



IN-HABIT – INclusive Health And wellBeing In small and medium size ciTies

D2.2 Innovative PPPs and financial mechanisms for IHW in Riga

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GA	Grant Agreement
GDEI	Gender, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
H2020	Horizon 2020 projects
IHW	Inclusive Health and Wellbeing
PPPP	People-public-private-partnerships
SMSCs	Small and medium sized cities
VIS	Visionary and integrated solutions
WP	Work Package



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PARTNERS' SHORT NAMES

AVUE	Neighbourhood Association of Las Palmeras
BOT	Book on a Tree
BSC	Baltic Studies Centre
B4B	Bridge for Billions
CORD	Ayuntamiento de Córdoba
DFC	Design for Change Spain
HIDE	Hidepark Civic Association Triptych
KQ	Kalneciema Quarter
LABORELEC	Engie Laborelec
LCREA	Lucca Crea
LUCCA	Comune di Lucca
NITRA	Mesto Nitra
PUJ	Pontificia Universidad Javeriana



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RIGA	Riga Planning Region
SUA	Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra
TSR	Tesseræ
UCO	University of Cordoba
UNIFI	Università di Pisa
UREAD	University of Reading



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Executive summary

- **Holistic transformation:** Āgenskalns Market in Riga has been transformed into a multifunctional urban food hub, addressing inclusion, health, and wellbeing.
- **Hybrid innovation:** The market's success lies in its composite nature – combining social, infrastructural, and financial elements – which can serve as a model for other urban food hubs.
- **Stakeholder engagement in PPPs:** The market team engages with residents, NGOs, private and public sectors, and local activists in PPPs, ensuring community input shapes the market's development.
- **Collaborative governance:** The project relies on a core team that collaborated with an advisory group and a broader community of stakeholders, fostering an inclusive and adaptive PPP framework.
- **Informal governance and social capital:** Success is enabled by informal networks and trust-based relationships, allowing for flexible collaboration, and a combination of formal structures and more fluid, relationship-based collaborations as the project progresses.
- **Socially conscious and pragmatic:** Balancing social enterprise ideals with financial sustainability is an ongoing challenge, requiring careful financial planning and strategic partnerships.
- **Financial diversity for sustainability:** Diversified revenue streams (rent, tourism services, project funding) and long-term lease agreements ensure operational resilience while balancing commercial viability with social impact.
- **Scaling up:** To replicate this model, a unified market cooperation platform is proposed to promote knowledge exchange, advocacy for supportive policies, and overcoming regulatory and funding barriers.



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Introduction

The IN-HABIT project investigates how visionary and integrated solutions (VIS) can foster Inclusive Health and Wellbeing (IHW) with a focus on gender, equity, diversity and inclusion (GDEI) in four European peripheral small and medium-sized cities - Cordoba (Spain), Riga (Latvia), Lucca (Italy) and Nitra (Slovakia).



Figure 1. Āgenskalns Market, front view with main entrance.



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Our interventions can be considered visionary because, by putting vulnerable collectives at the centre of the innovative solutions, we are mobilising existing undervalued resources, such as culture, food, human-animal bonds, environment and art, to boost IHW, overcoming the limited health and wellbeing provision for these collectives.

And integrated because we combine ‘soft’ solutions based on social and cultural actions with ‘hard’ solutions such as nature-based solutions, infrastructures and digital tools. Soft and hard VIS are articulated around heritage and culture in Córdoba (as a nexus for inclusive societies), food in Riga (nurturing daily healthier lifestyles), animals in Lucca (human-animal bonds as new relational urban goods) and art and environment in Nitra (to connect places and people). The pilot in each city targets a different urban scale in the area of intervention and works with different vulnerable collectives.

All cities follow a similar methodological and conceptual approach. In each city, an IN-HUB (IN-inclusive, HUB, central focus of activity and connection) is created. According to the IN-HABIT Glossary, the IN-HUB is a laboratory of social innovation where people coming from different public and private organisations or as individuals work together for social change. It is a networking strategy for enhancing cooperation aimed at the co-design and co-management of spaces and a platform for structural dialogue and collaboration. The IN-HUB is both a physical place for meeting and sharing and an governance structure to facilitate the transformative process in the cities.

The IN-HUBs are the IN-HABIT People-Public-Private Partnerships (PPPPs) aiming to mobilise human resources and supports VIS co-design, co-deployment, co-management, and co-monitoring processes with city stakeholders (CO-CO-CO-CO method). They work as inclusive innovation labs that function as the main operational and governance framework through which the city's inclusive transformation strategies are articulated.

The IN-HUBs operate at the science-society-policy interface, where diverse actors meet to undertake practical work, share and transfer knowledge, deliver evidence, assess impact, and



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shape the future legacy of the project. This collaborative approach enables civic, public, and private sector actors to work together, ensuring everyone feels included and part of the solution, and aims to find the best solutions to improve IHW. IN-HABIT not only builds capacities within vulnerable communities but also fosters community building and enhances willingness to collaborate.

Rather than acting as a traditional coordination body, the IN-HUB is a shared platform, structured as a dynamic space for collaboration, decision-making, and action. By integrating CO-CO-CO-CO methods and GDEI tools into PPPP frameworks, the project aims to ensure that vulnerability and inequalities are not merely acknowledged but actively transformed into capacities for growth and development. In this way, PPPPs serve not only as a governance system but also as a transformation model, enabling communities to transition from vulnerability and inequality towards collective agency.

PPPPs and financial mechanisms for IHW in Riga

In Riga, several soft and hard VIS were designed and implemented at a multi-functional urban food hub (Āgenskalns Market). Soft VIS included numerous economic (trade), social, cultural, environmental and educational events. Hard VIS refer to various infrastructural solutions that were developed as part of the project. These include the transformation of the outdoor marketplace, installation of a lift and co-creation kitchen in the market pavilion and the creation of an eco-island for reducing waste

In Riga, the IN-HUB focused on the transformation of a traditional urban neighbourhood market into a multifunctional urban food hub. The team focuses on food (the locally undervalued resource in Riga) as a point of departure for addressing broader issues associated with IHW and sustainability as part of the project. The market is, therefore, conceptualised as a multifunctional and inclusive space that fosters social, cultural, and economic participation. The IN-HUB and PPPPs were conceived as formations that could facilitate this, without introducing unnecessary procedural obstacles, while simultaneously allowing for the inclusion of various perspectives.



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Base on information collected throughout the project and interviews with key participants, this deliverable documents the partnerships and governance and financial mechanisms of the Riga IN-HUB.



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Conceptualising PPPP and the IN-HUB in Riga

The **organisation and governance of the Riga IN-HUB** were initially envisaged as a set of three concentric circles of actors. These actors would carry out their tasks by interacting among themselves and networking with other stakeholders, while being primarily driven by the vision of the core team (RPR, BSC and KQ) of project partners. It was decided in the initial stages (M1-M6) by the core team that this approach would allow for structure and continuity, while simultaneously encouraging regular feedback from stakeholders not directly involved in the project. This would facilitate a continuous revision of ideas proposed by the core team in general, and the practice partner (KQ) in particular.

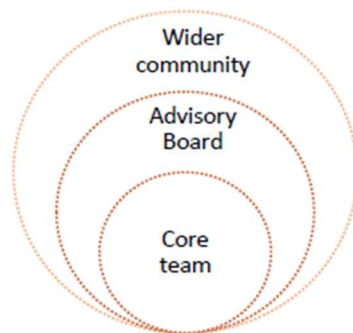


Figure 2. The Riga IN-HUB

The **first IN-HUB circle consists of the core group**. The core team comprises three project partners who have agreed on their roles and responsibilities in line with the project’s requirements. The core group held meetings approximately every two weeks to discuss ongoing activities and plan future events. This rhythm was maintained throughout the duration of the project.

The **second circle is the enlarged group**, which includes the members of the core group, a small number of development specialists, activists, and representatives of various organisations and



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associations. This is exemplified by the user advisory board (UAB), which consists of the core team and ten individuals not directly involved in the project who were recruited via an open call. The first meeting took place in March 2021. Members of the UAB came from different organisations and represented different stakeholder groups, some of which are at risk of social discrimination and exclusion. For example, the representative of LGBT organisation “Mozaika” and the chairperson of an ethnic minority organisation joined the UAB.

In practice, members of the UAB also acted as community representatives as many of the organisations represented on the UAB were also identified in the stakeholder mapping exercise. Consequently, in addition to their responsibilities on the UAB, they were also involved in outreach activities and ensuring that a GDEI perspective was present at all stages of the project. Subsequently, a memorandum of cooperation was drafted to agree upon principles of collaboration, and statutes were prepared to organise work within the advisory board. The UAB held meetings approximately twice a year.

The **outermost circle** refers to the residents of Āgenskalns neighbourhood, local community groups and other actors interested in the future development of Āgenskalns market. This is the most loosely defined “circle” as it includes everyone participating in activities aimed at generating ideas for the future of Āgenskalns as part of IN-HABIT and even before the project. Despite its less clear identity, this circle has been regularly involved in IN-HABIT activities (e.g. co-creation workshops, community surveys) and has been a regular source of input that allowed the core team to revise the initial plans for Āgenskalns market. The outermost circle forms also the publics of numerous social, cultural and educational events and activities organised at the market.

While the approach described above provides an account of the initial stages of the project and the identification of key forms of intervention (VIS), **subsequent collaboration within the IN-HUB took a more fluid and episodic form**. The market team (KQ) remained the key actor and collaborated closely with the other members of the core team, but interactions with other stakeholders became less formal and less regulated by formal agreements among all



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stakeholders involved. Instead, agreements, both formal and informal, have been made between individual stakeholders and parties involved in the implementation of specific activities or projects.

Consequently, in the context of thinking about PPPP and the IN-HUB, it is of utmost importance to consider the feasibility of an **iteratively adapted model** of governance that develops along with the project. This mode of operation foresees a key role for a leading partner, but everything is created in synergy and collaboration with the relevant stakeholder groups. Crucially, this means that the direction and success depend on the key actors' ideas, material and immaterial resources (such as economic resources, time, voluntary work), the available funding and the social capital accumulated by key partners to ensure that they are trusted by relevant stakeholders. During the project the social capital – mutual trust, reliance, participation – increased and became more distributed and shared throughout the three circles of the IN-HUB. Therefore, the model of governance developed alongside social capital accumulation in the whole network.

This is neatly illustrated by our (Riga) example. The initial ideas for implementing solutions at the market mainly come from the market management team. The market team plays the main, coordinating role in the networks of collaboration. It is the central node in the network through which everything passes. However, there is continuous collaboration with NGOs, the public and private sectors and local residents. Citizens directly communicate their needs, and the market strives to implement them. While there was initially a memorandum of understanding and a UAB (a formal structure) guiding the work, over time, a living network of cooperation developed with the market team as the core of the IN-HUB that is respected by and receptive to input from others and enables PPPPs.

In summary, in our case the IN-HUB and facilitation of PPPP are enabled by a growing network of connections maintained and enlarged on the basis of social capital that coalesce around a key partner with its own vision that is nonetheless amenable to revision.



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IN-HUB stakeholders in Riga

While the Riga IN-HUB has involved a wide variety of stakeholders, only a few have been constant. Specifically, the core project team, which consists of Riga's three project partners. Each partner has their primary responsibilities.

KQ is the main practice partner. KQ manages an urban quarter that regularly hosts cultural and business events, such as festivals, concerts, film screening, exhibitions, and design shops, as well as a popular and prominent weekly farmers' and artisanal market. KQ's team is in charge of (i) implementing the Āgenskalns market renovation and modernisation project, and (ii) drawing on a range of previously established contacts and relations, facilitating stakeholder engagement. This gives them a key role in designing and implementing the VIS.

BSC is the research partner. It is a private non-profit research organisation. BSC's team coordinates, monitors and documents all IN-HUB activities, and facilitates stakeholder engagement with the help of KQ. BSC had a key role in designing monitoring and evaluation activities.

The public partner RPR is one of five planning regions in Latvia, and their responsibility is the planning and coordination of socio-economic development in the greater Riga region. RPR acts as a bridge to other municipalities and municipal agendas in the greater Riga planning region. RPR is primarily responsible for achieving policy and planning impact via replication and upscaling.

In the initial meetings of the core team, a stakeholder mapping exercise was carried out. The core team identified several stakeholder groups that would likely be affected by the development of Āgenskalns Market and should be approached to participate in co-creation exercises and join the UAB. Furthermore, their potential role and interest in the development of Āgenskalns Market were also discussed to ensure that they could be involved in the project at the appropriate moment.



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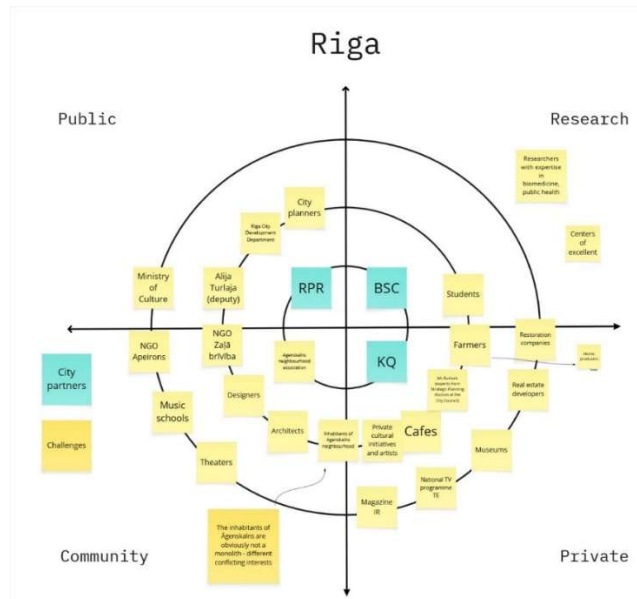


Figure 3. Stakeholder map, November 2020.

It was agreed that the primary stakeholders who should be directly involved in the project are the residents of Āgenskalns and the neighbourhood association of Āgenskalns. However, the variety of organisations and individuals identified was quite broad, ranging from environmental NGOs and entrepreneurs who are active in the neighbourhood, to state and municipal institutions. These stakeholders have been and will continue to be approached to participate in thematically relevant events and co-creation workshops.



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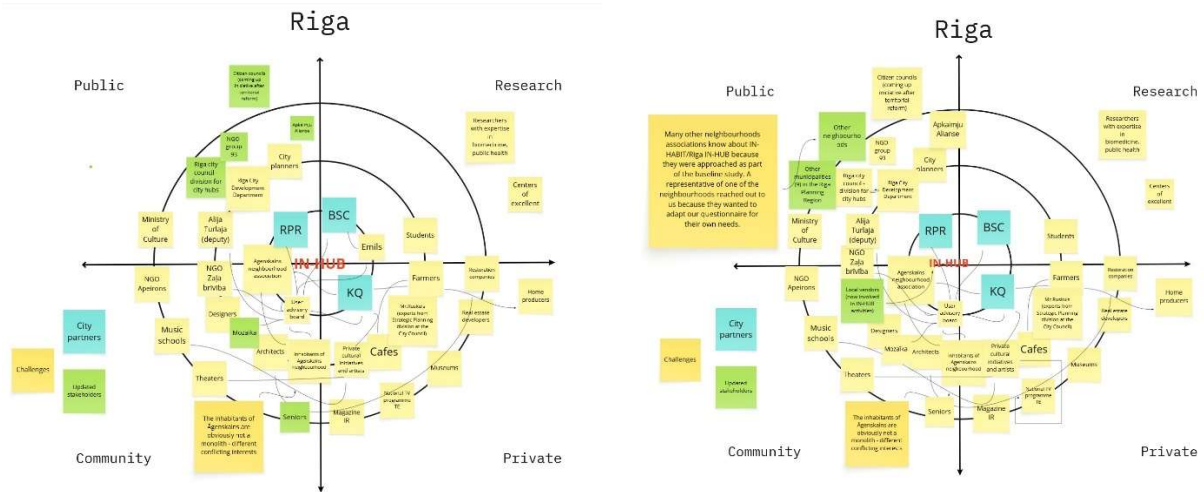


Figure 4. Stakeholder maps, 2021.

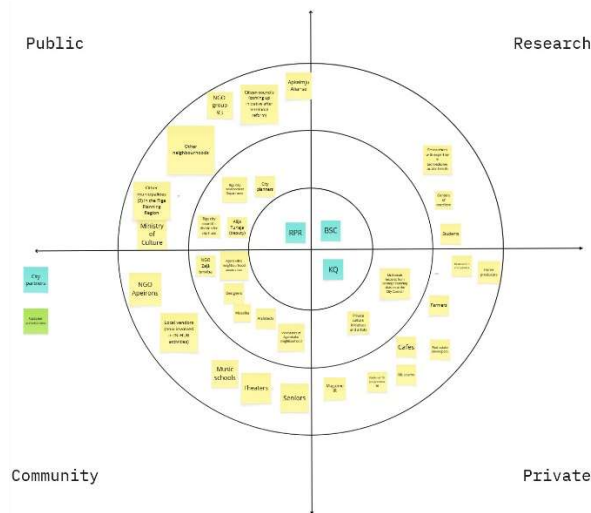


Figure 5. Stakeholder map, 2022.



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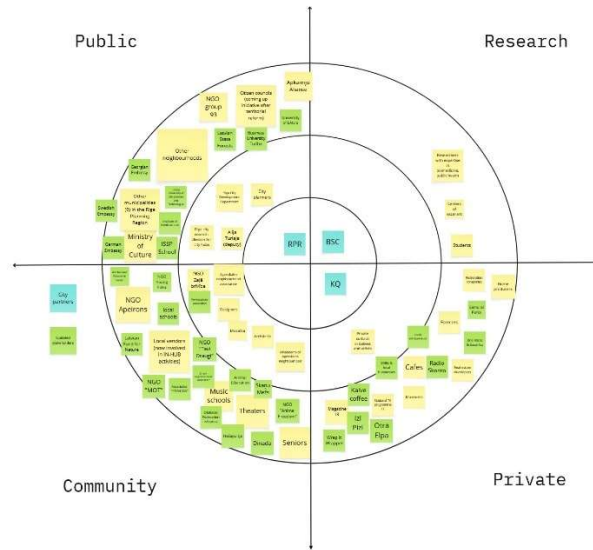


Figure 6. Stakeholder map, 2023.

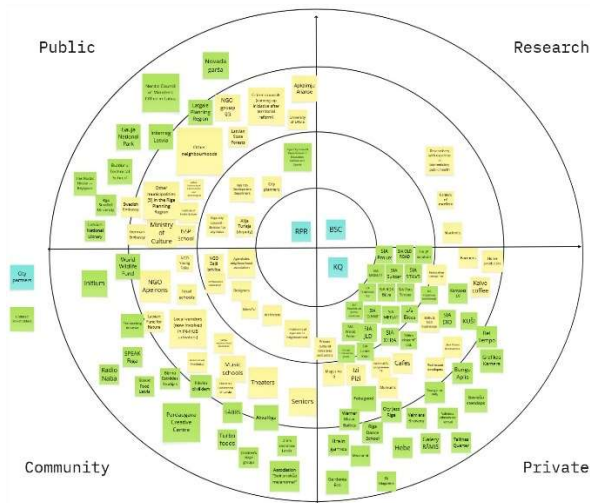


Figure 7. Stakeholder map, 2024.



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The above stakeholder maps show the gradual evolution of the relationships. We note that the number and range of stakeholders and partners with whom the market has a formal or informal relationship has increased and expanded. In particular, we note that this is true of public, community and private stakeholders, highlighting the varied connections the market team has established during the course of the project.

However, **it is equally important to consider the evolution of the relationship between stakeholders and the core team.** When the (re)development of Āgenskalns Market began, a wide variety of community (neighbourhood) activists were involved in advocating for a more contemporary approach to the renovation of the market. The Āgenskalns Neighbourhood Association was established, and the opinions of the community members were included in the vision for the market. Simultaneously, there was an initiative to revitalise the market that came from the Riga City Council, specifically from the Deputy Mayor. These processes happened in parallel and converged on the idea to let the KQ team take over the market. This was the point of departure for IN-HABIT. The prior research and development collaboration between KQ and the research partner BSC also strongly backed up initiation of the IN-HABIT project in Riga.

The next stage was when the market was re-opening. At the very beginning, a wide variety of stakeholders were invited and approached. (“from senior choirs to school groups”). This served several purposes. Firstly, it was a way of disseminating the fact that the market was open. Secondly, it was in line with the idea of a market as an inclusive space for different audiences. Thirdly, it allowed for a diverse repertoire of events and initiatives to unfold. This has changed over time, however. In general, the offer became more diverse and multifunctional. While many new activities were added to the market repertoire, some phased out or diminished in importance.

In the past, we allowed all sorts of experimental events, but now we’ve become more selective - you can no longer just set up an installation in the middle of the market, because there’s no space for it anymore.



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Figure 8. Inside Āgenskalns Market – vendors, cafés and customers.

Now, however, the team notes that they are at a stage where they must evaluate who their strategic partners are. This is primarily based on how and whether it is easy to collaborate and come to an agreement. This largely determines under what conditions stakeholders can get involved in the life of the market. This, however, is a further shift in how relationships with stakeholders are organised. Whereas in the past the market team had to search for cooperation partners and approach them, now it is the other way around. Different stakeholders and partners approach them, and the team has to choose.

Crucially, as the maintenance costs grow, different considerations need to balance. In particular, social and economic costs and gains have to be carefully weighed. There are many



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public activities that do not bring direct profit but incur economic costs. They bring social benefits, such as community participation and IHW effects, but require economic, financial and organisational inputs. A part of these inputs is secured by project (e.g. IN-HABIT) funding, voluntary work of community members, donations from enterprises, public funding for small projects. Nevertheless, the public and social mission of the market which directly targets important IHW dimensions never fully pays back in economic terms. This creates implications for the business and social model which the market adheres to. However, the market team contends that the nature of their relationships with stakeholders has not really changed and care is taken to maintain established relationships.

Even when we only provide the space, involvement is still quite high.

Market representative

Nonetheless, it is also noted that a certain “structure and rhythm” have developed in how the market team collaborates with different stakeholders: businesses, public institutions, NGOs, research and educational organisations. What is more, the identity and reputation (and associated expectations) have shaped the commercial and social operation of the market. Below we describe specificities of collaboration with some types of stakeholders.

- **Commercial stakeholders:** There are some vendors who were unable to find their customer base in the market, and cooperation with them has ended, even though the market team supported them and tried to come up with a mutually beneficial solution. Changes have also occurred within the market itself. Initially, the first floor was to be reserved for local food and the second floor for cafés. But, even though the market is a social enterprise, it has to follow actual trends and provide an offer that targets customers with purchasing power - that is what allows the market to function and sustain itself. On the second floor, there’s also an ongoing struggle between the initial vision (focus on healthy food) because unhealthy food is what is in demand. This profoundly shapes the relationship with commercial stakeholders.



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- **Public institutions:** The market strongly collaborates with Riga municipality, in particular the Development Department and the Housing and Environmental Department of the Riga city. The market is viewed as an innovation that can and should be replicated elsewhere.
- **NGOs:** The market team actively collaborates with different NGOs and community organisations. These include, but are not limited to, cultural, environmental and health NGOs. Of particular note is that collaboration with NGOs is especially fluid as it is organised around specific events and initiatives. Despite its fluid nature, some of these relationships have a long history and are based on the personal ties between market representatives and the people who work for the NGOs.
- **Research and educational organisations:** The market has long-term collaborations with universities (Rīga Stradiņš University, University of Latvia and Riga Technical University), research institutes (BSC) and vocational schools (Bulduri Horticultural College) and local schools. Collaborations frequently take the form of educational events (e.g. nutritional classes) and use of the market as an example and space in university curricula. Crucially, this collaboration also allows the market team to explore different solutions and innovations and also take reflexive stance on their activities (e.g. via IN-HABIT).

In summary, the stakeholder network has evolved over the course of the project, as has their relationship and forms of collaboration with the market team in the IN-HUB. Consistent with the conceptualisation of the IN-HUB and PPPP, the process is stewarded by the market team that tries to balance social and economic needs.



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GDEI Mode of engagement, facilitation and community organising in Riga

The multifunctionality of Āgenskalns Market project is inherently linked to diversity and inclusion. Enrichment and diversification of food hub functions opens up new opportunities for people to engage and participate in market life. For example, socialising and cultural events may compensate for certain exclusionary effects of other developments at the market (e.g. higher prices). These exclusionary trends can be remedied by activity modification and introducing economic or social innovations that target disadvantaged and excluded groups.

The overall approach for developing visionary and integrated solutions (VIS) in the market has been shaped by the GDEI perspective inherent in the project and the mode of operation of the market team.

The project goals were closely aligned with our mission and goals, so we will continue with the culture program, community workshops, outdoor improvement, accessibility measures and waste management.

Market representative

The project provided a framework for the wider engagement of stakeholders in local activities, including stakeholder mapping and local needs assessment. However, we note that groups without institutions or organisations that represent their needs have been challenging to involve.

The community engagement approach in Riga is underpinned by the assumption that consultation and co-creation can significantly enhance inclusivity and diversity in the process of developing the market. The initial needs assessment phase ensures that the offer at the market reflects the voices and diverse perspectives of the entire community, rather than assumptions made by the market team. By employing multiple engagement methods (including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and community forums), our approach aims to capture input



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from community members who may have different communication preferences, schedules, or comfort levels with various forms of participation (though we note that not all groups are equally well represented).

The dual approach of in-person and online consultation sessions further broadens accessibility, accommodating different technological capabilities, physical mobility, work schedules, and participation preferences. This flexibility ensures that both digitally connected and offline community members (or those who prefer offline communication) can contribute meaningfully to the process. The iterative nature of this process, where community feedback continuously refines activities, creates space for different perspectives to influence outcomes even after initial planning phases, preventing early exclusion from becoming permanent.

The co-creation workshops represent a particularly powerful tool for inclusive practice, as they give decision-making power to community members. This collaborative approach encourages residents to not only provide input but to actively shape priorities, develop solutions, and take ownership of implementation (however, the market team often has to take the lead). The ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and reflection phases create sustained opportunities for “course correction” and learning, ensuring that inclusivity remains a dynamic goal. The continuous feedback allows community members to flag exclusionary practices or unintended barriers as they emerge, while the structured reflection sessions provide space for collective learning about what inclusive practices work best for their particular community. This adaptive approach acknowledges that diversity and inclusion are ongoing processes that require constant attention and adjustment, rather than one-time achievements.

The result of the multifunctional and inclusive approach is that it has been possible to bring together different consumers and visitors. Given the relatively niche range of products sold at the market, we acknowledge that the market (as a place to buy goods) primarily caters to those who are interested in more premium products. However, the cultural repertoire brings together people from vastly different social groups (culturally, socially and economically). There are also several projects aimed at ethnic minorities (language learning, cooking together, working with



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refugees), ensuring inclusion. In the beginning, the market team made an effort to organise many youth-oriented events and create a youth-friendly environment. Currently, however, young people and youth events still exist in the market, but they have become less prominent.

However, we note that not all population groups are equally well represented at the market, though this is not the result of exclusionary policies. Indeed, the team notes that most of their followers on social media are women. Many events also manage to consistently attract families. A possible point of contention is that the market team very seldom organises events that would be of specific interest to men or cover traditionally masculine topics. That said, there are also events specifically targeted at men - for example, cooking masterclasses for men who do not know how to cook. Still, the overall atmosphere at the market is characterised as “more feminine”. Also, data from monitoring and evaluation activities suggest that the majority of market visitors and customers tend to younger or middle-aged, while senior citizens form a smaller fraction among of market visitors. While certain economic gentrification effects (prices) may create conditions for the exclusion of seniors, an open and free of charge cultural programme counteracts these exclusionary effects.

In summary, the multifunctionality of the market acts as an instrument of inclusion that counters the crowding out effects of the comparatively higher prices of goods sold at the market. Furthermore, the market follows an “inclusive-by-design” approach that is not tied to a specific strategic document outlining GDEI indicators and KPIs.

We don't create events artificially - events arise from the needs and interests of the stakeholders.

Market representative



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Governance of PPPs in Riga

The general vision for Āgenskalns Market predates the IN-HABIT project. The project provided an opportunity to increase the presence of IHW aspects and further refine the plans of the market team. It also contributed to new VIS by providing infrastructure investment support and enabling many soft measures, such as educational, social and cultural events. This meant that IN-HABIT activities in Riga operated in lockstep with the overall vision of KQ.

The inclusive transformation plan (ITP) was an attempt to combine the project's methodology and conceptual approach and KQ's development plans and actions. While working on the ITP for Āgenskalns Market and the direction that IN-HABIT would take in Riga, the local team took into consideration the local context and the needs of the local community. Different options were explored through community surveys and public workshops with the residents of the neighbourhood and other relevant stakeholders (see above). In summary, **we started with the initial vision proposed by the market team and refined it based on the feedback we received. Thus, the initial version of the ITP was a collective effort, underpinned by the ideas of the key partner.**

This is also reflected in the approach to governance and management in the Riga case study. Market activities are based on a 30-year lease agreement, and this long-term approach informs ongoing community engagement efforts and helps strengthen relationships between KQ and the community. However, it also shapes the management approach. Āgenskalns Market operates under an agreement with Riga municipality, where the main relations are supervisory and regulatory, while market managers have autonomy to implement their vision and participate in municipal tenders for financing cultural and public events.

In practice, the governance model is based on cooperation with local stakeholders, usually multiple bilateral cooperations, to deliver specific solutions or events. However, it is important to note that this relationship has changed over the course of the project. Initially, the IN-HUB



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had a formal structure with a UAB that reviewed and approved the proposals of the market team (see above). This process was followed for the main hard VIS. However, this approach gradually lost its relevance – mainly due to the focus shifting towards soft VIS. **This meant that the nature of the IN-HUB as a managing organism gradually changed, and the facilitation of PPPs and implementation of VIS was mainly coordinated by a single partner - the key node in the network of connections maintained on the basis of social capital accumulated over an extended period of time.** Nonetheless, some coordination functions were self-assumed by community groups and local activists who initiated their own activities at the market. This contributed to shared governance and greater ownership of the market event programme by the community.

Many of these relationships and collaborations are informal in the sense that they're based on trust and specific people. So it's not necessarily a collaboration between different legal entities. It's a collaboration between specific people with specific interests.

Research partner

In terms of formal arrangements and agreements, the situation varies. There are formal agreements with vendors and businesses that wish to sell their goods at the market. Likewise, there is a cooperation memorandum with *Latvia's State Forests*, signed for one year. It does not specify particular activities or forms of cooperation, but it provides a foundation to support the creation of the children's corner on the top floor of the market. For larger events (soft VIS), the market team signs a cooperation agreement with the partner in question that outlines how they take over the space and how they return it. While the partner is responsible for the event, the market team assesses whether this fits with the overall vision of the market.

However, **consistent with the network-like structure of the IN-HUB, the market team stresses that many agreements are initially verbal, which underlines the fact that cooperation tends to be informal.** It is based on relationships and the accrued reputational and social capital, rather than contracts that formalise relationships. This is also illustrated by the



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way the market team communicates with various stakeholders. Specifically, it has been noted that people communicate with the market team directly through social media, via email, or by meeting them in person at the market or calling them on the phone. The relationship is very direct. This also means that the feedback the market team receives is direct and immediate.

Reliance on feedback from stakeholders indicates the initial absence of dedicated human and financial resources that allows them to set up formal organisational structures to systematically implement and monitor progress vis-a-vis the ITP. However, the approach taken in Riga allowed the team to better adapt to changing circumstances, and the team acknowledges that the project has initiated the formalisation of various practices (e.g. monitoring and delegating tasks on Slack) within the organisation to manage and monitor all the processes that take place within the market.

In summary, both the design of the ITP and governance and management mechanisms put in place to implement it, show a combination of formal and informal elements. The formal side is represented by agreements between KQ and the city council, with vendors, different stakeholders and the UAB. The informal side is represented by the network of relationships that allow the market to attract interest and continuously adapt to changing circumstances. Finally, we note that a process of formalisation has gradually taken root within the organisation to ensure that a project of this scale can be successfully managed.



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Implementation & sustainability

The overall approach to design and implementation in Riga generally follows a similar pattern. There is an initial needs assessment to understand the specific needs, interests, and preferences of the community is carried out. This is done through various methods and direct feedback. Based on the needs assessment, a series of community consultation sessions (both in person and online) to gather input and feedback on potential activities are organised. Using the insights gathered, KQ develops proposals that outline the objectives, target audience, format, resources required and expected outcomes of each activity. Stakeholders are subsequently encouraged to provide suggestions. Following the co-creation phase, KQ works closely with community members to finalise the implementation plans for the selected activities. The planned activities are implemented according to the agreed-upon timelines and action plans. During the implementation phase, the Riga team monitors the progress of the activities and collects data on their impact and effectiveness via community feedback and data.

The above mirrors the approach to building PPPs, functioning of the INHUB and formation of a multifunctional market offer described throughout this report. Specifically, the market team guides the process in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders and takes a leading role in the implementation of hard VIS and curates the offer for the various soft VIS organised at the market. They have a key role, despite being open to feedback. Given the focus of the market (as a social enterprise) on creating an inclusive space for wellbeing, rather than making a profit, this has several implications for the sustainability of this initiative that must be addressed and considered.

Firstly, the long-term viability of an inclusive, multifunctional neighbourhood market rests upon several interconnected pillars that create a resilient ecosystem capable of weathering both economic fluctuations (e.g. high inflation) and social changes. At the heart of this model lies a web of relationships and informal governance mechanisms that extend beyond simple



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commercial transactions, encompassing community and stakeholder networks that give the market its distinctive character and purpose.

Trust emerges as a key element of market sustainability, manifesting in multiple dimensions that reinforce one another. Community trust develops through consistent delivery of quality goods, relevant cultural offer, and demonstrated commitment to serving diverse neighbourhood needs. This trust extends beyond customers and partners (who see it as a valuable partner in social initiatives) and includes local government officials who recognise the market's contribution to urban vitality and neighbourhood residents who have started to regard the market as a kind of community centre. The accumulation of this social capital creates a protective buffer of sorts, as stakeholders become invested in the market's continued success and willing to advocate for its preservation.

The market's reputation is the result of sustained trust-building and a driver of future growth. A strong reputation attracts new vendors, draws customers from beyond the immediate neighbourhood, and creates collaborative opportunities with like-minded organisations. This reputation is carefully cultivated through consistent messaging about the market's values, transparent operations, and visible impacts on community wellbeing. The reputation has become self-reinforcing as positive experiences generate word-of-mouth marketing that extends the market's reach organically. The market environment and atmosphere attract customers, tourists and neighbourhood residents. Thus, trust is invisible glue that ties together different functions of the market and varied publics.

Dynamic collaboration and partnerships form the operational backbone of economic sustainability. In addition to vendors selling goods, these partnerships might include local farms providing fresh produce, artisan cooperatives offering unique crafts, the community kitchen being used to organise educational events, and NGOs using the market space for outreach programs. Each partnership brings complementary strengths, and the dynamic nature of these relationships allows the market to adapt to changing conditions and emerging opportunities while maintaining its core identity and mission.



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Vendor interest and engagement represent a crucial sustainability factor, as their continued participation ensures the market's economic relevance and viability. This interest is maintained through transparent rental policies, adequate infrastructure support and marketing assistance. Vendors are key stakeholders, and their individual success is tied to the market's overall health, creating a collaborative environment. Long-term vendor relationships also provide stability in offerings and customer expectations, while new vendor recruitment ensures that the offer keeps changing.

The **financial model combines long-term lease security and entrepreneurial risk**. While there is a lease agreement from the municipality with KQ as a social enterprise, renovation efforts thus have relied largely on private investment, loans and projects attracted by the market team.

We invested our own money, with loans, and no public money except IN-HABIT which was dedicated for different solutions which are not directly connected with economic growth but supported it in and not allowed us to implement all the soft solutions for accessibility and hard solutions, but it all allowed to reach wider audiences to involve community.

Market representative

As a comparatively small entity they can adapt their development strategy when initial plans fail or have to be revised. For example, their original plan to dedicate the ground floor exclusively to local food traders had to be revised, giving way to a more diverse tenant mix based on viability and price compromises. Furthermore, the market has diversified revenue streams (e.g. rent, tourism services, participation in publicly funded projects). This diversity has allowed the market to remain resilient in times of crisis and allowed it to fund both infrastructure and softer, community-oriented initiatives.

Nonetheless, the desire for sustainable operations presents challenges that require careful navigation and creative problem-solving. **The fundamental tension between commercial viability and the social enterprise ideals of KQ, between the economic function of the market**



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and its social function, creates an ongoing balancing act that shapes daily decision-making processes. Revenue must be sufficient to cover operational costs while maintaining accessibility and inclusivity. This commercial-social balance manifests in pricing/offer strategies that must remain competitive enough to attract customers while generating sufficient revenue to support vendor and market operations. Each inclusive initiative requires careful financial planning to ensure that social benefits do not compromise the market's ability to maintain quality facilities and services, including the hard VIS implemented as part of IN-HABIT. In case the financial means cannot be mobilised in sufficient amounts to implement planned activities, the market team mobilises other resources to get the job done, for example – involve volunteers, delegate work to students-interns, organise joint events in partnerships with other social enterprises and NGOs who have raised funds, etc.

The desire to support inclusive initiatives while maintaining financial sustainability creates ongoing strategic dilemmas. The market management team must evaluate each potential partnership both socially and financially. This evaluation process requires sophisticated understanding of community needs, available resources, and long-term sustainability requirements. The challenge lies in developing criteria that honour the market's social mission and commitment to inclusive wellbeing while ensuring its operational foundations.

For instance, infrastructure maintenance represents a persistent challenge that encompasses both immediate needs and long-term planning requirements. Maintenance and heating bills during winter months can consume significant portions of revenue. These costs must be met regardless of seasonal revenue fluctuations or temporary decreases in vendor participation.

The challenge of infrastructure maintenance extends beyond immediate costs to encompass strategic planning for major improvements and replacements. The management team must anticipate equipment lifecycles, plan for facility upgrades that enhance both vendor and customer experiences, and balance current operational needs against future sustainability requirements. This planning process requires access to funding sources that may not always be readily available.



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Current risk assessment approaches often focus on specific operational areas rather than comprehensive threat evaluation. Thus, the focus is on safety and security, vendor contract management, facility maintenance and waste management. While these focused assessments serve important purposes, they may miss systemic risks that emerge from the intersection of multiple factors or external forces.

However, it is clear that project funding dependence (e.g. IN-HABIT) represents a critical sustainability risk for the team. This dependence creates vulnerability to funding cycle changes, shifting grant priorities, policy modifications, or economic downturns that reduce available support. Another risk identified is the shortage of small producers and the increasing administrative burdens, which hinder market initiatives. Furthermore, high permit fees and complicated application processes discourage spontaneous participation and new entrants.

One important and often overlooked risk in management of multifunctional places in cities is a managerial risk associated with high workload of managers and burn-out possibility. This is present also in case of Āgenskalns market. This risk is handled in the framework of shared governance model by (i) strengthening capacities of the core management team (e.g. recruiting junior management staff), (ii) delegating coordination tasks to community members and local activists, and (iii) deploying joint management of activities with other organisations.

A key strategy to ensure the sustainability of the market includes the establishment of a national collaborative platform for Latvian markets. This could foster knowledge exchange, joint marketing efforts, and coordinated advocacy for supportive regulatory frameworks. Replication activities and the organisation of Latvia's first national urban markets conference in 2025 marks a significant step toward consolidating market actors and promoting long-term resilience.

We had this event in Sigulda last month and it was actually one of the first events where different Latvian markets gathered and shared different practices and experiences. And we are thinking of hosting the next one in Āgenskalns Market.



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We discussed the possibility of creating an association of food markets and markets in general in Latvia, so that people see us as an NGO representing their interests at a policy level. We are thinking about how to proceed because it involves a lot of management, but we see this necessity in our country.

Market representative



Figure 9. Courtyard of Āgenskalns Market during a public event.

There are several strategic options considered regarding the future economic and social model of market operation with organisational, financial and social implications. Essentially, the market has two options to explore: (A) to sustain or even expand the current diversity and multifunctionality of its operations with diverse beneficial impacts on inclusion and community wellbeing, or (B) to streamline, focus or even reduce the scope of market activities and functions with potential limitation of IHW impacts.



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The first scenario would likely involve continued flexibility and simultaneously targeting different funding sources

- Ad-hoc networks with NGOs and businesses for specific projects and activities, frequent
- EU project applications and applications to municipal funding programmes
- Using in-kind contributions
- Establishing new business and NGO entities to carry out functions
- Social entrepreneurship projects

The second scenario would likely mean that the range of cooperation partners should be reduced, and financial sustainability would potentially become more dependent on long-term partnerships with key donors.

In summary, the social capital and partnerships that the market team has built over time serve as a good foundation for its sustainability (especially in terms of soft VIS). However, the practical requirements of markets and the need to balance social enterprise ideals with the need for revenue to maintain the infrastructure create ongoing challenges. The Riga case demonstrates that social-purpose initiatives oriented towards inclusive health and wellbeing are in a precarious financial position without a sustainable financial base that is pragmatically maintained. While IN-HABIT had a key role in funding several non-commercial activities, their continuation depends on strategic planning and the ability to mobilise funding that balance lofty social goals and the commercial realities of maintaining a market. At the same time, continuation of an open, inclusive, trust-based and distributed governance model is equally important for maintaining the place's vitality and usefulness for the city and the community.



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Innovation, transferability and scaling up

The solution developed and implemented in Riga was composite in nature - a multifunctional market that combined infrastructural solutions and social/cultural interventions to redefine the identity of a neighbourhood market and reframe the possibilities for what a neighbourhood market can be in Riga and Latvia. From the perspective of transferability and upscaling, no single element should be viewed in isolation. Rather, a multifunctional market that contributes to IHW in the broad sense should be treated as the model to emulate and presents a contextually innovative solution that used food (locally undervalued resource) to address broader questions of inclusion, health and wellbeing.

What is more, the solutions implemented at the market serve the needs of various stakeholders simultaneously. Crucially, the market was managed by a forward-looking and proactive team that had accumulated a wealth of social capital and good will, while simultaneously combining various funding sources to ensure financial sustainability while maintaining its social commitments. In summary, **the innovative aspect is a combination of various elements (social, infrastructural and financial) in a new composite whole. Importantly it merges the enthusiasm and social purpose of various local and pop-up markets with the longevity of purely commercial initiatives.**

Expanding the solutions explored and implemented in the IN-HABIT to a broader context requires the replication and more widespread adoption of the model of operation and cooperation exemplified by Āgenskalns Market (see D2.5 for more details). However, as has been noted above, the specifics of the Āgenskalns case mean that it does not easily lend itself to replication, without the involvement of the market team. Consequently, the near future vision involves the creation of a unified market cooperation platform. Crucially, the idea behind this initiative is to promote the understanding that today's markets, in addition to their trading function, also have a multifunctional role, acting as a neighbourhood centre that creates opportunities for socialisation, creative activities, and generally a place to revitalise the urban



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environment. This would promote a common market culture in Latvia and strengthen local food systems, promote sustainable consumption habits and contribute to overall wellbeing.

Nonetheless, significant barriers to scaling this form of innovation in a sustainable manner exist. These include complex regulatory environments, a lack of a culture of co-creation and municipal support, poor infrastructure and inconsistent demand from local customers. As noted above, a key challenge is achieving and working towards financial sustainability while maintaining social objectives. Many community-focused food hubs and markets struggle with the tension between commercial viability and accessibility, particularly when trying to serve disadvantaged groups while covering operational costs and infrastructure maintenance.

Additionally, there is need for significant capital for infrastructure and staffing, while revenue streams from community-focused activities often develop slowly and may never fully cover costs. To counter this, there is a need for robust operational foundations and strategic partnerships based on social capital. The team in charge must possess a combination of entrepreneurial skills and community development experience, while also being flexible in attracting various sources of funding (public grants, private partnerships, and earned revenue). Municipal support is also important in aligning social objectives with commercial sustainability. They can create regulatory frameworks that facilitate rather than hinder multifunctional operations and potentially offering financial support. Engagement with such barriers would be part of the mission of the market association, which will serve as a platform for coordinated advocacy and best-practice sharing.

In summary, the Āgenskalns Market in Riga demonstrates a composite, multifunctional model that blends infrastructure, social cultural programming, and diversified funding. Its success hinges on a proactive management team rich in social capital that merges commercial viability and social commitments. While the model offers a promising template for promoting markets as community hubs, scaling and replication are challenging processes. However, the upcoming market association will become a key driver in the context of replication efforts.



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Conclusion

The transformation of Āgenskalns Market in Riga into a multifunctional urban food hub exemplifies a holistic approach to IHW. The success of this case hinges on **a collaborative and adaptive governance model** involving a core team that is open to an honest and constructive dialogue with a broader community of stakeholders. An iterative and adaptive framework has fostered a vibrant, inclusive space that balances commercial viability with social enterprise ideals.

Central to its success is a **governance model that blends formal agreements with informal networks** where trust and social capital play pivotal roles. This approach allows for fluid collaboration, enabling the market team to respond dynamically to community needs and evolving circumstances. The informal nature of many partnerships ensures flexibility, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and fostering genuine engagement with stakeholders, while formal agreements ensure financial predictability.

We note that **financial flexibility has been crucial, as the market team has navigated the delicate balance between commercial viability and social mission**. By diversifying revenue streams – such as rent, tourism services, and project funding – they have maintained operational resilience while supporting inclusive initiatives. This pragmatic approach to funding, combined with long-term lease agreements and private investment, underscores the importance of financial adaptability in sustaining community-focused enterprises.

The project demonstrates that informal governance and financial agility are key to creating resilient, people-centred spaces. As the market continues to evolve, its model offers a compelling framework for other urban food hubs seeking to integrate health, wellbeing, and sustainability into their operations. By prioritising community trust and flexible financial strategies, Āgenskalns Market sets a precedent for replicating and scaling similar initiatives elsewhere.



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Key lessons include (i) the importance of organic stakeholder engagement, (ii) the need for flexible governance structures, and (iii) the role of informal networks in sustaining community-driven initiatives. While financial sustainability remains a challenge, the market's reputation, dynamic partnerships, and diversified revenue streams have contributed towards building a resilient approach. **The model's innovation lies in its composite nature**, merging social, infrastructural, and financial elements to redefine the potential of neighbourhood markets.

To scale this approach, a unified market cooperation platform could promote knowledge exchange and advocacy for supportive policies. Overcoming barriers such as regulatory complexities and funding constraints will be critical. Ultimately, Āgenskalns Market serves as a blueprint for integrating health and wellbeing into urban food systems, demonstrating how markets can drive broader social and economic benefits.



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