET could become “something more”, what do we mean?

DO WE NEED:

a new organisation?

or simply better coordination?

a permanent team?

or a flexible network around specific challenges?

a physical hub?

or a function that connects people and projects
wherever they are?

a new funding structure?

or better use of existing programmes and partnerships?

a formal institution?

or a shared way of working that becomes normal practice?

The form should follow the functions – not the other way around.

→ *The Focused Policy Lab workshop can help us understand which functions are worth keeping before we decide how they should be organised.*

12 OVER TO YOU

Help us see what we cannot see from inside the project.

First, help us understand the problem:

OWNERSHIP & INTEREST

Where is ownership still unclear?

BLIND SPOTS

What are we missing from the inside?

CAPACITY & DEPENDENCY

What is too fragile to survive 2028?

TRANSFERABILITY

What can we gain from interregional cooperation?

Then help us think about what comes next:

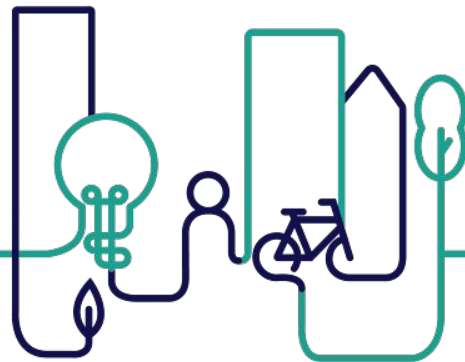
SURVIVE · TRANSFORM · CARRY FORWARD · TRANSFER

We want better questions, not one perfect model for Celje.



**MONTHLY PARTNERS' MEETING
OF THE MAG-NET COMMUNITY**

Thank you





**What's next
for you?**

15:15

Coffee Break

15:30

Family picture (in front of the City Hall)

15:35

Site visits

18:00

**City Matchmaking Cocktail &
Poster expo at the venue**

Thank you

