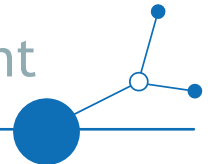


Brand4Talents Governance Strategy Paper (D1.2.3)

How Lagging Areas Can Attract and Keep Talent



Version 1

July 2026





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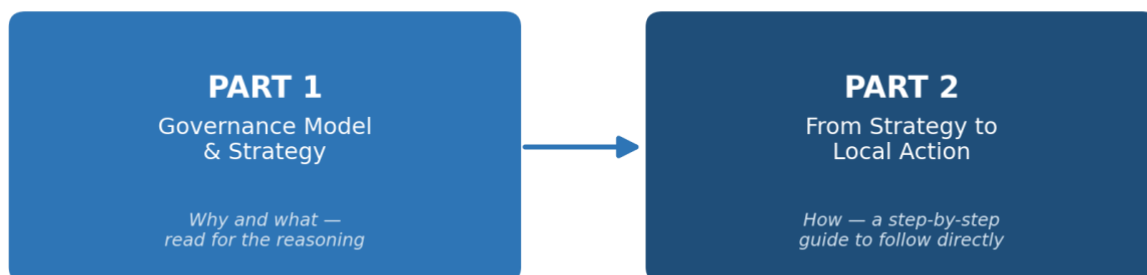


How to Use This Document

This document is, at its core, a governance strategy. But it is written to serve several purposes at once: it provides context and reasoning (why this approach, and why now), it documents a co-creation methodology (how the underlying tools and sessions were designed), and it functions as a playbook cities and regions can follow directly. Because of this, it does not always follow the layout of a conventional strategy document from cover to cover. All the elements you would expect to find in a strategy – vision, diagnosis, objectives, actions, and how success is measured – are genuinely present but interwoven with the material that serves these other purposes. The Strategy at a Glance page, immediately following this section, shows exactly where each strategic element sits.

This strategy paper is organized in two parts that work hand-in-hand: **Part 1** gives the context and foundations; **Part 2** gives the playbook. We strongly advise reading **Part 1** first and then moving to **Part 2** – though each part is also designed to work on its own if that is what you need.

Part 1 – Governance Model & Strategy sets out the why and the what: the challenge Brand4Talents responds to, the strategy to address the challenge, the governance principles, the multi-sectoral model, and how success is measured. It is the foundation everything else in this document stands on.



Part 2 – From Strategy to Local Action is the how: a step-by-step guide that takes a city from forming a working group to a strong first draft of its Local Brand Book and Local Action Plan. It is written to be followed directly – as a facilitator's guide, a workshop script, and a planning tool in one – and it draws on Part 1's reasoning throughout, pointing back to the relevant section whenever a step's logic matters.

If you are a Brand4Talents partner city, we recommend to thoroughly read Part 1 for shared vocabulary and principles, then working through Part 2 with your local team.

If you are a city or region outside the Brand4Talents partnership facing similar challenges, Part 2 is designed to be usable even on its own, adapted to your context. However, Part 1 still provides the reasoning and evidence base behind the method, so it is strongly recommended to review it.

Annexes contain the detailed materials – facilitator scripts, canvases, templates and timing – everything you need for every tool referenced in Part 2. Each tool has its own annex, so you can print or share a single tool's materials without carrying the whole document into a workshop room.



Foreword

This document is the result of a collaborative effort. It was not written by one institution – it was shaped by a partnership of organisations from Hungary, Slovenia, Poland and Germany who share a common conviction: that smaller cities and lagging areas do not have to accept brain drain as their destiny.

Brand4Talents brings together knowledge providers and territorial partners from across Central Europe to co-develop a governance approach that is practical, honest about constraints, and built on real evidence from places that have successfully attracted and retained talent.

This strategy paper began as a preliminary draft and has since been shaped by the partnership itself: a structured co-creation sprint brought partner cities together to challenge, translate and add to the principles and framework presented here. What you are reading reflects that input – real examples from Derecske, Bielsko-Biała, Greifswald, Opole and Ptuj - sit alongside the original framework, and the governance principles have been refined based on what partners actually said about their own contexts.

It is also important to highlight that the current version of the strategy is not set in stone and is expected to evolve further, building on the lessons and insights from the implementation of Brand4Talents project. In the coming months, partners will use the governance methodology and specific tools presented in Part 2 of this document to co-create (together with their stakeholders) their local action plans. They will also experiment with implementing pilot actions as part of Brand4Talents. Experience from local action plan design and pilot implementation will be collected and processed to then further enhance the governance strategy and model.

What this document is:

- A strategic framework for how lagging areas can govern their talent attraction and place branding efforts
- A practical, step-by-step guide that takes partners from strategy to a working draft of their own Local Brand Book and Local Action Plan
- A resource designed to be usable – with adaptation – by other cities and regions facing similar challenges, beyond the Brand4Talents partnership itself

What this document is not:

- A prescriptive blueprint that all cities must follow identically
- A marketing guide or communications toolkit on its own – branding here is inseparable from governance and genuine local improvement
- A finished product – it will continue to develop as partners implement, pilot and learn

Scientific Research Centre
Bistra Ptuj

Signature: _____

Date: _____

First Hungarian Responsible
Innovation Association

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Network for Regional
Development Foundation

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Strategy at a Glance

The table below walks through Part 1 chapter by chapter, showing how each one contributes to this strategy – even where a chapter also serves the document's other purposes (context, methodology, playbook).

CHAPTER	ROLE IN THE STRATEGY
1. The Challenge	Diagnosis – why lagging areas lose talent, and the evidence that change is possible
2. Vision and Strategic Objectives	Vision and Strategic Objectives
3. The Brand4Talents Approach	Conceptual grounding for the strategy
4. Governance Principles	The key principles behind the strategy
5. Excellence Directory	Diagnosis – the evidence base, drawn from places that have faced similar challenges
6. Talent Journey Framework	The organizing framework local actions need to be structured around, with illustrative actions at each phase
7. Governance Model	Framework for planning and implementation - how decisions get made and implemented
8. Measuring Success	Monitoring and indicators



PART 1

GOVERNANCE MODEL AND STRATEGY



1. The Challenge: Why Lagging Areas Lose Talent – and Why It Does Not Have to Stay That Way

This section frames the problem that Brand4Talents was designed to address – and, critically, the opportunity that sits within it.

1.1. The Brain Drain Spiral

Across Central Europe, **a self-reinforcing cycle is quietly weakening smaller cities and lagging areas. Young educated people leave** – to study in larger cities, to find better career opportunities, or simply because they perceive their home region as a place without a future. **Their departure makes the local economy less dynamic**, which makes it harder for employers to create quality jobs, which makes the area less attractive, which **drives even more people to leave**.

The numbers are stark. Research consistently shows that lagging **areas in the Central Europe region lose their highly educated young people at disproportionate rates** – and that most do not return. The economic consequences compound over time: labour shortages reduce productivity and competitiveness; reduced tax revenues limit investment in the very services and infrastructure that could make a place more attractive; and the social fabric thins.

It is already turning, in places: Brand4Talents partner cities are not starting from theory. Bielsko-Biala reports that roughly 70% of young people who leave to study elsewhere return to live and work in the city. Krapkowice has seen its population decline halt. Greifswald has seen industrial companies actively choosing to set up operations in the region. None of this happened by accident – it happened through sustained, coordinated effort, which is exactly what this strategy sets out to structure.

1.2. What Makes Lagging Areas Structurally Different

Lagging areas do not compete for talent on a level playing field with capitals and large metropolitan regions. Their structural disadvantages are real - however, they also offer currently underexplored advantages.

STRUCTURAL DISADVANTAGES	UNDEREXPLORED ADVANTAGES
Lower visibility and name recognition	Authentic, uncrowded identity – easier to own
Thinner stakeholder ecosystems	Strong community and social cohesion
Smaller budgets for attraction and branding	Lower cost of living and housing
Fewer international connections	Quality of life: nature, pace, space
Weaker perceived career opportunities	Remote work shift: location matters less than lifestyle

1.3. The Core Argument

Lagging areas cannot – and should not try to – **compete with capitals by mimicking what capitals do**. A small city in Central Europe will not beat Vienna or Warsaw at metropolitan branding, world-class nightlife, or density of multinational employers.



But they can compete on different terms: authenticity, proximity, belonging, quality of life, and a genuine sense that the individual matters – to the community, to local employers, to the place itself.

The condition for winning on these terms is not more money. It is better governance: a coordinated, multi-sectoral effort that improves the real conditions that make a place worth living in and communicates those conditions honestly and specifically to the right audiences.



2. Vision and Strategic Objectives

This section sets out what success looks like for this strategy, and what it concretely commits the partnership to achieving.

2.1. Our Vision

By 2030, lagging areas across Central Europe are no longer defined by what they lack. Talent attraction and retention is a normal, well-governed part of how these cities and regions operate – coordinated across sectors, honest about constraints, and built on genuine local strengths. Brain drain has not disappeared, but it has stopped being treated as inevitable.

2.2. Strategic Objectives

This strategy pursues four shared objectives across the partnership. Each partner city translates these into its own Specific Objectives at the local level (see the Local Action Plan, Chapter 4) – the two are linked, not identical.

- SO1 – Establish functioning, multi-sectoral governance of talent attraction in every partner city, at minimum the minimum-viable tier, within the project lifetime
- SO2 – Equip each partner city with a locally owned, evidence-based Brand Book and Local Action Plan that genuinely reflects local strengths and constraints
- SO3 – Test at least one talent attraction/retention intervention and one place-branding/digital-campaign intervention per city, generating real evidence on what works
- SO4 – Build a transferable governance and co-creation method that cities outside the partnership can adopt and adapt

THE BRAND4TALENTS PROPOSITION: Lagging areas that are honest about their challenges, specific about their genuine strengths, and coordinated in how they govern their response, can reverse the brain drain spiral – or at minimum, significantly slow it.



3. The Brand4Talents Approach

This section explains what we mean by multi-sectoral governance of talent attraction, and how this strategy connects to the other Brand4Talents tools and deliverables.

3.1. What Multi-Sectoral Governance of Talent Attraction Means

Talent attraction is not a marketing task. It is a governance challenge.

When a young professional considers whether to move to – or stay in – a smaller city, they are not primarily responding to a logo or a social media campaign. They are weighing a complex set of questions: Can I find a good job? Can my partner find work too? Are housing and schools manageable? Do I feel welcome? Is there a community I want to be part of? Do I see a future here?

Answering those questions positively requires action from across sectors – local government, employers, educational institutions, cultural organisations, civil society. No single actor can do it alone. **Multi-sectoral governance means creating the structures, roles and processes that allow these actors to work together coherently – rather than in parallel silos.**

Place branding, in this context, is not the starting point. It is the outward expression of a genuine, coordinated effort to make a place better for the people who live there and those who might. Branding without substance is noise. Governance without communication is invisible. Brand4Talents insists on both.

3.2. The Three-Layer Model

The Brand4Talents approach operates across three layers, each of which influences the others:

FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS	The national and regional context: legislation, funding, migration policy, administrative structures. These are largely outside local control but must be understood and navigated.
LOCAL ENABLERS	The local conditions that talent actually experiences: quality of jobs, housing, education, healthcare, cultural life, social integration and community. These are the primary zone of action for local partners.
TALENT ATTRACTION MANAGEMENT	The active management of the relationship with talent across their journey: branding, attracting, receiving, integrating and staying in touch with those who leave. This is where place branding and the talent journey framework come in.

3.3. What Talent Attraction Is Not in the Brand4Talents Approach

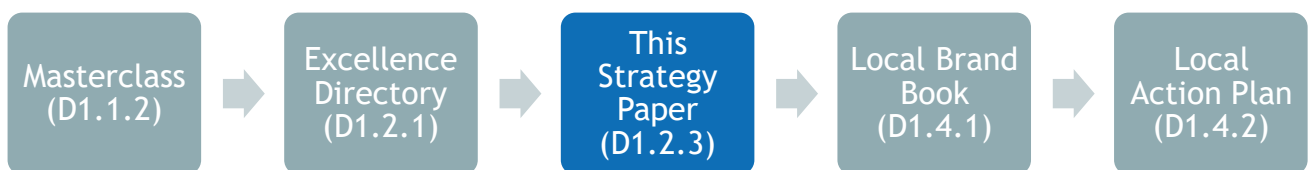
- Not a marketing campaign – branding without improved local conditions will not work
- Not a one-off event – talent attraction requires sustained relationship management over time
- Not something only the municipality does – cross-sectoral ownership is essential
- Not a prescription – this strategy is a framework for adaptation, not a rigid formula



- Not a region-wide talent attraction or economic development strategy – this is a governance strategy: it helps towns and regions organise their response to brain drain, mainly through governance interventions, not broader regional economic policy

3.4. How This Document Connects to the Brand4Talents Journey

This strategy paper sits at the centre of the Brand4Talents learning and planning journey. The diagram below shows how the key deliverables connect:



Part 2 of this document is where that connection becomes concrete: it walks you from this strategy through to a working draft of your own Local Brand Book and Local Action Plan, step by step.



4. The Brand4Talents Governance Principles

The following seven principles form the values backbone of the Brand4Talents approach. They were developed by the knowledge provider partners and have since been tested, translated into practice, and added to by partner cities through a structured co-creation sprint. Principle 3 remains as originally drafted and awaits validation through the Part 2 co-creation sessions.

HOW TO USE THESE PRINCIPLES: These principles are not a checklist. They are a set of shared commitments that should guide every decision in the governance process – from how the steering group is composed, to how the brand book is written, to how success is measured. Local Action Plans should be able to trace their key choices back to one or more of these principles.

PRINCIPLE 1: GOVERN TOGETHER, BRAND TOGETHER

Talent attraction is not a municipal task alone. It requires active, sustained ownership from across sectors – employers, education institutions, civil society and cultural organisations alongside local government.

What this looks like in practice:

- A multi-sectoral steering group meets regularly; decisions are made collectively, not by the municipality alone
- Non-traditional institutions – libraries, hospitals, and similar local anchors – are engaged as branding partners, not just service providers
- Long-term residents are recognised as valuable contributors to the place brand, not only newcomers and returnees
- Public employment services are actively engaged in promoting the city or region

PRINCIPLE 2: BUILD ON WHAT IS REAL

Authentic branding, rooted in genuine local assets and honest about real conditions, builds more credibility and attracts better-matched talent than aspirational fiction.

What this looks like in practice:

- The brand narrative uses authentic sources – real testimonials, not promotional claims
- Communication relies on relatable, verifiable facts rather than generic assertions
- The city regularly gathers feedback from residents and visitors on whether the brand narrative still holds true (“story-testing”)
- Local challenges are acknowledged transparently, alongside a clear account of what is being done about them

PRINCIPLE 3: DESIGN WITH TALENT, NOT FOR TALENT

Co-creation with young people, newcomers and the talent the city is trying to attract is not optional – it produces better decisions and builds a sense of ownership and belonging that is itself a retention factor.

What this looks like in practice:



- Young people participate in the steering group or have a dedicated advisory role.
- Welcome programmes are co-designed with recent arrivals.
- The local action plan includes at least one intervention that was directly shaped by the target group.

PRINCIPLE 4: START SMALL, THINK LONG

Sustainable change in lagging areas comes from consistent, cumulative effort – not grand plans with short implementation windows. Small, well-executed pilots that can be learned from and scaled are more valuable than ambitious initiatives that cannot be sustained.

What this looks like in practice:

- The local action plan prioritises 2-3 well-resourced interventions over a long list of underfunded ones
- New efforts start from what is already happening locally, rather than from zero
- The real challenge of bringing different sectors together is named openly, not assumed away
- Co-creation events – including with students – are used as low-cost entry points for continuous small actions
- Personal relationships (friends, family, community ties) are recognised as a genuine retention factor the action plan can actively support

PRINCIPLE 5: TURN THE JOURNEY INTO AN EXPERIENCE

Every touchpoint across the talent journey – from first awareness of the city to departure and beyond – matters. Inconsistency between what is promised and what is delivered destroys trust. Coherence builds it.

What this looks like in practice:

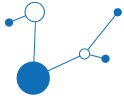
- The city maps its current talent touchpoints and identifies gaps and inconsistencies
- Developments and changes are communicated proactively to those affected, keeping the community involved as the process unfolds
- The journey is actively turned into something interactive, not just documented – this is a direct design principle behind the Part 2 co-creation sessions
- The brand book establishes a consistent voice and visual identity across all communications

PRINCIPLE 6: OWN YOUR CONSTRAINTS, LEVERAGE YOUR ADVANTAGES

Lagging areas that are honest about their challenges and specific about their genuine strengths are more credible – and attract more committed talent – than those that try to pretend the challenges do not exist.

What this looks like in practice:

- Claims that overreach what the city can genuinely deliver are honestly assessed and avoided



- The city critically weighs both its strengths and its weaknesses as the basis for moving forward, rather than leading with strengths alone
- Marketing uses specifically targeted communication for distinct audiences, rather than one generic message for everyone

PRINCIPLE 7: KEEP IN TOUCH

Former residents, students and mobile talents are assets, not lost causes. A city that maintains a genuine relationship with those who have left – and actively supports those who want to return – builds a long-term competitive advantage.

What this looks like in practice:

- The city maintains an alumni or ambassador network, with an active platform for ongoing communication
- A recurring, city-wide “class reunion” gives former residents a standing, low-cost reason to reconnect year after year
- Returnees are tracked as a success metric, and the city has a clear returnee support offer



5. Good Practices to Learn From The Excellence Directory

This chapter is not a stand-alone topic – it is the evidence base behind this strategy's diagnosis (Chapter 1) and its talent journey framework (Chapter 6). This strategy is grounded in evidence from places that have faced similar challenges and succeeded.

The Brand4Talents Excellence Directory (D1.2.1) is a catalogue of good practices in talent attraction and retention, place branding and multi-sectoral governance, with a specific focus on non-capital cities and lagging areas. It is the evidence base this strategy draws on: the governance principles in Chapter 4, the talent journey framework in Chapter 6, and the intervention menu in Annex B are all informed by real cases catalogued there.

The Directory is organised around the same five-phase talent journey used throughout this strategy – from making a place visible to turning those who leave into ambassadors – so that partners can move directly from a principle or a phase in this document to concrete examples of how other places have put it into practice.

This strategy paper and the Excellence Directory are companion documents, meant to be read together. Where this strategy sets out the why and the how, the Directory answers who has already done this, and what did it look like. Readers are encouraged to consult it directly rather than relying on the selected examples referenced in the chapters that follow.

A Preview of the Directory

The table below gives a taster of what the Directory contains, organised by the five phases of the talent journey (see Chapter 6). It will be populated in full once the Directory (D1.2.1) is finalised.

JOURNEY PHASE	EXAMPLE PRACTICE TYPES	FEATURED CASE EXAMPLES
1. Make yourself visible	Inclusive branding platforms, innovative place events, branding toolboxes	Krosno, Poland – heritage-based identity built on real glassmaking tradition, anchored by a physical Glass Heritage Centre Brainport Eindhoven, Netherlands – regional identity built through triple-helix cooperation around innovation and technology Pécs, Hungary – culture-led rebranding via European Capital of Culture 2010, unified under a single 'Borderless City' concept
2. Make a compelling case	Marketing portals, community and content marketing, online campaigns	Lublin, Poland – integrated attractiveness proposition combining a participatory city strategy, an IT sector brand, and Youth Capital / Capital of Culture designations Nysa, Poland – quality-of-life repositioning combining urban revitalisation with social media communication, on a modest municipal budget
3. Make people feel welcome	Welcome programmes, information portals, expat services, dual career support	Brno, Czech Republic – city-supported Expat Centre as a single-entry point for



		newcomers, with a recurring survey feeding local policy Copenhagen, Denmark – International House Copenhagen, a one-stop-shop reducing administrative complexity for international talent
4. Make staying worthwhile	Professional networks, mentoring, trainee programmes, career events, co-creation platforms	Vorpommern-Greifswald, Germany – Youth Bioeconomy Conference connecting secondary school students with regional employers before mobility decisions are made Stalowa Wola, Poland – SPACE 4 TALENTS, linking schools, businesses and innovation actors to build local talent pathways in aerospace and technology
5. Turn movers into ambassadors	Alumni networks, ambassador networks, mobility support, returnee programmes	Lyon, France – ONLYLYON's Ambassador Network of 26,000+ residents and alumni actively carrying the city's story abroad Bilbao-Bizkaia, Spain – Be Basque Talent Network, treating the Basque diaspora as an asset to reconnect with, not a loss

NOTE: The Excellence Directory (D1.2.1) is the companion document to this strategy. Case examples and good practices referenced throughout this document are drawn from the directory. Readers are encouraged to consult it alongside this strategy paper.



6. A Framework for Action: The Talent Journey in Lagging Areas

Talent attraction is not a single moment – it is a relationship that unfolds over time, across multiple touchpoints and decisions. This section presents the five-phase framework for understanding and managing that relationship, adapted specifically for the context of lagging areas – now enriched with real examples from Brand4Talents partner cities.



Phase 1: Make Yourself Visible

Before talent can choose your city, they need to know it exists – and have a reason to pay attention. This is the branding and awareness phase.

What matters most for lagging areas

- Authentic, specific identity: do not try to be everything to everyone – own what is genuinely distinctive
- Co-created branding: involve local stakeholders (including young people) so the brand reflects lived reality
- Honest communication: do not oversell – talent who arrive with unrealistic expectations leave quickly and spread negative word-of-mouth

LAGGING AREA ADAPTATION NOTE: With limited budgets, focus on a small number of channels where your target audiences are actually present. Peer-to-peer and word-of-mouth testimonials from current residents are often more credible and cost-effective than paid advertising. See Phase 5 – your alumni and ambassadors are your best marketers.

From the partnership: Derecske is building its branding around proximity to a major city combined with a quality of life that city cannot offer – showcasing what it can provide precisely because it is not the big city. Vorpommern-Greifswald is working to show the diversity of the region (varied landscapes, varied people, varied jobs) rather than a single generic pitch. Bielsko-Biała is coordinating all city branding initiatives under one coherent place-branding strategy, deliberately strengthening its image as a city of entrepreneurship and technology rather than leaving that positioning implicit.

[Tool reference: Identity Workshop – Annex A3]

ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIONS: an inclusive branding platform co-created with local stakeholders, or a social media ambassador programme (a quick win). See Annex B for the full menu for this phase.



Phase 2: Make a Compelling Case

Awareness is not enough. Once talent knows your place exists, you need to persuade them that it is worth serious consideration. This is the attraction and communication phase.

What matters most for lagging areas

- Lead with specifics, not generics: 'great quality of life' means nothing; 'a 12-minute commute and a mortgage you can actually afford' does
- Showcase real employers and real opportunities: talent needs to see concrete jobs, not just a general sense of economic dynamism
- Address concerns proactively: if your city has a language barrier, limited international schools, or a cold climate – acknowledge it and explain how it is being addressed

LAGGING AREA ADAPTATION NOTE: A well-curated, regularly updated online presence (even a simple one) beats an impressive brochure produced once. Content marketing – stories of people who have made the move and are glad they did – is both low-cost and high-impact.

From the partnership: Derecske hosts an annual “come back to Derecske” event aimed specifically at people with a connection to the city who have moved away – turning nostalgia into an active recruitment channel. Vorpommern-Greifswald is working to draw a clear line between its tourist-facing image and its living-and-working offer, so prospective residents don't mistake a holiday destination for a place to build a career. Opolskie Voivodeship is building its case at the regional rather than single-city level, organising cultural events specifically designed to help newcomers integrate rather than just visit.

[Tool reference: [Place Narrative Canvas – Annex A2](#)]

ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIONS: community and content marketing showcasing real resident stories (a quick win), or a peer-to-peer referral programme (a quick win). See Annex B for the full menu for this phase.

Phase 3: Make People Feel Welcome

Talent has decided to move. The first days, weeks and months are make-or-break. A difficult arrival experience – bureaucratic obstacles, loneliness, inability to find housing or schools – will end the relationship before it has begun.

What matters most for lagging areas

- Reduce friction: identify the specific administrative and practical barriers newcomers face and systematically remove them
- Personal welcome: smaller cities have an advantage here – a personal phone call or welcome visit is feasible in a way it is not in a metropolis
- Connect newcomers to community: formal networks, welcome events, buddy systems linking new arrivals with local contacts
- Dual career support: if the accompanying partner cannot find work, the primary mover will leave – address this proactively

LAGGING AREA ADAPTATION NOTE: Lagging areas often cannot afford a full expat centre. But a single well-trained 'soft landing coordinator' – a person whose job it is to help newcomers navigate the practical



challenges of arrival – can make an enormous difference at low cost. This role can be hosted by the municipality, a university, or a business association.

From the partnership: Derecske provides a welcome package for newcomers and has created an informal gathering space where employers, the municipality and local youth can meet and connect. Bielsko-Biala has developed an integration guide designed to help new residents discover the people, places and activities that make the city feel like home. Vorpommern-Greifswald channels welcome support through its university and employers, including a dedicated welcome centre.

[Tool reference: [Local Enablers Assessment – Annex A1](#)]

ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIONS: a dedicated welcome coordinator role, or a welcome event for new arrivals (a quick win). See Annex B for the full menu for this phase.

Phase 4: Make Staying Worthwhile

Retention is the goal – and it is won or lost in the everyday experience of living and working in a place. This is the most complex phase, because it depends on the widest range of actors and the deepest improvements to local conditions.

What matters most for lagging areas

- Career development pathways: talent needs to see a future, not just a current job – mentoring, professional networks and trainee programmes help
- Social integration: belonging to a community is a powerful retention factor, especially for those who moved from elsewhere
- Co-creation with talent: involving young people in improving the place gives them a stake in its future – and produces better decisions
- Addressing the partner employment challenge: a city that can find work for both members of a couple has a significant retention advantage

LAGGING AREA ADAPTATION NOTE: Regional trainee programmes – where multiple employers share the responsibility of offering structured placements to young talent – are particularly powerful in lagging areas, where no single employer is large enough to run such a programme alone. A consortium of five or six local employers can create something compelling together.

From the partnership: Derecske and Vorpommern-Greifswald both point to housing support as a decisive factor – Derecske through initiatives already targeting young people, Greifswald by pairing housing support with job-finding assistance. Bielsko-Biala reports that stable, well-developed nursery and kindergarten capacity is a concrete, measurable enabler of families choosing to stay. Vorpommern-Greifswald also highlights the breadth of its cultural and sporting offer as a retention factor that is easy to overlook next to jobs and housing, but matters just as much day to day.

[Tool reference: [Local Enablers Assessment – Annex A1](#)]

ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIONS: a regional trainee programme shared across several employers, or professional networking events (a quick win). See Annex B for the full menu for this phase.



Phase 5: Turn Movers into Ambassadors

People leave. This is not a failure – it is a reality of talent mobility. The question is not how to prevent all departures, but how to ensure that those who leave remain connected, speak well of the place, and potentially return.

What matters most for lagging areas

- Stay in touch systematically: a database of former residents and students, reached through alumni networks, is a long-term asset
- Give leavers something to be proud of: if they had a positive experience, they will tell others – help them do this
- Actively cultivate returnees: people who studied or worked elsewhere and then came back bring networks, skills and perspectives that are enormously valuable
- Make returning easy: practical support for those considering a return move (housing, job matching, administrative help) lowers the barrier significantly

LAGGING AREA ADAPTATION NOTE: For smaller cities, even a handful of well-connected alumni in major national or international cities can be transformative – as recruiters, as advocates, as investors, or as eventual returnees. An ambassador network does not need to be large to be powerful.

From the partnership: This phase produced some of the sprint's sharpest insights. Vorpommern-Greifswald partners described it simply: people form their strongest emotional connection to a place twice – when they arrive, and when they leave – which is exactly why this phase deserves as much deliberate design as Phase 1. Derecske has already established an ambassador network to share news and opportunities with people who have moved away. Bielsko-Biała's "Bielszczanin by choice" campaign tells the city's story through real people who chose to move there – turning newcomers themselves into part of the ambassador narrative. One idea raised during the principles discussion is worth carrying into practice here too: a recurring, city-wide "class reunion" – a standing, low-cost occasion that gives former residents a reason to come back, year after year.

[Tool reference: Stakeholder mapping canvas – Annex (to be developed)]

ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIONS: an active alumni or ambassador programme, or structured mobility support for those preparing to leave (a quick win). See Annex B for the full menu for this phase.



7. Framework for Implementation: The Brand4Talents Governance Model

This section proposes a governance model that cities can adapt to their local context. It defines the core structure, key roles, and the governance cycle that connects strategy to action.

7.1. The Core Governance Structure: The Brand4Talents Local Steering Group

The centrepiece of the governance model is a multi-sectoral Local Steering Group – a standing body that provides direction, legitimacy and cross-sectoral coordination for all talent attraction and place branding activities.

This strategy offers two tiers of the model. The minimum-viable tier is the recommended starting point for most partner cities – it is not a lesser version of the governance model, but a genuine, sustainable way to begin. The full tier is where cities grow toward as capacity, momentum and results build.

Minimum viable tier

ACTOR	ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION
Municipality / local government	Strategic leadership, political legitimacy, coordination of public services relevant to talent
One key local employer	Labour market intelligence, employer branding, an anchor voice from the private sector
One civil society or education representative	Community integration and/or student/talent perspective, depending on which is more relevant locally

Recommended cadence: twice yearly, timed to natural checkpoints – for example, after each cluster of Part 2 co-creation sessions – rather than a fixed calendar rhythm that may be hard to sustain early on.

Full tier

ACTOR	ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION
Municipality / local government	Overall strategic leadership, political legitimacy, coordination of public services relevant to talent (housing, childcare, registration)
Regional authority	Regional funding and policy alignment, coordination with neighbouring municipalities, regional branding consistency
Key local employers	Labour market intelligence, employer branding, traineeship and career development offers
Education and training institutions	Student engagement, career services, research into local talent dynamics, alumni network management
Civil society and NGOs	Community integration, cultural programming, social cohesion initiatives, volunteering infrastructure
Youth and talent representatives	Voice of the target group, co-creation participation, early warning on what is and is not working

Recommended cadence: quarterly.



WHAT THE STEERING GROUP IS NOT, at either tier: A bureaucratic committee that meets once a year to approve reports. It is a living, action-oriented body that reviews progress against the action plan, makes decisions, and actively supports implementation across its member organisations.

Growing from minimum-viable to full: Most cities add capacity in a natural order – typically the Regional authority and remaining sector voices once the Local Action Plan moves into implementation and the case for wider participation is easier to make with early results in hand. There is no fixed timeline for this – it should track the city's own readiness, not a project deadline.

7.2. Key Roles

The two tiers use the same core roles – the minimum-viable tier simply starts with fewer of them filled.

The Brand4Talents Coordinator (minimum-viable and full)

Operational lead for all talent attraction and place branding activities. Manages day-to-day implementation, coordinates across the steering group, maintains the talent database and monitoring framework. This is the certified Brand4Talents Ambassador. At the minimum-viable tier, this can be a part-time responsibility held by a single named person inside the municipality. Can be hosted by the municipality, a regional development agency, or a business association.

The Political Sponsor (minimum-viable and full)

A senior elected or appointed official who provides political legitimacy and top-level commitment. Ensures that talent attraction is on the municipal agenda and that the steering group has the authority it needs to act.

The Community Voice (full tier – added as the city grows)

A formal mechanism for including the perspective of young people and newcomers in governance decisions. This could be a youth advisory board, a panel of recent arrivals, or structured co-creation sessions built into the governance calendar.

The External Validator (full tier – added as the city grows)

A partner from outside the immediate local context – for example, through the Brand4Talents transnational network – who provides peer review of the Brand Book and Action Plan. This builds quality and accountability and connects local efforts to transnational learning.

7.3. Connecting Governance to Deliverables

The governance model is the backbone that connects the Brand4Talents tools and deliverables into a coherent local system:

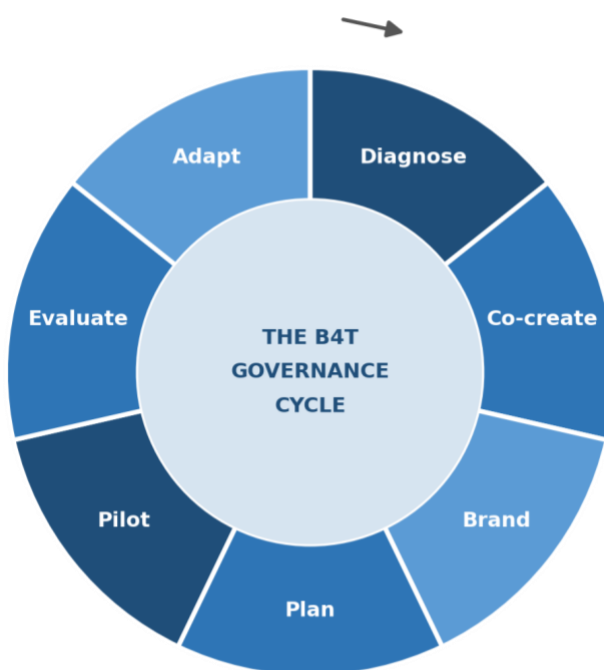
DELIVERABLE	WHO DEVELOPS IT	WHO APPROVES / OWNS IT
Local Brand Book (D1.4.1)	Brand4Talents Coordinator + local stakeholders, supported by knowledge providers	Steering Group, with external validation from Brand4Talents partnership (full tier) or Coordinator + Political Sponsor sign-off (minimum-viable tier)
Local Action Plan (D1.4.2)	Brand4Talents Coordinator + Steering Group members, with territorial partner support	Steering Group, endorsed by Political Sponsor



Local Pilot Plan	Brand4Talents Coordinator + relevant implementing partners	Steering Group
Monitoring and reporting	Brand4Talents Coordinator	Steering Group reviews quarterly; Political Sponsor receives annual summary

7.4. The Brand4Talents Governance Cycle

The governance model operates as a continuous cycle, identical at both tiers. Each phase builds on the previous one, and the cycle repeats as the city learns, adapts and improves its approach over time.



DIAGNOSE	CO-CREATE	BRAND	PLAN	PILOT	EVALUATE	ADAPT
<i>Local Enablers Assessment (Annex A1)</i>	<i>Identity Workshop (Annex A3)</i>	<i>Place Narrative Canvas (Annex A2) / Brand Book (D1.4.1)</i>	<i>Local Action Plan (D1.4.2)</i>	<i>Local Pilot Plan (WP2)</i>	<i>Monitoring framework (Section 7)</i>	<i>Updated Action Plan and Brand Book</i>

Part 2 of this document walks a city through the Diagnose, Co-create, Brand and Plan phases in detail, in three structured sessions. Pilot, Evaluate and Adapt follow during implementation.



8. Measuring Success

Measurement in lagging areas needs to be realistic. Most partner cities will not have dedicated monitoring units or sophisticated data systems. The framework below is designed to be meaningful without being burdensome – a small set of core indicators that all cities track, combined with a broader menu of phase-specific indicators that cities select based on their priorities.

8.1. High Level Result Indicators

These four indicators should be tracked by all partner cities. They capture the overall direction of travel and connect to the Brand4Talents programme result indicators.

INDICATOR	HOW TO MEASURE	SUGGESTED FREQUENCY
Number of strategies and action plans taken up by local organisations	Count of organisations formally endorsing or adopting Brand4Talents approach	Annually
Number of newcomers (migrants, returnees, new residents) recorded in the city	Population registry / migration data	Annually
Returnee rate: proportion of people who previously lived or studied in the city and have returned	Population registry cross-referenced with departure records; employer survey	Annually
Stakeholder satisfaction with governance process	Short survey of steering group and key stakeholders	Bi-annually

8.2. Phase Specific Outcome Indicators (Optional Menu)

Cities select the indicators most relevant to their priorities and interventions. Resource effort required for each is indicated visually.

PHASE	INDICATOR	HOW TO MEASURE	EFFORT
1. Make yourself visible	Brand awareness among target groups	Survey of prospective talent (online panels, university outreach)	Medium
1. Make yourself visible	Media mentions and social reach	Media monitoring / social analytics	Low
2. Make a compelling case	Website visits and engagement on talent-facing platforms	Web analytics	Low
2. Make a compelling case	Number of job applications from outside the region	Employer survey	Medium



3. Make people feel welcome	Satisfaction of newcomers with arrival experience	Survey of recent arrivals (6-month check-in)	Low
3. Make people feel welcome	Time to complete registration and administrative processes	Administrative data / mystery shopper	Medium
4. Make staying worthwhile	Retention rate of talent after 1 and 3 years	Population registry / employer survey	Medium
4. Make staying worthwhile	Participation in professional networks and community events	Network/event attendance records	Low
5. Turn movers into ambassadors	Size and engagement of alumni / ambassador network	Network membership data and event participation	Low
5. Turn movers into ambassadors	Number of returnees in a given year	Population registry cross-referenced with departure records	Medium

8.3. A Note on Measurement in Lagging Areas

Many partner cities will not have dedicated monitoring capacity. We recommend a pragmatic approach:

- Start with what you already collect: population registry data, event attendance, website analytics
- Add one or two targeted surveys per year – they do not need to be large to be informative
- Use qualitative evidence alongside numbers: stories from returnees, testimonials from newcomers, feedback from the steering group
- Share data across the Brand4Talents partnership – transnational comparison adds value and reduces individual burden



PART 2

FROM STRATEGY TO LOCAL ACTION



9. From Strategy to Local Action: How Part 2 Works

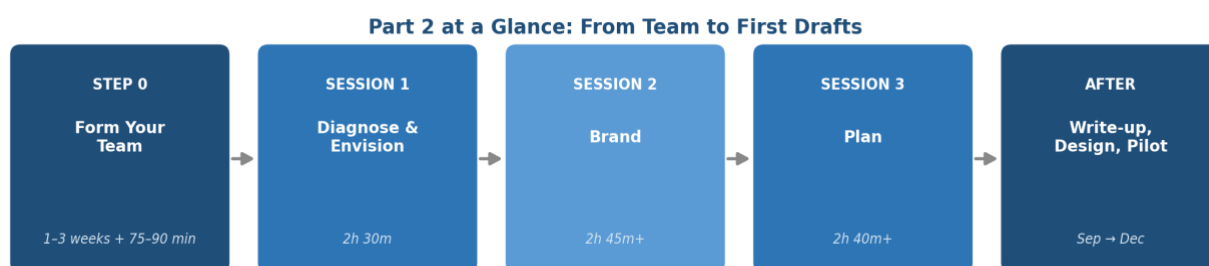
Part 2 is a step-by-step guide, designed to be followed directly rather than read as background. This chapter explains how it is organised, shows the whole process at a glance, and sets out the timeline partners are working toward.

9.1. How to Use This Guide

Part 2 walks a city from forming a working group through to strong first drafts of its Local Brand Book and Local Action Plan, in one preparatory step and three co-creation sessions. Each session follows the same template – objective, summary, duration, preparation, materials, a printable session-flow table, and expected outputs – so once you are familiar with one, the rest follow the same logic.

Cities outside the Brand4Talents partnership can use this guide on its own, adapting group sizes, timings and terminology to their context. Part 1 provides the reasoning behind the method, should you want it.

9.2. The Process at a Glance



9.3. Suggested Timeline

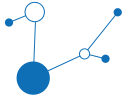
Brand4Talents partners are working toward three deadlines that do not all fall on the same date. The Local Action Plan needs the Brand Book's substance – not its finished visuals – so the Brand Book is delivered in two stages, and the LAP is never left waiting on design work it does not depend on.

MILESTONE	TARGET	WHAT'S NEEDED
Team formed	Within 1-3 weeks of the Greifswald TN meeting	Step 0 complete: Steering Group confirmed, at minimum-viable tier or above
Sessions 1-3 complete	Within 6-8 weeks of the Greifswald TN meeting	Diagnosis, vision, brand foundation and draft action priorities all captured
Brand Book – Part A (strategic content)	Mid-September	Promise, values, narrative, positioning and target audience, written up from Session 2
Local Action Plan – first draft	Late September / early October	Written up from Session 3, using Brand Book Part A as a direct input



Brand Book — complete (with visual identity)	December	Visual-direction brief from Session 2 taken to a designer; visuals integrated into the full Brand Book
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The 6-8 week window for Sessions 1-3 is tight but realistic if Step 0 moves quickly — this is why combining Step 0 with Session 1 is offered as an option (see Step 0), and why many partners are expected to choose it.



10. Step 0 - Form Your Team

SESSION OBJECTIVE

Identify who needs to be involved, confirm at least a minimum-viable Steering Group, and get political backing in place – before any diagnostic or co-creation work begins.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

This step is different from Sessions 1-3: it is not a single workshop, but a short process of groundwork spread over one to three weeks, culminating in one founding meeting. The Coordinator maps stakeholders using the tiered model from Part 1, approaches candidates for the key roles, and secures at least informal political backing before convening the group for the first time. The founding meeting itself is short and practical: agree which tier to start at, confirm who is in the room, and set the cadence going forward. Nothing about the brand or the action plan gets discussed yet.

CONTRIBUTION TO BRAND BOOK / LAP

This step does not directly produce Brand Book or LAP content, but it produces the governance foundation both documents depend on: the LAP's Governance & Ownership section documents what is confirmed here, and both documents' approval process (Part 1, Section 6.3) traces back to the tier decided here.

DURATION

Not a single session. Recommended: 1-3 weeks of part-time effort for mapping and approaching stakeholders, culminating in one founding meeting of 75-90 minutes.

NECESSARY INPUTS

- A read of Part 1, Chapter 6 (Governance Model) by whoever is coordinating this step
- Basic familiarity with the local institutional landscape – no formal analysis needed yet, just enough to draft a first stakeholder list

PREPARATION STEPS

- One person steps into the Coordinator role (even informally) and owns Step 0
- Send the Local Enablers Assessment worksheet to all invited participants at least one week in advance, asking them to complete it individually – scores and short narrative for each item
- Before the session, compile all submitted worksheets into one shared view: for each item, note the score range and flag where responses converge or diverge sharply – this compiled view is what the group works from live
- Draft an initial stakeholder list using the Stakeholder Mapping Canvas (Annex)
- Approach a senior official to gauge willingness to serve as Political Sponsor
- Make a provisional call on starting tier – minimum-viable or full – based on realistic local capacity
- Send invitations for the founding meeting, with the stakeholder map and two-tier model summary attached



MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

- Stakeholder Mapping Canvas (printed or digital/Miro)
- Pre-compiled Local Enablers Assessment summary (prepared by the Coordinator before the session)
- One-page summary of the two-tier governance model (Part 1, Section 6.1)
- Meeting space with a shared screen or wall space for the stakeholder map
- Sign-up sheet or shared doc to record confirmed names and roles

SESSION FLOW – FOUNDING MEETING

TIME	ACTIVITY	FACILITATOR DOES	PARTICIPANTS DO
0:00-0:10	Welcome & purpose	Explains why the group is being formed; sets expectation that no brand or action-plan content is discussed today	Listen, ask clarifying questions
0:10-0:30	Introduce the governance model & decide starting tier	Walks through the minimum-viable vs. full tier handout; poses the tier question openly	Discuss local capacity honestly; agree (or provisionally agree) on a starting tier
0:30-0:55	Walk through and confirm the stakeholder map	Presents the draft map; asks “who is missing, who is wrong here”	Amend the map together; flag any gaps in sectors
0:55-1:10	Confirm roles	Names the Coordinator and Political Sponsor candidates; if full tier, opens Community Voice and External Validator for discussion	Confirm, raise concerns, volunteer if appropriate
1:10-1:25	Agree cadence & next steps	Proposes a meeting cadence matching the chosen tier; proposes a date for Session 1	Agree cadence; commit to Session 1 date and attendance
1:25-1:30	Close	Thanks the group, confirms who owns follow-up actions	—

If forming subgroups at later sessions: aim for a balanced mix across sectors/institutions in each subgroup, rather than letting people self-select into friend clusters – this preserves diversity of perspective. The simplest method is counting off (1-2-1-2...) after a quick check that no subgroup ends up dominated by one sector. Full guidance in the Facilitator Cheat Sheet (Annex).

OPTION: COMBINING STEP 0 WITH SESSION 1

For partners working to a tight timeline, Step 0's founding meeting can be compressed and merged directly into Session 1, run back-to-back in a single extended session. This is offered as an option, not the default – but given the September deadline, many partners are expected to choose it.



- The founding meeting portion is trimmed to essentials only: confirm tier, confirm stakeholder map, confirm Coordinator and Political Sponsor. Decisions should be pre-socialized by the Coordinator beforehand, so the room is confirming, not debating, on the day
- Recommended combined duration for the founding portion: approximately 30 minutes, moving directly into Session 1 without a break
- Everything else – stakeholder mapping, role approaches, tier groundwork – still needs to happen before the combined session. Combining saves a calendar event, not the underlying preparation work

Not recommended if the stakeholder group is not yet informally aligned on tier or roles going in – forcing that discussion into 30 minutes risks a rushed or contested founding. In that case, keep the two meetings separate. The full combined session-flow table appears in Session 1.

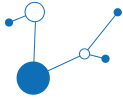
TOOLS AND METHODS USED

Stakeholder Mapping Canvas: a simple actor-mapping tool used to draft and then validate who should be at the table. Full canvas and instructions in Annex.

Two-tier governance model: a decision-support reference from Part 1, Section 6.1, used to ground the tier discussion in something concrete.

OUTPUTS TO BE PRODUCED

- A confirmed stakeholder map
- A confirmed Steering Group tier (minimum-viable or full) and its named membership
- A named Coordinator and Political Sponsor (minimum-viable), plus Community Voice and External Validator if starting at the full tier
- An agreed meeting cadence
- A scheduled date for Session 1



11. Session 1- Diagnose & Envision

SESSION OBJECTIVE

Establish an honest, shared picture of where the city currently stands as a place for talent and agree a concrete shared vision of what success looks like by 2030 – giving both the Brand Book and the Local Action Plan a common, evidence-based starting point.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

This session combines two exercises that work best done together: a Local Enablers Assessment across the Place / Work / Life / Attraction framework, and a North Star visioning exercise. The North Star exercise is run live, from scratch, in the room – the co-creation sprint showed pre-work is often skipped, so it's designed to produce real content live. The Local Enablers Assessment is the one deliberate exception to that principle: given its scope, participants complete it individually in advance, and the session time is spent on focused discussion and consensus rather than generating content from zero.

CONTRIBUTION TO BRAND BOOK / LAP

- The Local Enablers Assessment output becomes the LAP's diagnostic/baseline section, and directly informs which interventions Session 3 prioritizes. Note: the session captures stakeholder perception – this should be paired with available hard data (population registry figures, employer surveys, existing statistics) when the LAP is written up (see After the Sessions), rather than standing alone
- The North Star vision becomes the LAP's vision and goals section
- Both outputs inform the Brand Book's positioning work in Session 2 – a brand promise that ignores known gaps will not hold up, and a vision statement often contains language the brand narrative can build on directly

DURATION

2 hours 30 minutes (fits within the 2-3 hour session envelope). If combined with Step 0's founding meeting, add 30 minutes – see combined flow below.

NECESSARY INPUTS

- Step 0 complete: Steering Group confirmed (at minimum-viable tier or above)
- Facilitator (typically the Coordinator) has read Part 1, Chapters 1 and 4
- Participants have completed the Local Enablers Assessment worksheet individually in advance (see Preparation Steps) – this is the one deliberate exception to Part 2's general no-homework design, given the assessment's scope. No preparation is needed for the North Star exercise.

PREPARATION STEPS

- Invite the Steering Group plus any additional stakeholders whose perspective on local strengths/gaps is valuable



- Prepare the compiled Local Enablers Assessment summary from submitted worksheets (see the two new steps above) – this is what the room works from, not blank worksheets
- Prepare the North Star Vision worksheet (Annex)
- Print the five-phase talent journey illustration (Part 1, Chapter 4) as a wall poster or shared screen reference
- Prepare a simple wall or shared digital space for the group synthesis steps
- If running combined with Step 0, pre-socialize the tier and role decisions with likely attendees beforehand

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

- Local Enablers Assessment worksheets (Annex A1)
- North Star Vision worksheets (Annex)
- Five-phase talent journey poster/screen
- Sticky notes (at least 3 colours), markers, flip-chart paper or whiteboard
- Timer, visible to the room
- Someone assigned to capture outputs in writing

SESSION FLOW – STANDALONE

TIME	ACTIVITY	FACILITATOR DOES	PARTICIPANTS DO
0:00-0:10	Welcome & framing	Explains the session's two goals and how outputs feed the Brand Book and LAP	Listen, ask questions
0:10-0:20	Five-phase framework refresher	Walks through the five-phase poster briefly – a shared reference point, not a re-teach	Follow along, relate phases to their own experience
0:20-1:05	Local Enablers Assessment	Presents the pre-compiled worksheet view; focuses discussion on the lowest-scored and most-divergent items	Discuss flagged items; agree a consensus score and narrative where individual scores diverged
1:05-1:15	Break	—	—
1:15-1:20	North Star framing	Introduces the exercise: “By 2030, talent governance here is working well. We know this because we see...”	Listen
1:20-1:35	Individual quick input	Keeps this short – 3-5 minutes silent writing, not homework	Write 2-3 concrete, observable things on sticky notes



1:35-2:00	Group synthesis	Facilitates clustering into shared themes; pushes for specificity	Cluster notes, discuss, agree 3-5 shared results statements
2:00-2:20	Prioritization & connection to gaps	Asks: "Which gaps matter most for reaching this vision?"	Identify 2-3 standout gaps to carry into Session 3
2:20-2:30	Wrap-up	Confirms outputs are captured; previews Session 2; confirms date	Confirm attendance for Session 2

SESSION FLOW - COMBINED WITH STEP 0

Use this version if running the compressed Step 0 founding meeting immediately before Session 1, per Step 0's combining option. Total combined duration: approximately 3 hours.

TIME	ACTIVITY	NOTES
0:00-0:30	Compressed founding meeting	Confirm tier, stakeholder map, Coordinator and Political Sponsor only – pre-socialized, not debated live. See Step 0.
0:30-0:40	Welcome & framing (Session 1)	Shortened, since the room is already warmed up
0:40-0:50	Five-phase framework refresher	As standalone
0:50-1:35	Local Enablers Assessment	Review pre-compiled worksheet view; focus on lowest-scored and most-divergent items; agree consensus scores
1:35-1:45	Break	Slightly longer break recommended given the extended session
1:45-1:50	North Star framing	As standalone
1:50-2:05	Individual quick input	As standalone
2:05-2:30	Group synthesis	As standalone
2:30-2:50	Prioritization & connection to gaps	As standalone
2:50-3:00	Wrap-up	Confirms Session 2 date; also confirms any founding-meeting follow-ups

TOOLS AND METHODS USED

- Local Enablers Assessment: individual pre-work across the Place / Work / Life / Attraction framework (1-6 scoring plus short narrative per item), compiled by the Coordinator before the session, then discussed live – focusing session time on the lowest-scored and most-divergent items rather than generating content from zero. Full worksheet in Annex A1
- North Star Vision Exercise: a lightweight visioning tool drawn directly from the co-creation sprint, where it produced strong, specific results. Full worksheet in Annex



OUTPUTS TO BE PRODUCED

- A completed Local Enablers Assessment: current strengths and gaps across the Place / Work / Life / Attraction framework, with consensus scores agreed live
- A shared set of 3-5 results statements, refined into the Vision (Chapter 3) and Specific Objectives (LAP Chapter 4) during write-up
- A shortlist of 2-3 priority gaps to carry forward into Session 3's action planning



12. Session 2 - Brand

SESSION OBJECTIVE

Develop a strong draft of the city's verbal brand foundation – target audience, genuine assets, positioning, promise, values and core message – using a structured, repeatable canvas process that does not require facilitation expertise or branding background and produce a one-page creative brief a designer can work from.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

This session runs in two halves, using the same underlying method throughout. The first half – three rounds on a shared wall canvas – builds the verbal brand foundation. Every round follows the identical sequence: individual reflection, pair discussion, subgroup consensus if the group has split, plenary sharing, and dot-voting, with only the top-voted ideas making it onto the canvas. This turns branding facilitation into a procedure rather than a judgment call. The second half moves to visual direction: participants identify which of three starting points their city is in, then work through a simple word-based exercise to define the brand's personality, with an optional, clearly low-stakes sketching exercise for groups who want to go further.

CONTRIBUTION TO BRAND BOOK / LAP

- The three canvas rounds produce the Brand Book's Target Audience, Genuine Assets, Positioning, Promise, Values and Core Message sections directly – together, the core of Brand Book Part A
- The visual-direction output becomes the starting input for Brand Book Part B (visual identity), developed with a designer between September and December
- Positioning and core message outputs are reference material for Session 3, since some LAP interventions should stay consistent with what's agreed here

DURATION

Duration scales with group size – more subgroups means more time for consensus-building and plenary sharing at each round.

GROUP SIZE	SUBGROUPS	RECOMMENDED TOTAL DURATION
Up to 7 participants	None	2 hours 35 minutes
8-14 participants	2	approx. 3 hours
15+ participants	3	approx. 3 hours 20 minutes

If the combined duration exceeds 3 hours, consider splitting the session across two shorter meetings rather than running one very long session – facilitation quality drops sharply after about 3 hours.

NECESSARY INPUTS

- Session 1 complete: Local Enablers Assessment and North Star vision available as visible reference material



- Any existing visual identity assets the city has, brought informally (photos on a phone are fine)
- A confirmed headcount in advance, so the facilitator knows whether to prepare for subgroups

PREPARATION STEPS

- Confirm expected attendance and decide subgroup structure accordingly (see Duration table). If forming subgroups, use a balanced mix across sectors – see Step 0's subgroup formation note
- Print or display Session 1's outputs as visible wall reference
- Build the wall canvas: six boxes, laid out as three paired rounds (Target Audience / Genuine Assets, Positioning Statement / Brand Promise, Core Values / Core Message) – a template layout is provided in Annex
- Gather existing visual identity assets in advance from participants
- Prepare the Visual Tier Self-Assessment handout (Annex)
- Prepare the Brand Personality word-spectrum handout (Annex)
- Prepare plain paper for the optional sketch exercise
- Prepare sticky notes (enough for individual + pair + subgroup rounds – see Annex for a quantity guide by group size) and dot-voting stickers
- Assign someone to photograph the finished canvas and all worksheets at the end

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

- Wall canvas template (six boxes, physical wall or shared digital board for hybrid/remote groups)
- Sticky notes (multiple colours recommended: one per round)
- Dot-voting stickers
- Visual Tier Self-Assessment handouts
- Brand Personality word-spectrum handouts
- Plain paper for the optional sketch exercise
- Creative Brief template (one page, printed)
- Any existing visual identity assets participants bring
- Timer, visible to the room
- Camera/phone for capturing outputs

HOW THE CANVAS ROUNDS WORK (SAME PROCEDURE, USED THREE TIMES)

STEP	NO SUBGROUPS (≤7)	WITH SUBGROUPS (8+)
1. Individual reflection	Everyone writes 1-2 ideas silently on sticky notes (2-3 min)	Same
2. Pair discussion	Pairs discuss and agree shared suggestions, written on fresh sticky notes	Same, within each subgroup



3. Subgroup consensus	(skipped)	Subgroup reconvenes, actively filters its pairs' output down to its own best few consensus suggestions
4. Plenary sharing	Pairs post directly to the wall canvas area	Each subgroup shares its consensus items in plenary and posts them
5. Cluster & dot-vote	Facilitator helps the room cluster near-duplicates; everyone dot-votes	Same
6. Canvas placement	Top-voted ideas (flexibly 2-5, based on facilitator judgment) are written into the canvas box	Same

After the session, the Coordinator has flexibility to fine-tune the wording of what's on the canvas before sharing it back with participants – the voting decides direction, not final phrasing.

SESSION FLOW

TIME	ACTIVITY	WHAT HAPPENS
0:00-0:10	Welcome & framing	Explain the two-half structure and the canvas method; review Session 1 outputs on the wall
0:10-0:35	Round 1 – Foundation	Canvas rounds process, applied to: who exactly are we trying to reach, and what is genuinely true and distinctive about this place
0:35-1:00	Round 2 – Positioning	Canvas rounds process, applied to: a positioning statement and a brand promise, tested against Session 1's identified gaps
1:00-1:20	Round 3 – Voice	Canvas rounds process, applied to: 3-5 core values and a one-sentence core message
1:20-1:30	Break	—
1:30-1:40	Visual Tier Self-Assessment	Facilitator introduces the three tiers (strong existing identity / partial identity / starting fresh); group discusses and agrees which applies
1:40-2:00	Brand personality word exercise	Individually, then as a group, participants place the brand on a fixed set of word spectrums; group converges on a shared personality profile
2:00-2:20	Optional: quick sketch exercise	Framed explicitly as fun, low-stakes, not a test of drawing skill; participants annotate existing assets or rough-sketch a direction; facilitator collects output as supporting material
2:20-2:35	Assemble the brief & wrap-up	Facilitator helps consolidate canvas + personality profile + optional sketches into the one-page Creative Brief; confirms Session 3 date



For 8-14 or 15+ participants, add the group-size time allowance from the Duration table, distributed across Rounds 1-3.

TOOLS AND METHODS USED

- The Canvas Build Method: the individual → pair → subgroup → plenary → dot-vote → canvas sequence used for all three rounds. A standalone, reusable facilitation method – full script, timing guide, and sticky-note quantity guide by group size in Annex
- Visual Tier Self-Assessment: places the city on the three-tier visual identity spectrum before any visual work begins. Full version in Annex
- Brand Personality Word Spectrum: a fixed set of adjective-pair scales; no curated image set required, works for any city. Full handout in Annex
- Optional Sketch Exercise: a low-skill, low-stakes annotation/sketching activity, recommended only where the facilitator is comfortable putting participants at ease about not being “good at drawing”; a fallback (extending the word-spectrum discussion instead) is available

OUTPUTS TO BE PRODUCED

- A completed six-box Brand Foundation canvas: target audience, genuine assets, positioning statement, brand promise, core values, core message
- A confirmed visual identity tier (strong existing / partial / starting fresh)
- A brand personality profile (word-spectrum results)
- Optional: sketch/annotation material as supporting direction
- A completed one-page Creative Brief, ready to hand to a designer



13. Session 3 - Plan

SESSION OBJECTIVE

Select and elaborate a small set of priority actions, flag which should be tested as pilots and why, capture further actions worth tracking, and link the plan to monitoring indicators – producing a strong first draft of the Local Action Plan.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

A Local Action Plan is not one flat list – it has three kinds of content. Priority actions are the 2-4 items this session elaborates in full, with an owner, timeline and budget. Pilot actions are a subset of those (usually, though not necessarily) chosen specifically to test a hypothesis before fuller commitment. Further actions are real but not fully elaborated yet – good ideas that did not make the priority cut, gaps the evidence points to, or items that emerge later from pilot results. This session generates all three. It uses the Intervention Menu (Part 1, Annex B) as inspiration, not a prescription – partners are encouraged to adapt listed interventions or invent something entirely city-specific; each group is encouraged (though not required) to bring forward at least one original action of their own. Selection uses an Effort-Impact Matrix rather than simple voting, since committing a budget and an owner deserves a more grounded discussion than preference alone.

CONTRIBUTION TO BRAND BOOK / LAP

- Priority actions and their Action Cards form the core of the LAP's action plan section
- Flagged pilot actions and their hypotheses feed directly into the Local Pilot Plan (WP2) and the After the Sessions / Track B process
- Non-selected candidates and evidence-driven gaps form the seed of the LAP's Further Actions list
- The monitoring linkage step feeds the LAP's indicators section, using the framework from Part 1, Chapter 7
- The consistency check against Session 2 ensures interventions stay aligned with the brand promise and positioning – this is also where any tension between what the brand promises and what the city can deliver should surface and be resolved

DURATION

Same scaling logic as Session 2 – more subgroups need more time for the selection round; the action-card round splits into parallel small teams regardless of overall group size.

GROUP SIZE	SUBGROUPS	RECOMMENDED TOTAL DURATION
Up to 7 participants	None	2 hours 40 minutes
8-14 participants	2	approx. 3 hours 5 minutes
15+ participants	3	approx. 3 hours 20 minutes

NECESSARY INPUTS

- Session 1 complete: prioritized gaps and North Star vision available as reference



- Session 2 complete: positioning statement, brand promise and core message available as reference
- Part 1, Annex B (Intervention Menu) – printed or displayed, with quick-win options marked, framed as inspiration rather than a prescribed list
- Part 1, Chapter 7 (Measuring Success indicators) available as reference for the linkage step

PREPARATION STEPS

- Confirm expected attendance and subgroup structure (same thresholds and balanced-mix approach as Session 2)
- Print or display Session 1 and Session 2 outputs as wall reference
- Print the Intervention Menu with quick-win options marked – one copy per participant or pair; frame explicitly as a source of inspiration, not a checklist
- Prepare blank Action Cards, one per intervention likely to be selected, plus a few spares
- Prepare a simple visual checklist of the high-level result indicators from Part 1, Section 7.1
- Prepare the Effort-Impact Matrix wall template (large 2x2 grid) and facilitation notes (Annex)
- Prepare a Further Actions running list (flip-chart or shared doc) to capture non-selected candidates
- Assign someone to photograph all action cards, the matrix, and the final lists at the end

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

- Printed Intervention Menu (Annex B), quick-wins marked
- Blank Action Card template (Annex): fields for intervention name, owner, timeline, rough budget, linked indicator, pilot flag and hypothesis
- Effort-Impact Matrix wall template and facilitator guidance (Annex)
- High-level indicator checklist (from Part 1, Section 7.1)
- Further Actions running list (flip-chart or shared doc)
- Sticky notes
- Timer, visible to the room
- Camera/phone for capturing outputs

SESSION FLOW

TIME	ACTIVITY	WHAT HAPPENS
0:00-0:10	Welcome & framing	Review Session 1 gaps and Session 2 brand foundation as the basis for today's choices; introduce the Intervention Menu as inspiration – encourage at least one original, city-specific action per group
0:10-0:20	Individual selection	Working from the printed Intervention Menu (or an original idea), each person marks their top 2 candidate actions



0:20-0:35	Pair discussion (→ subgroup consensus if applicable)	Pairs compare picks and agree shared preferences; if using subgroups, subgroup filters pair outputs down to its own top picks, written on sticky notes
0:35-0:50	Plenary sharing & clustering	All picks posted to a shared wall list; facilitator helps cluster duplicates into a clean candidate list (typically 6-10 items)
0:50-1:15	Effort-Impact Matrix	Facilitator draws a 2×2 matrix (Impact: low↔high / Effort: low↔high) on the wall; group places each candidate together, discussing as they go
1:15-1:25	Confirm the priority shortlist	Facilitator guides the group to select 2-4 priority actions, prioritizing high-impact/low-effort first; a high-impact/high-effort item can be chosen deliberately as a stretch priority. Non-selected candidates go onto the Further Actions list
1:25-1:35	Break	—
1:35-2:05	Action card build (parallel small teams)	One small team per selected priority action fills in its Action Card: owner, timeline, rough budget, linked indicator
2:05-2:20	Flag pilot actions	Facilitator asks: which of these priority actions (or which not yet elaborated) is most worth testing before full commitment, and what are we trying to find out? Teams mark chosen actions as pilots and write a one-line hypothesis on the Action Card
2:20-2:40	Report back & cross-check	Each team presents its card to the full group; group checks each action against Session 1's gaps and Session 2's brand promise
2:40-2:50	Resolve tensions, if any	If a card conflicts with the brand promise or duplicates another priority, the group adjusts it on the spot
2:50-3:00	Wrap-up	Confirm all cards and the Further Actions list are captured; explain the write-up phase ahead (LAP first draft, per the Suggested Timeline)

For 8-14 or 15+ participants, add the group-size time allowance from the Duration table, distributed across the selection round.

TOOLS AND METHODS USED

- The Canvas Build Method (selection variant): the same individual → pair/subgroup → plenary sequence from Session 2, adapted here for selecting from a pre-populated menu rather than generating new ideas. Refer to Annex (Canvas Build Method), with a short note on the selection-variant adaptation
- Effort-Impact Matrix: a simple 2×2 prioritization tool that grounds the action choice in feasibility, not just preference, with facilitator guidance to eliminate guesswork. Full template and facilitation notes in Annex



- Action Card: a simple, single-action planning template used in parallel small teams, including a pilot flag and hypothesis field. Full template in Annex
- High-level indicator checklist: a quick-reference extract from Part 1, Section 7.1, used to speed up the linkage step

OUTPUTS TO BE PRODUCED

- A confirmed, prioritized shortlist of 2-4 priority actions
- A completed Action Card for each priority action: owner, timeline, rough budget, linked monitoring indicator
- At least one action flagged as a pilot, with a one-line hypothesis of what it is meant to test
- A Further Actions list: non-selected candidates, plus any gaps the evidence pointed to that weren't otherwise captured
- A documented consistency check against Session 1's gaps and Session 2's brand foundation, including any adjustments made



After the Sessions: From Workshops to First Drafts

PURPOSE

Sessions 1-3 produce raw material – completed worksheets, canvases, action cards, a creative brief. This step turns that material into two actual documents: the Brand Book and the Local Action Plan. From Stage 1 onward, the two documents follow different paths – the Brand Book moves toward visual completion, while the LAP moves toward piloting and revision. Most of this work is done by the Coordinator, on the timeline agreed in Section 8.3.

STAGE 1 – BY MID-SEPTEMBER (SHARED)

TASK	OWNER	INPUTS USED	OUTPUT
Write up Brand Book Part A	Coordinator	Session 2 canvas (audience, assets, positioning, promise, values, message)	Draft Brand Book Part A: strategic/verbal content only
Strengthen the diagnostic with hard data	Coordinator, with Steering Group input	Session 1 Local Enablers Assessment + available data (population registry, employer surveys, existing statistics)	Evidence-backed LAP baseline section
Write up the LAP vision and goals	Coordinator	Session 1 North Star vision	LAP vision & goals section
Write up the LAP action plan	Coordinator	Session 3 Action Cards, pilot flags and hypotheses, Further Actions list	LAP action plan section, structured in three parts: Priority Actions (fully elaborated), Pilot Actions (flagged subset, with hypotheses), and Further Actions (tracked but not yet elaborated)
Cross-check LAP against Brand Book Part A	Coordinator	Both drafts	Confirm no contradictions between what's promised and what's planned; flag and resolve any found
Circulate both drafts to the Steering Group	Coordinator	Draft Brand Book Part A + draft LAP	Feedback collected
Validate and sign off	Steering Group (full tier) or Coordinator + Political Sponsor (minimum-viable tier)	Feedback-integrated drafts	Approved Brand Book Part A + approved LAP first draft



Note on strengthening the diagnostic: the Local Enablers Assessment captures stakeholder perception – real, but partial. Pair each identified gap or strength with available hard data where possible. Where no data exists, say so explicitly rather than presenting perception as fact.

From this point, the two documents follow separate tracks.

TRACK A - BRAND BOOK: VISUAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT (SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER)

TASK	OWNER	INPUTS USED	OUTPUT
Brief a designer	Coordinator	Session 2's Creative Brief, visual tier assessment, brand personality profile, optional sketch material	Designer engaged and briefed
Review and iterate on visual concepts	Coordinator, with Steering Group input	Designer's proposals	Agreed visual identity direction
Finalize visual assets	Designer (subcontracted)	Agreed direction	Logo (if applicable), colour palette, typography, templates
Assemble the complete Brand Book	Coordinator	Approved Brand Book Part A + finished visual assets	Complete Brand Book (D1.4.1)
Final validation	Steering Group (full tier) or Coordinator + Political Sponsor (minimum-viable tier)	Complete Brand Book	Approved, final Brand Book

TRACK B - LOCAL ACTION PLAN: PILOT, THEN REVISE

The approved LAP is a first draft, not a final document. Its Priority Actions are ready to elaborate further; its flagged Pilot Actions are ready to test; its Further Actions remain a living list. The LAP is designed to be tested and adjusted, following the same governance cycle set out in Part 1, Section 6.4 (Plan → Pilot → Evaluate → Adapt).

TASK	OWNER	INPUTS USED	OUTPUT
Implement pilot actions	Owners named on each flagged Action Card	Approved LAP, pilot hypotheses	Pilot activity underway, per the Local Pilot Plan (WP2)
Collect pilot evidence	Coordinator, with action owners	Monitoring framework (Part 1, Chapter 7); indicators linked on each Action Card	Real performance data against each pilot's hypothesis and indicator
Revisit the LAP with the Steering Group	Steering Group	Pilot evidence	Shared understanding of what worked, what



			underperformed, what should scale, and what from the Further Actions list should now be elevated to priority
Adjust and finalize the LAP	Coordinator, with Steering Group approval	Revisit outcomes	Updated Action Plan, reflecting real pilot results rather than pre-pilot assumptions

This is not a one-off correction: Adapt feeds back into future Diagnose and Plan cycles, per the governance cycle. The Local Action Plan – including its Further Actions list – is expected to keep evolving as the city learns what actually works.

A NOTE ON VALIDATION

The approval path used throughout this chapter follows the tiered model from Part 1, Section 6.3: minimum-viable tier cities can proceed with Coordinator + Political Sponsor sign-off, while full-tier cities route through the complete Steering Group, with external validation available through the Brand4Talents partnership. Either path is legitimate – the point is that nothing becomes final without someone beyond the Coordinator confirming it.



Annex A - Brand4Talents Tool Kit: Core Tools

Each tool below is summarized using the standard structure (Purpose, Used in, Contributes to). Full instructions, step-by-step facilitation scripts and printable artefacts are provided as standalone annex documents – designed to be printed or shared individually without carrying this whole document into a workshop room.

A1. - Stakeholder Mapping Canvas

Purpose: Identify who should be involved in local governance of talent attraction, before the Steering Group is formed.

Used in: Step 0 (Form Your Team)

Contributes to: Step 0's confirmed stakeholder map and Steering Group composition; LAP Chapter 6

Full tool: see standalone Annex A1 document.

A2. Local Enablers Assessment

Purpose: Establish an honest, evidence-based picture of current local conditions for talent, across the Place / Work / Life / Attraction framework.

Used in: Session 1 (Diagnose & Envision)

Contributes to: LAP Chapter 2 (Starting Position); Brand Book's city snapshot

Full tool: see standalone Annex A2 document.

A3. - North Star Vision Worksheet

Purpose: Generate a concrete, specific set of shared results statements describing what talent governance success looks like by 2030.

Used in: Session 1 (Diagnose & Envision)

Contributes to: Brand Book's 'Our Ambition'; LAP Chapter 3 (Vision) and Chapter 4 (Specific Objectives)

Full tool: see standalone Annex A3 document.

A4. - The Canvas Build Method

Purpose: A repeatable facilitation procedure – individual reflection, pair discussion, subgroup consensus, plenary sharing, dot-voting – used across Session 2 and Session 3.

Used in: Session 2 (Brand) and Session 3 (Plan)

Contributes to: Every content element built through Session 2's canvas rounds; Session 3's candidate shortlist

Full tool: see standalone Annex A4 document.

A5. - Brand Foundation Canvas



Purpose: The six-box wall canvas used to build the verbal brand foundation — target audience, genuine assets, positioning, promise, values, message.

Used in: Session 2 (Brand)

Contributes to: Brand Book Part A: Target Audience, Genuine Assets, Positioning, Promise, Values, Message

Full tool: see standalone Annex A5 document.

A6. - Visual Tier Self-Assessment

Purpose: Help a city honestly identify its starting point for visual identity work — strong existing, partial, or starting fresh.

Used in: Session 2 (Brand)

Contributes to: Brand Book's Visual Identity Direction page; the Creative Brief

Full tool: see standalone Annex A6 document.

A7. - Brand Personality Word Spectrum

Purpose: Define the brand's visual personality using words instead of images, giving a designer clear direction.

Used in: Session 2 (Brand)

Contributes to: Brand Book's Visual Identity Direction page; the Creative Brief

Full tool: see standalone Annex A7 document.

A8. - . Optional Sketch Exercise

Purpose: Turn the Visual Tier and Word Spectrum results into rough visual direction — low-stakes, explicitly optional.

Used in: Session 2 (Brand)

Contributes to: The Creative Brief

Full tool: see standalone Annex A8 document.

A9. - Creative Brief Template

Purpose: A one-page brief handed directly to a subcontracted designer, consolidating Session 2's outputs.

Used in: Session 2 (Brand)

Contributes to: Track A — Brand Book visual identity development

Full tool: see standalone Annex A9 document.

A10. - Effort-Impact Matrix

Purpose: A 2x2 prioritization tool that grounds action selection in feasibility and value, placed one axis at a time.



Used in: Session 3 (Plan)

Contributes to: LAP Chapter 7 (Action Plan Overview) and Chapter 8 (Priority Actions)

Full tool: see standalone Annex A10 document.

A11. - Action Card

Purpose: A single-action planning template completed for each Priority Action.

Used in: Session 3 (Plan)

Contributes to: LAP Chapter 8 (Priority Actions); Chapter 9 references it by name

Full tool: see standalone Annex A11 document.



Annex B - Brand4Talents Intervention Menu

This menu is inspiration, not a checklist. It presents a curated set of interventions organised by talent journey phase – cities are encouraged to adapt any of them to their context, combine several, or invent something entirely city-specific. Session 3 explicitly encourages every group to bring forward at least one original action of their own. Each intervention is rated for resource effort required, with quick-win options flagged for cities working to a tight timeline.

HOW TO USE THIS MENU: Do not try to do everything, and do not feel bound to this list. Based on your Local Enablers Assessment and your priority gaps, identify 2-4 actions where you can make a real difference with your available resources – drawn from this menu, adapted from it, or entirely your own. Interventions marked ☆ Quick win are lower-effort starting points. Session 3's Effort-Impact Matrix will help you weigh the full set, including anything you add yourselves. Quality of implementation matters more than quantity of interventions.

Phase 1: Make Yourself Visible

INTERVENTION	DESCRIPTION	WHO LEADS	EFFORT	QUICK WIN?
Inclusive branding platform	Co-created set of values, messages and materials that all local stakeholders can use in their own communications	Municipality / business association	Medium	
Innovative place event	A distinctive local event that generates media coverage and embodies the city's brand values	Any stakeholder – ideally broad partnership	Medium	
Branding toolbox	Online portal with downloadable materials (photos, videos, texts) for employers and organisations to use in recruitment	Municipality / university	Medium	
Social media ambassador programme	A small group of local residents who share authentic stories about life in the city on social media	Any organisation	Low	☆ Yes
[Add your own – city-specific intervention]				

Phase 2: Make a Compelling Case

INTERVENTION	DESCRIPTION	WHO LEADS	EFFORT	QUICK WIN?
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Talent marketing portal	A dedicated website communicating the city's offer to prospective talent, including job opportunities, quality of life and practical information	Municipality / business association	Medium-High	
Community and content marketing	Regular, relevant content (articles, videos, newsletters) distributed to talent communities and networks	Any organisation	Low	☆ Yes
Online targeted campaigns	Paid or organic digital campaigns targeting specific talent profiles through relevant platforms	Municipality / cluster organisation	Medium	
Peer-to-peer referral programme	Incentivising current residents to recommend the city to their professional networks	Employers / municipality	Low	☆ Yes
[Add your own – city-specific intervention]				

Phase 3: Make People Feel Welcome

INTERVENTION	DESCRIPTION	WHO LEADS	EFFORT	QUICK WIN?
Welcome coordinator role	A dedicated person who helps newcomers navigate practical arrival challenges	Municipality / university	Low-Medium	
Welcome event or programme	Structured welcome event or multi-week programme connecting newcomers with local community and services	Municipality / university / employers	Low	☆ Yes
Information portal for newcomers	Online guide covering practical information: registration, housing, healthcare, schools, language courses	Municipality	Medium	
Dual career support service	Assistance for accompanying partners in finding relevant employment	Municipality / employers	Medium	
Language learning programme	Flexible, work-life-oriented language courses for newcomers	University / municipality / employers	Medium	
[Add your own – city-specific intervention]				

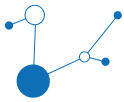


Phase 4: Make Staying Worthwhile

INTERVENTION	DESCRIPTION	WHO LEADS	EFFORT	QUICK WIN?
Professional networking events	Regular events connecting talent with local employers and peers	Business association / university	Low	☆ Yes
Mentoring programme	Pairing incoming talent with experienced local professionals for career guidance	University / business association	Low-Medium	
Regional trainee programme	Shared traineeship scheme where talent rotates across multiple local employers	Cluster of employers / business association	Medium-High	
Co-creation platform	Structured opportunities for talent to contribute ideas and solutions to local challenges	Municipality / university	Medium	
Career events and job fairs	Regular matchmaking events between talent and local employers, starting early in study programmes	University / business association	Low	☆ Yes
[Add your own – city-specific intervention]				

Phase 5: Turn Movers into Ambassadors

INTERVENTION	DESCRIPTION	WHO LEADS	EFFORT	QUICK WIN?
Alumni network	Maintained network of former residents and students, connected to the city through regular communication and events	University / municipality	Medium	
Ambassador programme	Selected former residents who actively advocate for the city in their current locations	Municipality / university	Low-Medium	
Returnee support package	Structured support (housing, job matching, administrative help) for those considering a return move	Municipality / employers	Medium	
Mobility support	Training, coaching and networking support for those preparing to move – making the departure positive and maintaining the relationship	University	Low	☆ Yes



[Add your own – city-specific intervention]				
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Annex C - Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Ambassador network	A network of former residents or students who actively advocate for a place in their current locations, serving as authentic voices in marketing and branding.
Alumni network	A maintained network of former residents and students connected to a place through regular communication and events.
Brand4Talents Coordinator	The local operational lead for all talent attraction and place branding activities; the certified Brand4Talents Ambassador.
Brain drain	The emigration of educated, skilled and talented people from a region or country, often to areas perceived to offer better opportunities.
Canvas Build Method	The reusable facilitation procedure – individual reflection, pair discussion, subgroup consensus (if applicable), plenary sharing, dot-voting – used across Session 2 and Session 3 to build content without requiring facilitation expertise.
Co-creation	A process of working together with stakeholders – including the target group – to jointly develop solutions, strategies or services.
Dual career support	Assistance provided to the accompanying partner or spouse of an incoming talent to help them find relevant employment in their new location.
Effort-Impact Matrix	A 2x2 prioritization tool used in Session 3 to select actions based on feasibility and value, rather than preference alone.
Excellence Directory (D1.2.1)	A Brand4Talents catalogue of good practices in talent attraction, retention, place branding and governance, focused on non-capital and lagging areas.
Governance cycle	The recurring cycle of Diagnose – Co-create – Brand – Plan – Pilot – Evaluate – Adapt that structures the Brand4Talents local process.
Governance tier (minimum-viable / full)	The two levels at which a city can run its Local Steering Group – minimum-viable (three seats, twice-yearly cadence) or full (six actor types, quarterly cadence) – with cities encouraged to grow from one to the other over time.
Lagging area	A region characterised by below-average economic development, often combined with demographic decline, limited job opportunities and reduced access to services.
Local Action Plan (D1.4.2)	A city-level plan that defines the starting position, future vision, specific objectives, place brand, and concrete steps for local application of the Brand4Talents governance strategy.
Local Brand Book (D1.4.1)	A document specifying the city's value proposition for talent, its repositioned image, and its visual and verbal brand identity.
Local Steering Group	The multi-sectoral governance body responsible for directing, approving and monitoring all local talent attraction and place branding activities.
Multi-sectoral governance	A governance approach that involves actors from multiple sectors (public, private, civil society, education) working together in coordinated decision-making and implementation.
North Star vision	A concrete, specific description of what talent governance success looks like for a city by a target year, generated through a structured visioning exercise in Session 1.



Place branding	The strategic process of shaping and communicating a distinctive and attractive identity for a place, aimed at specific target audiences.
Political sponsor	A senior elected or appointed official who provides political legitimacy and top-level commitment to the Brand4Talents local process.
Priority / Pilot / Further Actions	The three-tier structure used in Local Action Plans: Priority Actions are fully elaborated near-term actions; Pilot Actions are a flagged subset selected for testing; Further Actions are real but not yet elaborated, tracked for future development.
Quadruple helix	A model of collaboration involving four sectors: public authority, private business, academic/research institutions, and civil society.
Quick Win	An intervention on the Intervention Menu (Part 1, Annex B) flagged as low-effort – a recommended lower-effort starting point for cities working to a tight timeline, distinct from the Effort-Impact Matrix's 'Quick Wins' quadrant (low effort, high impact) used in Session 3.
Returnee	A person who previously lived or studied in a city and has returned to live and work there.
Shared Results Statements	The 3-5 concrete, specific statements produced by Session 1's North Star exercise, describing what talent governance success looks like by a target year. Not a finished vision or Specific Objective – the raw material both are drafted from during write-up.
Soft landing	The phase of welcome and integration support that helps newcomers settle smoothly into their new location after arrival.
Specific Objective (SO)	A concrete, outcome-level statement sitting between a city's vision and its individual actions, used to link action planning to result-level monitoring.
Talent	In the Brand4Talents context: young, educated people – including graduates, early-career professionals, researchers and entrepreneurs – who represent key assets for local economic and social development.
Talent journey	The sequence of experiences and decisions that shape a person's relationship with a place: from initial awareness, through attraction, arrival, integration and, potentially, departure and return.
Talent Relationship Management (TRM)	The systematic management of a place's relationships with potential, current and former residents, analogous to Customer Relationship Management in business contexts.
Visual identity tier	A city's starting point for visual identity development – strong existing identity, partial identity, or starting fresh – used in Session 2 to scope the right level of design work.



Annex D - Facilitator Cheat Sheet

Purpose: A short, practical reference for anyone facilitating a Brand4Talents session – general principles and techniques that make co-creation sessions run smoothly, regardless of facilitation experience.

Used in: All sessions (Step 0, Sessions 1-3), and any local workshop a partner runs beyond this process.

Contributes to: Better-run sessions across the board – no single document output; this supports everything else.

Full tool: see standalone Annex D document.