

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



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**PilotInnCities**

# **Agile Piloting**

## **A Complete Guide for Public Authorities**

### **Part I**

#### **Action Plan for Adoption of Agile Piloting**

A five-step strategic guide for decision-makers on establishing the institutional, political and administrative conditions for a successful Agile Piloting programme



Innovation ecosystems do not emerge by coincidence. They require deliberate leadership, calibrated risk-taking, and clear processes—and this framework provides the necessary instruments.

**The decision to initiate takeoff rests with you.**

## Dear leaders and policy-frontrunners,

Across Europe, a fundamental disconnect exists **between innovative technology and solution providers** (startups, SMEs) and **public-sector adopters** (municipalities, regional authorities). This does not reflect a failure of technology or lack of political will—it is an ecosystem failure rooted in inherent structural barriers that prevent promising innovations from reaching the citizens and public institutions who would benefit from them.

The consequences are twofold and mutually reinforcing.

- **Local governments** as the “living lab” and first markets for urban innovation remain locked out of the innovation cycle and are forced to rely on proven but often outdated approaches, missing opportunities to improve public services, reduce costs, and enhance citizens’ quality of life.
- **Local companies & innovators** face a “valley of death” between prototype and market-ready product. Without real-world testing environments, they cannot validate their solutions, gather user feedback, or build credible reference cases. This undermines their competitiveness, slows internationalisation, and ultimately weakens European innovation capacity.

It was in response to this systemic stalemate that we set out to build a practical bridge. Drawing on established Finnish know-how and integrating the perspectives of ministries, business development agencies, universities, municipalities, and enterprises, we have tested and consolidated an ecosystem tool designed to enable **a new way for public-private cooperation**. Our goal is not merely to connect actors, but to **accelerate innovation adoption, build lasting institutional capacity, strengthen competitiveness**, and ultimately **enhance quality of life across Europe**.

At the heart of this tool is a proven methodology: **Agile Piloting**. This structured, short-cycle process enables public entities to manage the real-world testing of new technologies, services, and use cases that are aimed for public spaces in cooperation with the solution providers. By facilitating rapid learning, user feedback collection, and iterative refinement, **Agile Piloting allows stakeholders to validate assumptions and de-risk solutions before committing to full-scale deployment**; a crucial step in the innovation cycle.

This document is addressed to public authorities and agencies seeking measurable impact on innovation ecosystems: **national and regional governments, development agencies, innovation centres and key regional centre cities** are positioned to shape the rules, incentives and governance culture that determine whether innovation remains a theoretical construct—or becomes an engine of tangible progress.

By establishing a safe environment for experimentation at the local level, you as leader enable municipalities and regional actors to adopt validated solutions, develop new skills and remain competitive in a fast-changing environment. Resilience is not achieved through technology alone; it emerges from governance structures capable of cooperation, learning and adaptation.

One of Agile Piloting’s key strengths is its universality. The method can be applied across themes and domains as diverse as digital public services, energy, mobility, circular economy, social innovation, healthcare, liveable environments—in both urban and rural contexts. It is especially effective where progress has stalled and a carefully calibrated external impulse is required to regain momentum.



## Preface

To equip you with this strategic “tipping power,” we have prepared an integrated package of guidance describing the political and executive steps required to establish and operate an Agile Piloting programme:

**1.** The **Action Plan for Adoption of Agile Piloting** guides decision-makers responsible for strategic direction and resource allocation. It outlines five key steps necessary to create the institutional, financial and governance prerequisites for a stable and high-performing Agile Piloting programme.

**2.** The **Agile Piloting Methodology** provides a step-by-step guide for executive teams, including project, financial and communication managers. Grounded in practical validation across the Danube Region through 20+ agile pilots implemented in 2025–2026, it integrates lessons learned and offers structured guidance from experimentation to scaling.

**3.** The **Benchmarking Quadruple-Helix Analysis of Smart City Innovation Ecosystems** offers a comparative overview of innovation landscapes in the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. It introduces a universal stakeholder-mapping approach that supports reflection on systemic challenges, clarifies institutional roles and helps identify strategic allies for ecosystem development.

Together, these three components form an integrated framework enabling public authorities, regional actors, and business- and civil-sector leaders to transform innovation from aspiration into structured, low-risk and high-impact practice.

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## About PilotInnCities

**PilotInnCities**—Pilot-based Innovation Ecosystems for Smart Cities—is a transnational cooperation project co-financed by the European Union through the Interreg Danube Region Programme, and led by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic. Running from 2024 to 2026, the project brings together eleven partner organisations from six countries across the Danube Region: the Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Serbia.

Its central objective is to develop, validate, and disseminate a practical methodology for Agile piloting, enabling public authorities across the region to test innovative Smart City solutions in real municipal environments. This serves as a critical step toward accelerating the uptake and scaling of innovations with high economic, environmental, and societal potential.

This document forms part of the project's final knowledge portfolio—designed to ensure that the insights, lessons and tested guidance produced by the consortium continue to support new implementing teams across the Danube Region and beyond.

### Project website:

[www.interreg-danube.eu/projects/pilotinncities](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/projects/pilotinncities)



# Action Plan for Adoption of Agile Piloting

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# Introduction

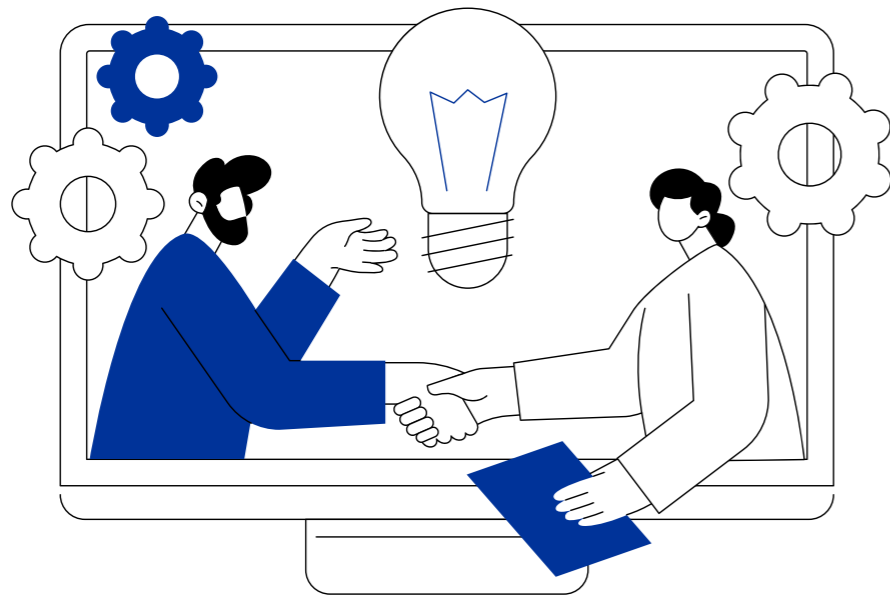
This Action Plan is committed to facilitating the emergence of innovation ecosystems by providing step-by-step support to decision-makers at national, regional and local levels.

The following five steps outline the strategic and organisational prerequisites for adopting Agile Piloting as a governance instrument. They are designed to guide decision-makers through the transition from intention to operational readiness:

- STEP 1** addresses the formulation of clear strategic objectives aligned with broader policy priorities.
- STEP 2** concerns the identification of relevant ecosystem actors, existing initiatives and potential synergies.
- STEP 3** describes the composition and competencies of an effective execution team.
- STEP 4** provides guidance on financial resource allocation and budgetary planning.
- STEP 5** outlines the institutional and administrative conditions necessary to enable implementation.

The timeline at the end of the document provides an indicative framework for timing and completion of these steps.

The Action Plan is intended to be read alongside the Agile Piloting Methodology, which provides detailed guidance for execution teams responsible for day-to-day implementation. Where this document establishes the runway, the Methodology serves as the flight manual.



## STEP 1 | DEFINING A STRATEGIC GOAL

Thorough reflection at the outset prevents avoidable course corrections later. Before initiating any activity, it is essential to clearly articulate why an Agile Piloting programme is being launched and for whom it is intended to deliver value.

Agile Piloting offers three principal strategic benefits. Their relative importance depends on the type and function of the implementing institution within the national or regional ecosystem.

### 1. Competitiveness of startups and innovative SMEs

Early-stage experimentation and validation accelerate solutions along the innovation cycle. Agile Piloting helps identify high-potential champions with globally relevant, leading-edge solutions and strengthens their competitiveness by reducing time to market and generating early project-references that support scaling and expansion.

→ This objective is typically prioritised by economic ministries, business development agencies, innovation centres and mission-driven venture funds.

### 2. Serving local communities

Agile Piloting provides a structured mechanism to identify specific categorical challenges (e. g. territorial, social, institutional...) and target them through context-sensitive interventions. The result is improved quality of life through solutions that are locally relevant and practically validated. With appropriate facilitation, disruption can be channelled as a constructive force—strengthening procedural and methodological capacities and accelerating development rather than triggering resistance to change.

→ This objective is typically prioritised by regional development ministries, regional and local governments, and community development organisations.

### 3. Capacity and trust building

Co-creation processes strengthen a culture of collaboration and gradually transform fragmented actors into a more coherent and interconnected ecosystem. Stakeholders learn to combine complementary strengths, develop new competencies, and compensate for institutional limitations. Agile Piloting functions as a practical training vehicle grounded in learning-by-doing principles, reinforcing both institutional capacity and inter-organisational trust.

→ This objective is typically prioritised by regional development agencies, NGOs and educational institutions.

While these three benefits are mutually reinforcing, institutions operate within defined mandates, competences and accountability frameworks. Pursuing objectives that are misaligned with the implementing or funding institution's role may weaken long-term sustainability and dilute impact.

It is therefore essential to:

- define the intended outputs clearly;
- identify the primary target groups you aim to serve;
- specify how your intervention is expected to create measurable value for them.

The intended impact should be clearly defined and passed on to the execution team as it greatly impacts the topic choices of open calls, the selection criteria for the solutions and further functional features of Agile Piloting runs.

## STEP 2 | IDENTIFYING A CLEAR STANDING WITHIN THE ECOSYSTEM

Agile Piloting does not operate in isolation. Its effectiveness is greatly determined by its alignment with the surrounding institutional landscape. This creates heightened responsibility: avoiding duplication, reinforcing complementarities and building on existing capacities are essential for long-term viability and institutional credibility.

Agile Piloting can begin with modest objectives and a minimal configuration. For example, a municipality may allocate or secure funding for collaboration with a regional startup incubator as a one-off experiment to address a specific local challenge or to provide municipal staff with hands-on experience of innovation as a learning exercise. However, such a configuration offers limited systemic impact and should therefore be viewed as a starting point rather than a strategic destination.

A more ambitious configuration of Agile Piloting begins to function as a visible ecosystem-shaping instrument with long-term effects. In this model, the programme may pursue broader objectives such as positioning a region as a lighthouse for innovation, developing national or global excellence in a specific field, attracting talent and entrepreneurs, and building a strong brand and collaboration networks. Achieving this requires a coalition of synchronised stakeholders operating both within and beyond the hosting territory.

Developing a national or regional stakeholder mapping and analysis enables the transition from a minimal configuration to a more ambitious one, amplifying the impact of the Agile Piloting programme. This mapping exercise transforms a complex web of actors and interactions into a transparent and navigable system. It enables decision-makers to:

- deliberately shape strategic relationships;
- pool and optimise financial and organisational resources;
- ensure that all critical functions required for Agile Piloting are adequately covered.

Institutions operating at national level should focus on the country-wide structure. Those operating at regional or local level should focus on the territorial ecosystem. In both cases, close attention to vertical linkages between governance levels is essential. Agile Piloting often starts locally, but successful solutions may progress towards national replication and internationalisation. Identifying these channels early clarifies the institution's role within the full innovation cycle.

*When mapping your ecosystem, pay particular attention to the following categories:*

### 1. Actors whose objectives align with the implementation's

Identify organisations pursuing similar goals and review their existing programmes, funding schemes and networks. These actors may provide immediate synergies and should ideally be contacted early in the process. Ignoring them risks duplication of effort, fragmentation of resources and unnecessary competition.

### 2. Complementary strategic partners

Identify stakeholders whose mandates and competencies complement your institutional role. They may strengthen dimensions that are not central to your own mission—whether competitiveness and excellence, or cohesion and community development, or capacity and trust building. Balanced ecosystem development requires all these aspects.

## Step 2 | Identifying a Clear Standing within the Ecosystem

### 3. Upstream and downstream harmonisations

Identify actors and/or projects whose outputs can serve as inputs to your Agile Piloting programme—or who could expand the project's impact. Examples include: technology research institutes & incubators, regional and national governance actors, existing networking & knowledge-sharing platforms, publicly funded national and international projects. These linkages strengthen continuity along the innovation pipeline.

### 4. Communication multipliers

Identify entities with established reach and credibility among key target groups—particularly startups, innovative businesses and proactive municipalities. These intermediary entities may include innovation hubs, thematic media platforms, development agencies, clusters, chambers of commerce and sectoral associations. Effective outreach significantly influences the quality and diversity of pilot applicants.

### 5. Expert capacity providers

Identify academic institutions, specialised NGOs and consultancy firms capable of supplying high-level expertise during various phases of the Agile Piloting process—as evaluators, mentors, advisors or quality assurance experts. Strong expert involvement enhances legitimacy and methodological rigour.

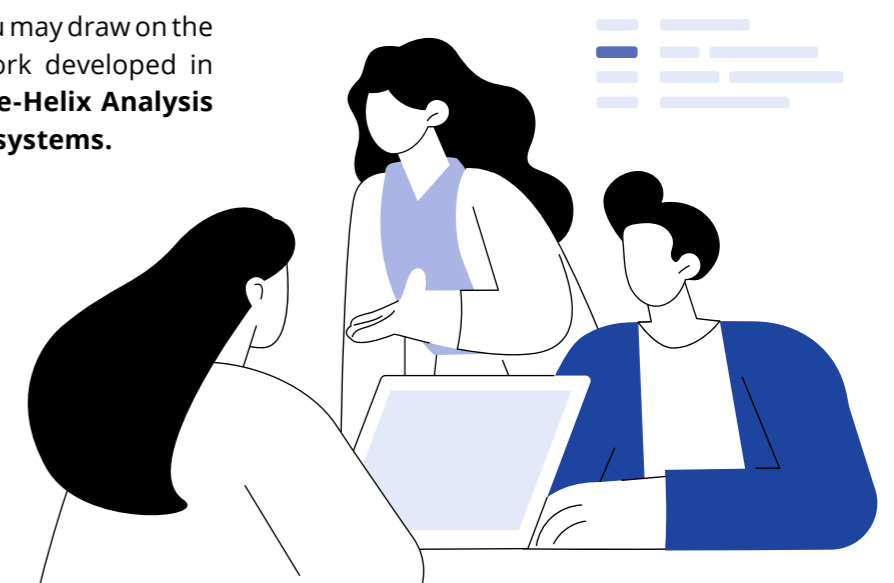
As methodological support, you may draw on the stakeholder-mapping framework developed in the **Benchmarking Quadruple-Helix Analysis of Smart City Innovation Ecosystems**.

Stakeholder mapping is not an analytical exercise for its own sake. It is a foundation for structured partnership development. The execution team shares the responsibility of engaging the actors and identifying the more reliable high-performing partners on a continuous basis.

Develop a shared understanding of governance priorities and clarify your programme's strategic purpose within that structure. Set long-term objectives for shaping the innovation landscape, using your Agile Piloting programme as a deliberate and central instrument—not an isolated initiative.

### Benchmarking Quadruple-Helix Analysis of Smart City Innovation Ecosystems

*Available for download here*



# STEP 3 | BUILDING AN ELITE EXECUTION TEAM

Agile Piloting is methodologically straightforward. However, its effective implementation requires the ability to navigate institutional complexity, facilitate cooperation across diverse stakeholder groups and manage uncertainty with composure and foresight. A competent, motivated and stable team is therefore indispensable. The designation “elite” reflects the level of professionalism required. Shaping an innovation ecosystem demands not only procedural competence, but strategic judgement, resilience and facilitation excellence. When the competence level of the organising team does not match—or ideally—exceed that of the participants, opportunities for wider ecosystem learning and spillover effects diminish.

*In practice, three core roles must be covered.*

A team configured within the following parameters can typically manage one annual open call cycle comprising approximately 4–8 pilot experiments.

As previously noted, the team may be multi-institutional. In regional ecosystems with specialised organisations operating in close alignment, shared staffing arrangements can increase both efficiency and ownership.

Investment in team capacity and training yields the highest return. The quality of execution directly determines:

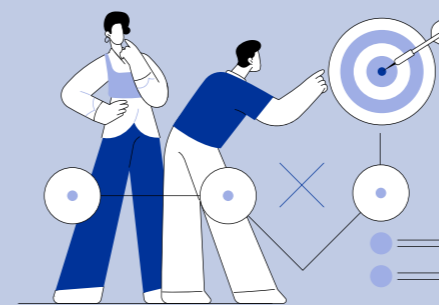
- the experience of participating stakeholders;
- the credibility of the programme;
- the likelihood of scaling successful solutions;
- the long-term impact on the governance structure.

If such a team is not yet available, “targeted training” needs not be elaborate: depending on the team’s prior experience, a structured self-study period using publicly available resources may be sufficient. The Agile Piloting Methodology has been developed with EU co-funding, and valuable resources are hosted through PilotInnCities (Interreg Danube) and CommuniCity (Horizon Europe). These materials are designed to de-risk implementation by providing validated, step-by-step guidance for first-time adopters.

Where additional support is needed, experienced practitioners—including partners of the PilotInnCities consortium—can provide external expertise to assist with initial programme design and early implementation phases.



## 1. PROJECT / IMPLEMENTATION MANAGER



### ROLE

They carry primary responsibility for overall coordination, timeline management and delivery of results. They require the highest level of capacity and seniority within the team.

### KEY COMPETENCIES

advanced project management skills, strong facilitation and mediation capabilities, solid understanding of both startup and municipal environments, operational flexibility and structured improvisation

### MINIMUM SETUP

1.0 FTE for one year—one full-time senior project manager with overall responsibility. The main limitation of this configuration is the absence of substitution capacity.

### IDEAL SETUP

1.5–2.0 FTE permanently—either a senior–junior tandem enabling workload distribution and continuity; or a joint arrangement between two aligned organisations (e.g., a regional innovation centre and a regional development agency) with clearly divided responsibilities. This structure improves resilience, institutional anchoring and ecosystem integration.

## 2. FINANCIAL MANAGER

### ROLE

They oversee all financial expenditures, ensure financial integrity as well as administrative and legal compliance.

### KEY COMPETENCIES

precision, procedural discipline, deep knowledge of the institutional financial regulations and strong attention to detail

### MINIMUM SETUP

0.2 FTE for one year—limited strictly to budget management and financial transactions.

### IDEAL SETUP

0.5 FTE permanently—full responsibility for administrative and compliance processes, including procurement, contracting and approval procedures, thereby allowing the project manager(s) to focus primarily on content and stakeholder coordination.



## 3. COMMUNICATION MANAGER



### ROLE

They manage all publicity-related activities and is critical for the broader systemic impact of the programme. They significantly enhance visibility, transparency, stakeholder engagement and dissemination of lessons learned and validated solutions.

### KEY COMPETENCIES

strategic communication planning, documentation and storytelling of pilot outcomes, proactiveness with pilots’ communication plans

### MINIMUM SETUP

0.2 FTE for one year—communication responsibilities partially delegated to pilot participants and project managers.

### IDEAL SETUP

0.5 FTE permanently—proactive communication with the pilot participants, structured stakeholder outreach and development of a wide-reaching communication strategy. Strong communication increases the quality of applications, strengthens legitimacy and supports scaling of successful pilots.

## STEP 4 | ALLOCATING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Agile Piloting can transform relatively modest financial inputs into systemic, multi-layered impact. However, it still requires deliberate investment. Its main advantage lies in modularity: an Agile Piloting programme can start small (both in budget and intended impact) and progressively scale.

Agile Piloting does not necessarily need to be financed entirely by the implementing institution. Various funding programmes could fully or partially cover implementation costs. The scope of implementation could also be adjusted to match the available funding. Programmes focused on territorial cohesion may favour addressing specific regional issues, while those oriented toward industrial competitiveness would more likely support piloting rounds aimed at enabling first reference projects for leading-edge innovations.

The source of funding matters, as it directly affects administrative requirements and reporting obligations. To preserve the effectiveness of Agile Piloting, funding arrangements should keep administrative burdens as light as possible.

Beyond the financing of the core execution team (see STEP 3), financial expenditures will also involve an “external services” category which typically covers:

- 1. Piloting services of selected solution providers**  
(direct financial support for implementation of pilot experiments)
- 2. External expert involvement**  
(jurors, mentors, evaluators, technical advisors and quality assurance)
- 3. Communication, marketing and events**  
(outreach, dissemination, visibility and stakeholder engagement)

While items 2 and 3 may appear secondary, they are critical for ensuring methodological integrity and systemic impact respectively.

A remuneration of experts ensures commitment, accountability and availability—conditions that informal or non-contractual arrangements rarely guarantee. Similarly, structured communication is not merely promotional. It supports knowledge transfer, strengthens institutional legitimacy and builds the narrative necessary to justify continued investment.

### 1. Minimal scenario: EUR 60,000 external services allocation

- 40,000 pilot funding + 10,000 expert services + 10,000 communication
- Enables approximately 2–4 pilot experiments
- Suitable as a proof-of-concept round
- Generates initial ecosystem learning

This configuration enables basic implementation but offers limited systemic impact. It should therefore be viewed as a starting point rather than a strategic destination.

### 2. Recommended strategic scenario: EUR 150,000 external services allocation

- 100,000 pilot funding + 30,000 expert services + 20,000 communication
- Enables approximately 4–8 pilot experiments
- Attracts stronger applicants
- Ensures professional evaluation and mentoring
- Supports structured dissemination and scaling

At this level, Agile Piloting begins to function as a visible ecosystem-shaping instrument rather than a small intervention.

## Step 4 | Allocating Financial Resources

National tendering limits can also play a role in deciding the amount of funding to be allocated. But either way: continuity matters. Agile Piloting achieves its full potential when implemented in consecutive rounds. Predictability of funding

strengthens trust among stakeholders, quality of applications, institutional learning and systemic behavioural change. On the other hand, one-off calls rarely generate lasting structural impact.

## STEP 5 | PAVING THE ADMINISTRATIVE WAY

Institutional readiness is a decisive success factor for Agile Piloting. Even a well-designed programme with a strong team and adequate funding can stall if internal procedures are not aligned.

Agile Piloting introduces a structured yet innovative procurement and contracting approach. While fully compliant with legal requirements and transparency standards, this model may not always fit neatly within existing internal regulations or standardised administrative routines.

Where procedural gaps arise, adjustments may be required. These can include:

- clarifying or adapting internal guidelines;
- granting targeted exemptions where legally permissible;
- negotiating practical solutions with responsible administrative units.

The first piloting cycle will inevitably involve elements of learning-by-doing administrative calibration. However, careful preparation and early engagement with internal stakeholders significantly reduce institutional turbulence.

A clear endorsement of the Agile Piloting programme by the birthing institution is particularly critical to ensure a wider impact. In that regard, the management can help create the necessary operational space for the team through:

### 1. Providing a clear mandate

Ensure the execution team has an explicit and formal mandate. This gives them the authority to coordinate across departments and engage service units constructively. Internal units may naturally prioritise procedural stability and risk minimisation. Clear leadership endorsement ensures that innovation objectives receive appropriate institutional weight.

### 2. Signalling strategic priority

Support the team during key internal discussions. Clearly communicate that Agile Piloting is a strategic priority and requires cross-departmental cooperation. Establish expectations of collaboration rather than siloed protection of competences.

### 3. Remaining accessible for escalation

Stay sufficiently close to the programme to intervene when necessary. Timely leadership intervention can unblock procedural deadlocks and prevent disproportionate delays.

### 4. Redefining success and failure

Agile Piloting is built on experimentation. Not every pilot will reach its intended conclusion—and not every administrative step will be perfectly calibrated from the outset. Each roadblock encountered is a valuable learning opportunity to enhance the institution’s capacity for risk assessment & management thereof: ultimately increasing its agility beyond the programme.

### 5. Acting as an ambassador

Publicly acknowledge achievements and lessons learned. Endorsement reinforces internal motivation and external credibility. Visible leadership support strengthens the programme's legitimacy and encourages broader ecosystem participation.

Once the strategic course is set and the runway is cleared through these five steps, the execution team shall be entrusted with the next ten. The Agile Piloting Methodology provides the manual for operating the aircraft—enabling controlled takeoff, steady navigation and responsible landing.

Each Agile Piloting cycle strengthens institutional competence. Each validated solution builds confidence. Each collaboration reinforces trust. Over time, what begins as a programme evolves into a lasting institutional capability, generating prosperity for your country, region or city.

*Your decision initiates the journey. Your sustained commitment determines its impact.*

## Suggested Timeline

### YEAR 1 | PREPARATORY PHASE

The proposed timeline is designed to provide realistic guidance even for institutions with no prior experience in this field. The duration of this preparatory phase may be shortened if your organisation already benefits from favourable

starting conditions, such as strong internal flexibility, prior experience with innovation procurement or pilot schemes, established cross-departmental cooperation, and available execution capacity.

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>STEP 1</b>	■						■			■		
<b>STEP 2</b>			■		■						■	
<b>STEP 3</b>			■			■						
<b>STEP 4</b>		■		■					■			
<b>STEP 5</b>			■				■					

The timeline illustrates typical sequencing; overlap between steps is expected.

Legend: ■ = low intensity ■ = high intensity

### STEP 1 | Define your priorities early and revisit them regularly.

Clarify your goals thoroughly at the outset. Any step in the wrong direction only increases the cost of correction later. As your understanding deepens through ecosystem mapping and interaction with stakeholders, revisit and refine these goals to ensure continued strategic alignment.

### STEP 2 | Start from within and treat ecosystem mapping as a continuous function.

Ecosystem mapping is not a one-off exercise; it continuously reveals new layers. Begin internally and within your closest institutional circle to identify suitable candidates for the execution team (STEP 3) and secure early wins. Then gradually expand the scope of your analysis to more distant actors and additional levels of the ecosystem. The initial six months of intensive mapping should establish a high level of ecosystem insight that is then systematically maintained and refined. Agile Piloting cycles themselves contribute to sustaining and updating this strategic awareness.

### STEP 3 | Use preparation processes to build and validate your elite team.

Leverage ecosystem mapping (STEP 2) and internal negotiations (STEP 5) as practical testing grounds for identifying capable and reliable individuals. Use this phase deliberately not only to assemble your execution team, but also to verify its competence, coordination and autonomy across project management, finance, administration and communication.

### STEP 4 | Secure financial feasibility: first in principle, then in detail.

Ideally, develop a multi-cycle budgetary plan and validate its administrative feasibility through an internal review before formal commitment. Confirm the overall financial concept at a strategic level first, then refine it through a detailed examination of reporting, procurement, approval and cash-flow requirements. This process should build on the increased understanding of institutional conditions gained through ecosystem mapping (STEP 2) and internal negotiations (STEP 5).

### STEP 5 | Consider all details before launching and ensure regular maintenance.

Conduct an iterative institutional check alongside the initial financial validation (STEP 4). Start early and continue refining the procedural framework until responsibilities, approvals and operational steps are fully clear. If constraints emerge at an early stage, intensify preparation and procedural alignment accordingly. Leaving any administrative aspect unresolved may jeopardise the feasibility and credibility of your Agile Piloting programme, even during implementation. Throughout the process, maintain periodic review to preserve agility and prevent unnecessary procedural burdens from accumulating.



## YEAR 2 | FIRST FULL IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

Navigate this phase with your execution team using the Agile Piloting Methodology. Apply the structured process consistently, document lessons learned and ensure that evaluation, communication and stakeholder engagement are integrated from the outset.

## YEAR 3 | CONSOLIDATION AND SCALING PHASE

This phase focuses on embedding Agile Piloting as a stable governance instrument and expanding its systemic reach. As this stage is currently being explored through follow-up work of PilotInnCities project partners, comprehensive long-term guidance is still under development. However, additional insights and structured recommendations will be made available before institutions entering this phase require them.

## FINAL WORDS: Clearance for Takeoff

The five steps outlined in this Action Plan establish the conditions for a controlled departure. With the appropriate objectives, the right ecosystem overview and intervention function, a competent execution team, and the appropriate resources and administrative support: the runway is prepared.

### What remains is the flight itself.

The complementary Agile Piloting Methodology document serves as the flight manual for this journey. It provides execution teams with structured guidance through each phase of implementation: from open call launch and selection of pilots, through facilitation and management of the implementation, to evaluation, documentation and communication of results. Where this Action Plan addresses the question of institutional readiness, the Methodology addresses the question of operational execution.

Agile Piloting is ideally not a single journey, but a series of iterative cycles—each one benefiting from compounding institutional confidence, operational capacity and validated knowledge. What begins as a programme becomes, over time, a durable capability—one that positions cities, regions and countries not as passive recipients of technological change, but as active shapers of innovation ecosystems.

*The strategic course is set.  
The execution now rests with your flight crew.*

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Lead partner:



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