



SOCIAL COESION

SENSE OF PLACE

ECOLOGICAL WELLBEING

HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

ECONOMIC VIBRANCY

ACCESS TO SAFE AND
INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACES



PRIORITISING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

Baseline study for U.R IMPACT
Liat Rogel, Lead Expert

U,R IMPACT

Prioritising Social Impact in Urban Regeneration

U.R. Impact, co-funded by the URBACT IV European program, is spearheaded by the Municipality of Cinisello Balsamo. Its primary aim is to craft an Integrated Action Plan assessing the societal impact of urban revitalisation initiatives.

Emphasising the significance of social impact and community engagement, this project seeks to reconceptualise urban renewal endeavours. This entails reorienting these actions to prioritise the welfare of citizens—addressing their social, economic, and environmental well-being at the core of these transformative processes. Additionally, by fostering a greater sense of belonging and encouraging civic involvement, the initiative aims to enhance community participation in these efforts.

This Baseline Study was written after the first 6 month of the project, to allow a good understanding of the topic, of the cities participating and of the opportunity to collaborate, exchange and learn from one another. The Document is divided in three main sections:

1. Introduction and policy framework: a general framework about policies and practices of social impact in urban regeneration as well as some basic definitions.

2. Partner Profiles: 10 city profiles explaining the challenges and opportunities in each context.

3. Analysis, Methodology and roadmap: analysis of the profiles and comparison, working methodology and roadmap.

Liat Rogel authored this baseline study, collaborating closely with **Eleonora La Torre**, who primarily curated the city profiles, and **Ingeborg Hagen**, responsible for transforming the information into comprehensive and visually engaging content.

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INTRODUCTION AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Social impact in urban regeneration

Introduction and policy framework

To reach sustainable development and positive change, cities need to regenerate with intention. Intentionality means planning for sustainable development, in UR IMPACT the focus is on planning for social impact.

Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration is a concept that has evolved over time to address the changing needs and challenges of cities. The term "urban regeneration" originated in the mid-20th century and gained prominence as cities faced the effects of industrialisation, economic decline, and urban decay. It encompasses **a range of interventions and strategies aimed at revitalising urban areas, improving their physical, economic, and social conditions.** The concept has been shaped by influential urban theories, such as the work of Jane Jacobs and the emergence of urban renewal programs, leading to the development of more holistic and community-focused approaches to regeneration. Evans and Shaw define urban regeneration as **"the infusion of new vitality into declining communities, industries and places, bringing long term sustainable improvements in economic, social and environmental dimensions."**

Differently from urban renewal or rehabilitation, regeneration comes from nature. Plants, animals and human beings can regenerate themselves from within. A wound on one's skin is being cured by the organism itself. In this metaphor, the city would heal from within, and considering all the elements involved and will not have an external and superficial cure.


Cities require regeneration efforts for various reasons. Growing cities often face challenges related to population growth, increased demand for housing and services, and strains on infrastructure. Regeneration can help manage urban expansion, create sustainable and inclusive communities, and enhance the quality of life for residents. On the other hand, shrinking cities experience population decline, economic downturns, and vacant properties. Regeneration in these cities focuses on repurposing underutilised spaces, revitalising the economy, and addressing social inequalities.



Shrinking cities

- Economic Decline
- Vacant Properties
- Aging Infrastructure
- Social Challenges
- Identity loss
- More elder population

Growing cities

- Infrastructure Strain
 - Housing Affordability
 - Urban Sprawl
 - Social Inequities
 - Identity changes
 - Loss of social cohesion
- 

Social impact in urban regeneration

Introduction and policy framework

Regeneration in cities is closely linked to sustainability in multiple dimensions. Firstly, it contributes to economic sustainability by attracting investment, creating employment opportunities, and promoting local businesses. Secondly, urban regeneration can enhance environmental sustainability by promoting compact and mixed-use development, energy efficiency, and green infrastructure. Lastly, social sustainability is a crucial aspect of urban regeneration, aiming to foster social inclusion, improve access to services and amenities, and enhance community well-being. By addressing these dimensions, urban regeneration promotes the long-term sustainability and resilience of cities.

Social Impact

change “capable of affecting lifestyle, culture, communities, political systems, the environment, health and well-being, personal and property rights, and even fears and aspirations”

Social impact refers to the effects that actions or initiatives have on individuals, communities, and society as a whole. It focuses on the positive or negative changes in people's lives resulting from specific interventions. Social capital is the main coin of social impact; it refers to the networks, relationships, and shared values that exist within a community, which can contribute to its resilience and well-being. Social capital encompasses trust, social cohesion, and collective action, and it is a valuable resource in achieving positive social impact through urban regeneration.

Social impact is often characterised by three main elements: Intentionality, Additionality and Measurability*.

*see triadi.it

Intentionality

the impact is not “just” happening, but it was planned. There is a specific intention for change.

Low

the impact occurring at the end of an action or an intervention is read to show the effects

High

puts impact evaluation ex-ante, allowing planning designing for impact and includes constant monitoring and replanning

Additionality

considering different areas and stakeholders

Low

the organisation works alone, considering the impact on itself

High

considering and involving different stakeholders and the impact on them and their specific context.

Measurability

being able to collect valuable data and demonstrate the impact.

Low

limited capacity to demonstrate the reached objectives

High

assessing the tangible and intangible changes resulting from actions.

Measuring social impact involves assessing the tangible and intangible changes resulting from actions. It requires defining relevant indicators, collecting data, and analysing the outcomes. Social impact measurement methodologies can vary depending on the specific context and objectives of the project. Common approaches include surveys, interviews, focus groups, and quantitative analysis of social and economic indicators. Various frameworks and tools, such as Social Return on Investment (SROI) and Social Impact Assessment (SIA), provide structured approaches to assess and quantify social impact.

Social impact in urban regeneration

Introduction and policy framework



Uses of social impact measurement at different stages of the decision-making cycle
OECD

Social Impact in Urban Regeneration

Considering social inclusion and social cohesion in urban regeneration is crucial for creating sustainable, equitable, and resilient communities

Social inclusion ensures that all members of society have equal access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making processes. Social cohesion promotes trust, collaboration, and a sense of belonging among community members. By prioritising these aspects in regeneration efforts, cities can address inequalities, foster social diversity, and strengthen community resilience.

Cities embarking on urban regeneration initiatives face a myriad of **challenges** that profoundly affect their social fabric. One of the primary issues revolves around declining populations and ageing demographics.

This **demographic shift** leads to imbalances in the population structure, which can strain local services and create economic vulnerabilities. The exodus of youth seeking better educational and employment opportunities elsewhere compounds these issues. As young individuals depart for urban centres offering better prospects, it not only results in a declining youth population but also exacerbates the existing intergenerational cycles of disadvantage within these cities.

Moreover, **economic crises and industrial decline** have a lingering impact on these regions. This decline not only affects the availability of jobs but also has a cascading effect on poverty rates and limited educational opportunities, perpetuating social disparities. These socioeconomic challenges further entrench barriers to inclusivity, particularly for vulnerable groups such as disabled individuals. Accessibility barriers, whether physical or social, hinder the full participation and integration of these groups into the community, thereby impeding their social and economic mobility.

Additionally, fostering **effective collaboration and trust between local authorities and citizens** presents a substantial hurdle. Mistrust between these entities often leads to a lack of cooperation, hindering the progress of regeneration efforts. This lack of collaboration can impede the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at addressing community needs and ensuring that regeneration projects align with the aspirations and needs of the local population.

Social impact in urban regeneration

Introduction and policy framework

Positive social impact

Considering the challenges above, positive social impact may aim at:

Sense of Place

The contribution to a sense of identity, pride, and attachment to the local area.

Social Cohesion

The level of social connections, trust, and cooperation among different social groups within the regenerated area.

Ecological wellbeing

the positive environmental effects of regeneration, such as improved air and water quality, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource use

Access to Safe and Inclusive Public Spaces

The availability and quality of public spaces that foster social interaction, recreational activities, and community engagement.

Healthier Communities

Improvements in physical and mental well-being, healthcare access, and community health outcomes.

Economic Vibrancy

The economic benefits, job creation, and entrepreneurial opportunities resulting from urban regeneration.



Social impact in urban regeneration

Introduction and policy framework

The role of local authorities in generating positive social impact

If we consider the three main characteristics of social impact, we may also translate them into specific methods and tools that the local authorities may use while regenerating their contest or part of it.

Intentionality: local authorities can integrate planning for social impact as part of their strategies. This means intentionally putting desired social outcomes in the beginning of the regeneration process. The design of intervention shall then be human and community centred. Local authorities should integrate long term thinking, also beyond the political timeframe. The planning can then be integrated also with intentionally social procurement methods. The public administration can leverage procurement processes to advance social impact objectives in urban regeneration.

Social Procurement

The public administration can leverage procurement processes to advance social impact objectives in urban regeneration. By integrating social sustainability criteria into procurement policies and practices, the public administration can influence the selection of suppliers and contractors that align with the desired social outcomes of regeneration projects. This can include considering factors such as supplier diversity, social responsibility practices, and the creation of social value. Social procurement is a tool to incentivise and reward suppliers who demonstrate a commitment to social inclusion, local job creation, environmental sustainability, and other relevant social impact considerations.

see also [URBACT Knowledge hub](#) on the topic

Additionality: The public administration can promote participatory planning processes, which involve actively engaging citizens, community groups, and stakeholders in decision-making related to urban regeneration. This can be achieved through mechanisms such as public consultations, community workshops, and participatory design exercises. By facilitating inclusive and bottom-up participatory practices, the public administration ensures that the voices and aspirations of local residents are incorporated into the planning and implementation of regeneration projects. This approach promotes community ownership, fosters social cohesion, and increases the likelihood of achieving positive social impacts.

Participatory Ladder

Measurability: The public administration plays a crucial role in conducting social impact assessments as part of urban regeneration processes. Social impact assessment involves systematically evaluating the potential social consequences of regeneration projects before they are implemented. The public administration can lead this assessment process by defining relevant social indicators, collecting data, and involving experts in analysing the potential social impacts. By conducting comprehensive social impact assessments, the public administration gains insights into the potential positive and negative effects of regeneration initiatives, enabling evidence-based decision-making and the implementation of mitigation measures to enhance social sustainability.



See below, in the profile section how every U.R Impact city is approaching social impact

Social impact in urban regeneration

Introduction and policy framework

Theory of Change is a series of logical steps that define how and why certain interventions will lead to a desirable change



The **theory of change** serves as a foundational framework that underpins urban regeneration initiatives by offering a structured approach to conceptualise and implement social transformation within urban environments. In the context of urban regeneration, the theory of change delineates a roadmap outlining the sequence of events and anticipated outcomes necessary to achieve desired social impact. It assists in identifying the causal relationships between interventions, actions, and intended changes in a community or urban setting. By articulating clear goals, stakeholders involved in urban regeneration projects can devise strategic plans and interventions aimed at addressing specific societal challenges such as poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, or inadequate infrastructure. The theory of change helps in understanding the interconnectedness of various factors influencing urban spaces, allowing for a systematic approach to identifying leverage points for intervention and guiding the allocation of resources to maximise positive outcomes. It encourages a comprehensive understanding of the complex social dynamics and enables stakeholders to adapt strategies based on continuous learning and evaluation, fostering more effective and sustainable urban regeneration initiatives.

Challenges

Challenges in implementing social impact urban regeneration are multifaceted and encompass various critical aspects.

- Short-term thinking often hampers the vision for sustainable and inclusive development, prioritising immediate gains over long-term benefits.
- The low capacity of planning within urban development frameworks constrains the ability to envision comprehensive strategies that address complex societal needs.
- The limited capacity or inherent mistrust associated with participatory methods hinders community engagement, leading to gaps in understanding local perspectives and needs.
- The scarcity of resources for valuable data collection impedes evidence-based decision-making processes crucial for effective urban regeneration initiatives.

Addressing these challenges demands a holistic approach, fostering long-term planning, fostering trust in participatory approaches, and investing in robust data collection mechanisms to catalyse meaningful social impact in urban regeneration efforts.

Despite the increasing focus on incorporating social impact into urban regeneration projects, there hasn't been a definitive model or set of tools established to showcase this effort. U.R Impact aims to gather contacts from relevant projects and develop a comprehensive model to guide future initiatives, potentially incorporating the URBACT approach.

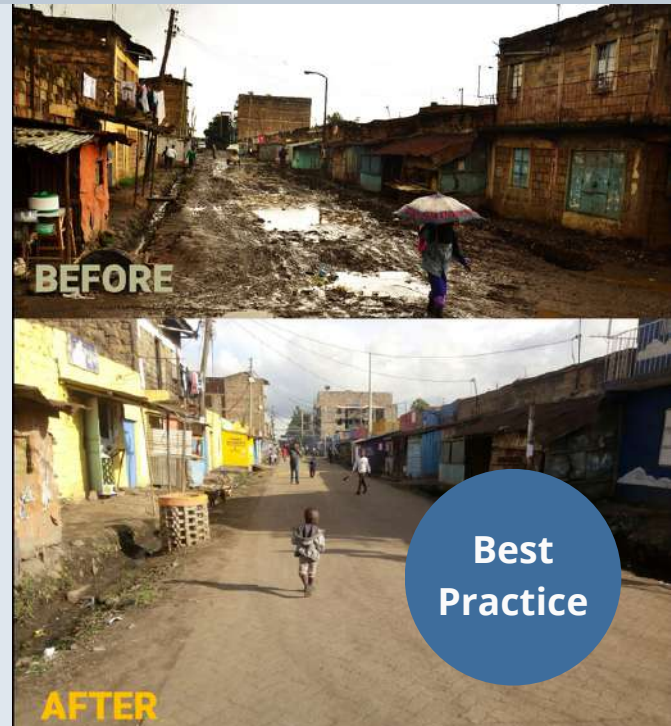
Social impact in urban regeneration

Introduction and policy framework

Nairobi's Dandora neighborhood shines again

The youth and the residents living in the **courtyards** establish a youth group that is then given the responsibility for the regeneration and maintenance of the space within the courtyard and the adjacent public street. **The residents then agree to pay a monthly fee to the appointed youth for the regeneration and maintenance.** This creates sustainable jobs for the young people, provides the residents with a clean, safe and well-maintained courtyard and public street while creating a sense of ownership and civic duty for all the residents.

Sources: 1) and photo: UN-HABITAT; <https://unhabitat.org/news/07-oct-2019/nairobis-dandora-neighborhood-shines-again-thanks-to-un-habitats-waste-management>; 2) <https://www.dubaiaward.ae/courtyard-system-for-management-of-public-spaces/>



The policy context

TUN Habitat SDGs linked to the New Urban Agenda

The UN Habitat Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a comprehensive framework that intersects with urban regeneration objectives. These goals outline a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. Within the context of urban regeneration, several SDGs align closely with the objectives of revitalising urban areas. SDG 11 specifically emphasises the need to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. This goal resonates deeply with urban regeneration efforts, focusing on creating liveable, vibrant, and equitable urban spaces.

Urban regeneration initiatives contribute significantly to achieving multiple SDGs beyond SDG 11. For instance, revitalising urban areas leads to enhanced infrastructure (SDG 9), promotes economic growth and decent work (SDG 8), ensures access to affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), and fosters sustainable communities (SDG 9 and 12).

European Union Policy Objectives and Potential Funds

The European Union has a vested interest in supporting urban regeneration to achieve its policy objectives, particularly through funding mechanisms like Cohesion Policy and various EU Funds. Cohesion Policy, within the EU's regional policy framework, emphasizes reducing disparities between regions, fostering sustainable development, and promoting economic and social cohesion.

Under Cohesion Policy, urban regeneration aligns with objectives related to enhancing regional competitiveness, fostering innovation, creating sustainable employment, and improving social inclusion. Various funds, such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), and Cohesion Fund, provide financial support for projects that drive urban regeneration in alignment with these goals.

Social impact in urban regeneration

Introduction and policy framework

The policy context

Partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the European Union (UAEU)

The **UAEU** establishes partnerships between stakeholders, cities, and EU institutions to address urban challenges and promote sustainable urban development. Urban regeneration features prominently within the UAEU partnerships, focusing on collaborative approaches to tackle issues related to housing, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and economic growth. Partnerships within the UAEU facilitate knowledge exchange, policy development, and innovative solutions to enhance the impact of urban regeneration initiatives across Europe. These collaborations foster a shared understanding of best practices, policy recommendations, and strategies for effective implementation in diverse urban contexts.

Relevant Policy Frameworks, Regulations, Networks, Initiatives at EU Level

The guiding documents for national urban development policy, such as the **Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities** and its updated version, the **New Leipzig Charter**, provide a solid foundation for sustainable urban development not only in Germany but also across Europe. Emphasising the pivotal role of local and regional authorities, these charters inspire collaborative efforts among various stakeholders from politics, administration, business, science, and civil society to drive social, economic, and environmental innovations. Particularly noteworthy is the focus on social impact, as highlighted in the New Leipzig Charter's emphasis on creating a **"just city,"** making it a valuable reference for U.R Impact initiatives.

The **Territorial Agenda 2030** underscores the importance of sustainable spatial development, stressing the role of urban areas in achieving territorial cohesion and sustainability. Additionally, the EU Urban Agenda tackles diverse urban challenges through strategic partnerships and thematic priorities, encompassing areas such as housing, circular economy, and urban mobility.

Initiatives like the **European Green Deal and the Digital Europe Programme** further underscore the imperative of green and digital transitions in urban regeneration efforts. By advocating for sustainable and digital transformation in cities, these frameworks align with the overarching goals of URBACT's cross-cutting themes, facilitating comprehensive urban renewal strategies.

The **New European Bauhaus** initiative serves as a bridge between the European Green Deal and everyday life, urging Europeans to envision and construct a sustainable and inclusive future that is aesthetically pleasing and accessible. By fostering collaboration across diverse backgrounds and disciplines, this initiative promotes sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion as inseparable values. The **NEB compass**, a key component of the initiative, assists cities in evaluating their performance across these dimensions, providing guidance for projects to embody the core principles of the New European Bauhaus. Through a series of assessment frameworks tailored to specific projects and outputs, the NEB Compass streamlines existing standards and guidance, facilitating alignment with the three dimensions of the New European Bauhaus. This comprehensive approach ensures that urban regeneration efforts not only meet sustainability goals but also enhance the quality of life and promote inclusivity in cities across Europe.

Social impact in urban regeneration

Introduction and policy framework

The policy context

URBACT Cross-Cutting Themes: Green, Digital Transitions, and Gender Equality

URBACT, with its focus on sustainable urban development, integrates cross-cutting themes of **green transitions, digitalization, and gender equality** into urban regeneration practices. Green transitions involve implementing environmentally friendly measures, such as renewable energy adoption, eco-friendly infrastructure, and sustainable transportation, aligning with the EU's sustainability goals.

Digital transitions emphasise leveraging technology to enhance urban services, improve connectivity, and foster innovation, thereby boosting economic growth and societal well-being. Gender equality, an essential aspect of URBACT's approach, ensures that urban regeneration initiatives address gender disparities and promote inclusivity across all stages of planning and implementation.



Green



Digital



Gender Equality

Relevant Other URBACT IV Networks

The U.R. Impact Network seeks to create a meaningful and lasting social impact in urban regeneration. In alignment with this mission, several URBACT networks offer opportunities for collaboration and mutual reinforcement. Some examples are: **Cities@Heart**, focused on achieving inclusive city centers, aligns with U.R. Impact's objective of fostering social inclusion and holistic policy frameworks in urban regeneration. **Agents of Co-Existence** Network resonates with our commitment to active community involvement and inclusive policies, showcasing how enhancing civic participation can enrich urban regeneration efforts.

Remote-IT addresses emerging challenges in the future of work, aligning with U.R. Impact's focus on adapting urban spaces to evolving societal needs. Similarly, **Residents of the Future**, on the issue of shrinking cities and attractiveness for youth. **GreenPlace**, which emphasises recycling unused urban areas and integrating greenery, complements U.R. Impact's holistic approach to sustainability in regeneration. **GenProcure's** emphasis on gender-responsive public procurement aligns with our dedication to gender equality and inclusivity in urban development. Lastly, **Re-Gen's** focus on involving young people in sustainable urban development parallels our approach of fostering social inclusion and community engagement, especially among disadvantaged youth. **Breaking Isolation**, on the work needed to re-build social ties and social cohesion. **WELDI**, given the important presence of people with a migration background in many project partners' context, and the work on social inclusion. Collaborating with these URBACT networks offers the potential for knowledge exchange, leveraging diverse expertise, and creating synergies that amplify the social impact of our urban regeneration initiatives.

2

CITY PROFILES

Bielsko-Biała, PL

Revitalization with people -
for people

166.765 CITIZENS

ESTIMATED AVERAGE AGE: 46

LESS DEVELOPED



The city has been through various significant changes, mostly related to the succession of different industrial settlements. The city originated from the unification of two cities, Bielsko and Biała. In the past, Bielsko and Biała operated as two neighbouring cities until their merger in 1951.

Currently, the labour market is dominated by the automotive sector and other industries related to it as well as the IT sector, representing the most sought-after job opportunities with a low unemployment rate. The city has undergone significant changes, primarily linked to the succession of various industrial settlements. Bielsko-Biała was formerly known as "the city of 100 industries" due to the diverse industrial sectors that thrived within it.

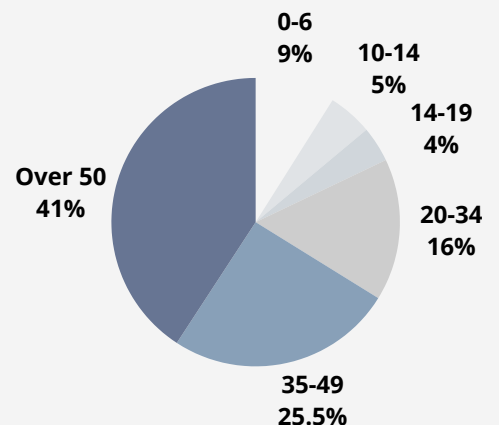
In the last few years, the population has changed due to the recent war and conflict in Ukraine which resulted in a large number of refugees from February 2022. It's relevant that about 7.000 refugees, who are well integrated in the community.

The series of varied transformations, influenced by industrial shifts and recent occurrences, has significantly weakened the sense of identity among the residents. Presently, the city confronts challenges associated with the decline of the city centre and aims to enhance the overall quality of life for its citizens.

Demographic data



Population by age



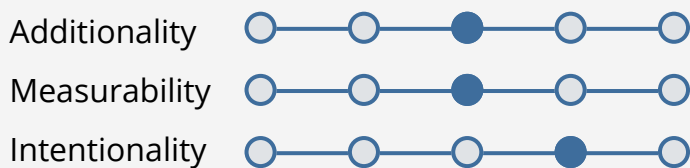


Challenges

Objectives

<p>Low sense of local identity in the city centre area.</p>	<p>Increasing the importance of the city centre as a good place to live.</p>
<p>Decline of the city centre.</p>	<p>Improving the quality of life in the city centre and attracting residents and other users. Socio-economic revival of Śródmieście Białej due to the introduction of a new user profile to the city centre area.</p>
<p>Weak engagement of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Make residents mainly stakeholders and leaders in the urban regeneration process</p>
<p>The evaluation of social impact indicators is not perfectly aligned with the identified needs</p>	<p>Increasing the involvement of residents in examining the impact of revitalization activities on the local community.</p>

Current approach to social impact



The new Municipal Regeneration Program includes an annual monitoring and evaluation system for regeneration activities, which is required and planned by the national government strategy. Due to a national protocol for urban regeneration plans, which requires goals and indicators, project authors, whether from public or private entities, are anticipated to provide progress updates on specific projects through reports and indicators. In fact, annual monitoring will assess the progress of the projects and the results achieved. In addition, it will indicate how each project affects the revitalization area and how it contributes to reducing unfavorable social phenomena. In order to ensure the assessment of social effects and to examine the impact of revitalization activities on the area, an assessment of the effectiveness of the undertaken activities and the achieved indicators will be carry out every 3 years - an evaluation.

Relevant SDGs



Gender Equality

The Municipal Regeneration Program follows national principles from the Regeneration Act, emphasizing equality, accessibility for disabilities, and gender equality.



Digital

Projects in the Municipal Regeneration Program must ensure digital accessibility, aligning with the Act on digital accessibility for public entities.



Green

Projects in Municipal Regeneration Program prioritize environmental aspects for diagnosing and addressing crises. Planned city centre activities enhance energy efficiency, biodiversity, and noise reduction.



Best practices

Municipal Regeneration Program

Objective assessment of the ongoing program, taking into account not only the method of its implementation but also its concept (assumptions) and, above all, the achieved results.

Social and professional activation through the Social Integration Center in Bielsko-Biała

80 people at working age, residents of the regeneration and neighbouring areas, experiencing the multiple social exclusion, will be covered with active integration services.



Key challenge question

Socio-economic revival of the city centre (śródmieście Białej) by introducing new functions to this area, and thus new residents and users.

Micro-challenge

Revive the centre of the city through the engagement of all the stakeholders to increase the local identity.

IAP focus

improving the city center's appeal and quality of life, sparking economic growth, and evaluating social impact with the help of stakeholders.

ULG

Coordinator:

Anna Jończyk - Strategy and Economic Development Department (City Hall)

Local Government authorities

Przemysław Kamiński - Deputy Mayor

Public institution

Municipal conservator of historical properties, Punkt 11 (cultural institution), Culture and Promotion Department, Municipal Social Welfare Center (city's institution), Strategy and Economic Development Department, Housing Management Department (city's institution), Mayor's Plenipotentiary for young people, City Gardener

NGOs/non-profit organizations

Local Entrepreneurship Center

Community organisations

Local Social Activist

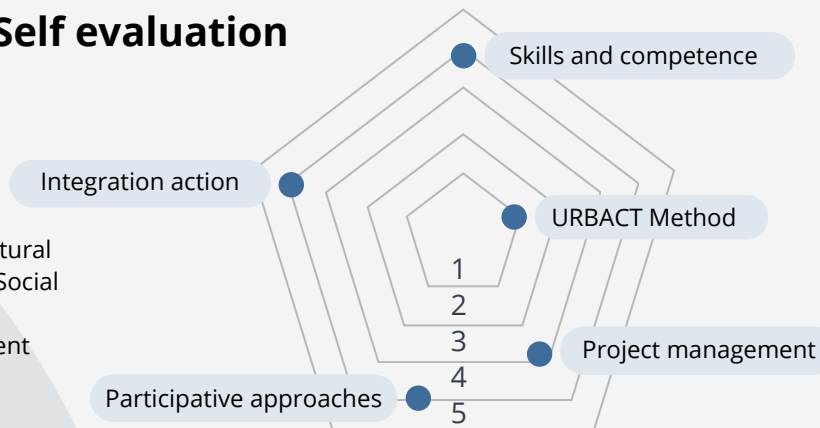
Businesses

Regional Development Agency in Bielsko-Biała

Other relevant stakeholders

Centre for Technology Transfer at the Medical University of Silesia

Self evaluation



Bovec, SI

Reversing the negative demographic trends towards sustainable tourism

Bovec is a mountainous region in the Julian Alps, situated at the crossroads of Romanesque, Germanic, and Slavic cultural influences along the Italian border. Despite being the fourth-largest municipality in Slovenia in terms of area, it has a relatively small population of 3,044 residents. Several historical events have marked the city and has been hit by diverse natural disasters, 3 strong earthquakes in 1976, 1998 and 2004 and a landslide in 2000.

In the last decade, Bovec has experienced issues related to over-tourism, especially during the summer season due to the presence of several outdoor activities. During this time, the population tripled, not only due to tourists but also because of the additional workforce required for these events. In contrast, during the winter and off-season, Bovec experiences a decline in population and becomes a "Ghost" town. Demographically, the area is primarily characterised by an ageing population and the outmigration of young people.

In Bovec, citizens are accustomed to leaving their hometown already at a young age. This is due to the absence of higher education for youth after 15 years of age in the slovene's education system which forces students to move away from others. Moreover, the lack of education opportunities, such as universities, and qualified jobs or career opportunities discourages the return of young citizens.

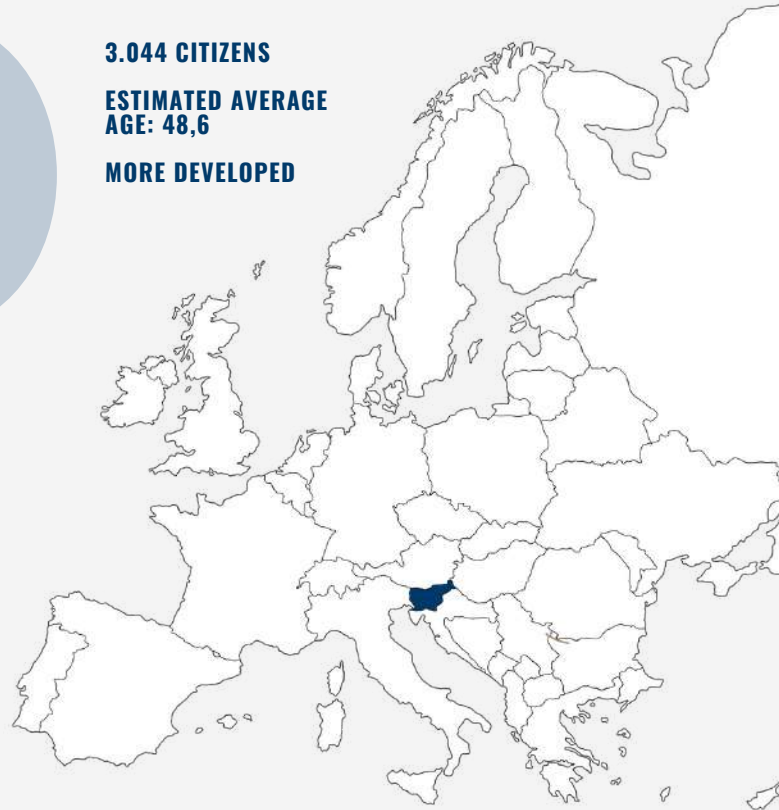
Bovec needs to develop a comprehensive strategy able to reverse the negative demographic trends and increase the engagement of young citizens in politics, promote intergenerational collaboration, and identify suitable spaces for all demographic groups at the local level. The Municipality of Bovec intends to complete the strategy this year.

Therefore, Bovec has to face several challenges, including overtourism, the lack of services, a shortage of educational opportunities, and a dearth of qualified job prospects. These various challenges lead to a series of closely interconnected reactions that threaten the survival of the small town of Bovec.

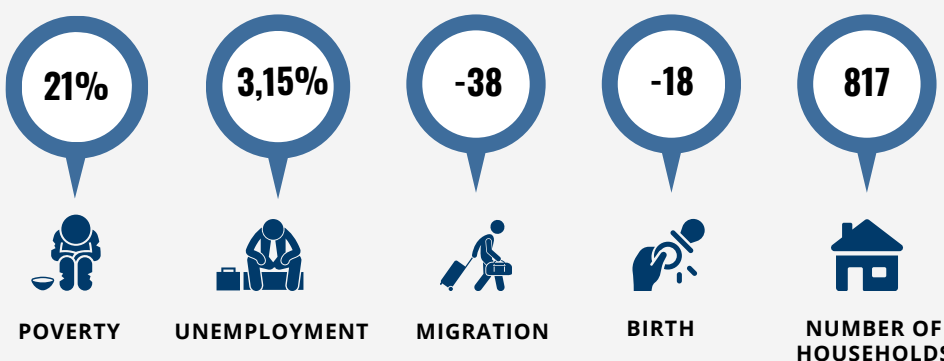
3.044 CITIZENS

ESTIMATED AVERAGE AGE: 48,6

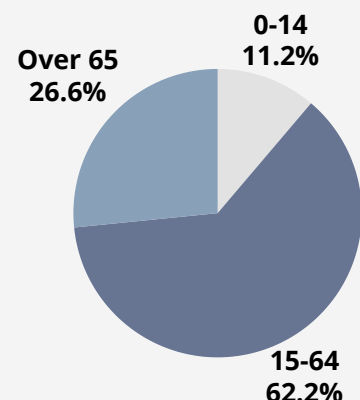
MORE DEVELOPED



Demographic data



Population by age



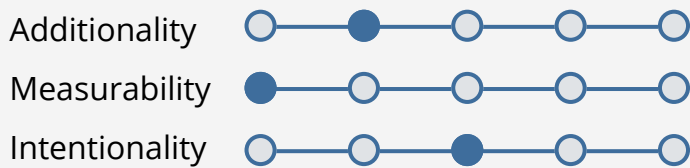


Challenges

Objectives

Demographic change.	Increase local opportunities for youth, bring new people, families, taking care of elderly people.
Beyond tourism and make tourism sustainable.	Increase qualified job opportunities (research, education) create balance of tourism opportunities in all year long and not seasonal the season and the use of resource.
Weak communication and local engagement.	Increase community participation.
Fit regulations to social impact objectives.	Work on norms and regulations concerning urban regeneration - for example in the housing sector.

Current approach to social impact



The Municipality of Bovec has developed a small funding program for culture, sports, and youth through NGOs, with a focus on participatory planning practices through consultations. They also engage the local community through a participatory budget based on voting for ideas that secure funding. Codesigning spaces and fostering collaborations play a significant role in implementing necessary strategies, but sustaining such projects requires long-term planning and support through partnerships.

Relevant SDGs



Gender Equality

Currently Bovec has no focus strategy for gender Equality. Bovec follows gender equality protocols.



Digital

ARC Bovec, live city council sessions, cable TV, new website (also with some services.) The new Soca Valley Tourist Board also serves Bovec municipality.



Green

Public houses heated with biomass, electric car owned by the municipality (taking people to the hospital), public transport (only seasonal), and new bike lanes. Triglav National Park regulations and strategies.



Best practices

Buška izba

It's the city's living room, took shape during the transfer of best practices from May 2021 to December 2022. The transfer of best practices was initiated by the Towns Living Room in the Municipality of Idrija in cooperation with the Institute for Spatial Policy (IPoP), the national URBACT point.



ARC Bovec

In 2020, a small group of individuals initiated Project ARC during the COVID-19 pandemic. By 2021, this project transformed into a non-profit organization named ARC Bovec. Initially focused on social, sports, and scientific activities to engage local youth, ARC Bovec, also endeavors to involve young people in sustainable tourism.



Key challenge question

How to increase the quality of life for all demographic segments and increase the engagement of young people?

Micro-challenge

Make tourism more sustainable and reduce the lack of service for citizens.

IAP focus

Increase the practices and the participatory planning, balance resources and tourist activities and increase local opportunities for young people.

ULG

Coordinator

Nataša Bartol

Local Government authorities:

Committee on non-economics and social issues

Public institution:

Primary school- the principal

Kindergarten- the head of kindergarten

Centre of Social work

NGOs/non profit organisations:

Caritas, Red cross, Youth groups, Retirement association

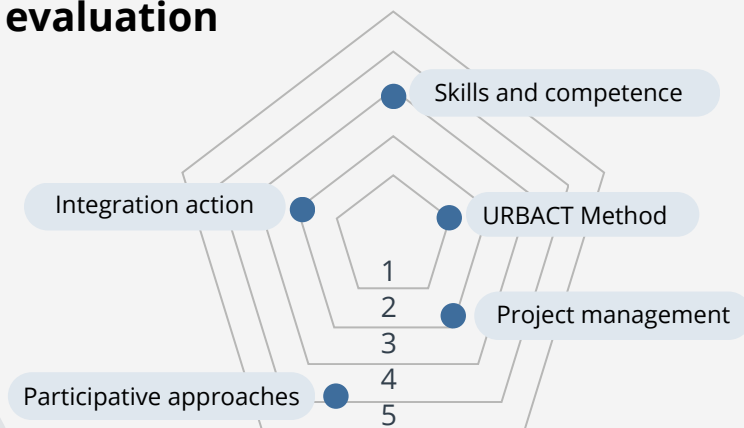
Community organisations:

sports clubs, cultural clubs, scouts, parish

Businesses:

local sports agencies, local entrepreneurs

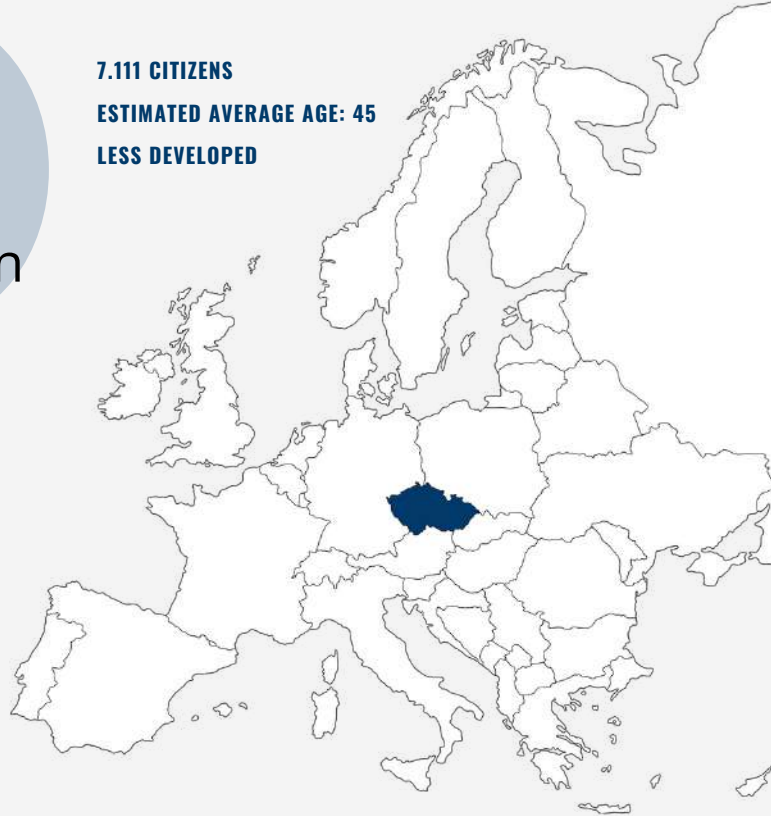
Self evaluation



Broumov, CZ

Enhancing City Appeal, Fostering Inclusive Participation

7.111 CITIZENS
ESTIMATED AVERAGE AGE: 45
LESS DEVELOPED



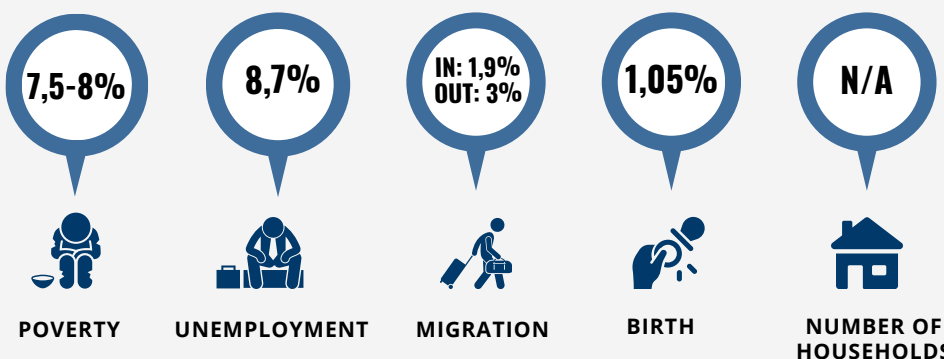
Broumov is a small city located on the border with Poland, separated from the rest of the Czech Republic by a natural rock wall. Despite its isolation, it is situated in the heart of Europe, surrounded by a beautiful natural environment. The city has a rich history, initially settled by Benedictines from Germany who left a significant influence. The monastery in Broumov is a famous historical landmark in the Czech Republic.

Today, Broumov serves as the cultural centre of the Královéhradecký region. The city is challenging with the lack of services and the availability of attractive activities for the youth. There is a current young migration process that deeply impacts the demography, in the last years about 600 young citizens have left Broumov.

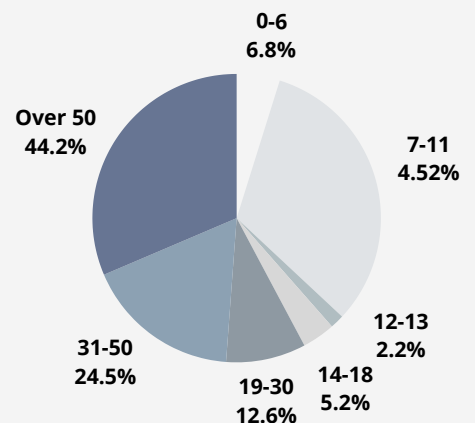
The downtown area of the city is undergoing substantial depopulation, resulting in reduced activity. The central square has lost its vibrancy and is no longer an active hub, marked by the closure of numerous shops and bars. Currently, only two cafes remain open in the whole city. The increased depopulation of the centre has a negative impact on the local economy.

The city is actively involved in initiatives aimed at ensuring social inclusion and the participation of individuals from diverse communities. As of 2023, approximately 10% of the population belongs to the Romani community.

Demographic data



Population by age



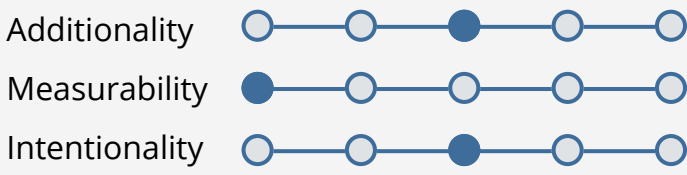


Challenges

Objectives

<p>Low attractivity especially for young people to stable in the city.</p>	<p>Enhance the appeal for by improving services increasing the sense of identity.</p>
<p>Declining city centre and dying local commerce.</p>	<p>Increase the lengths of stay of tourists and balance also to winter, integrate new policy about local consumption and production, make the centre more pedestrian.</p>
<p>Mistrust between authority and citizens.</p>	<p>Enhance participatory methodology and the development of bottom-up practices.</p>

Current approach to social impact



Broumov employs participatory methodologies, data use, and monitoring for urban practices. Quality of life is monitored, and social indicators guide external procurement evaluations. Public participation is encouraged for the Burgher Brewery and Café Herzog, and plans for the former swimming pool involve biotope restoration. To tackle challenges, Broumov plans to enhance the city's appeal, especially for young students, focusing on tailored services, schools, and commerce. Emphasis will be on recognizing the value of aspects like silence, community, and culture, fostering a sense of identity. Strategies include extending tourist stays, diversifying policies for local consumption, making the centre more pedestrian-friendly, and implementing an evaluation system for collaboration and inclusivity.

Relevant SDGs



Gender Equality

There is a Romani woman as a member of the social commission.



Digital

Participatory voting to support the best community projects. Run by the city for last 3 years. Since 2024 the city will run participatory budgeting also.



Green

The first waste newsletter will be published in December 2023 to raise local awareness of sorting in a simple way to reduce waste.



Best practices

Old brewery: A participation practice

One of the key practices revolves around the regeneration of an old brewery. The city organised guided tours, providing citizens with the opportunity to actively engage. With the involvement of approximately 700 individuals, the aim was to gather choices and opinions, allowing citizens to contribute to decisions regarding the initiatives planned for the brewery.



The Corner Shop

In order to revitalise the downtown area, the local ONG represented in the ULG has leased a shop, giving citizens the opportunity to use it for activities of their choice. In only 3 months, more than 50 different activities were organised and held in the space.



Key challenge question

How to make the city attractive and increase participation from all the local communities?

Micro-challenge

Foster the outcome of the bottom-up process, create action and service more attractive.

IAP focus

Building competence and skills from the sharing European practice, activities focus on methodology to develop a bottom-up approach.

ULG

Coordinator

Pavla Jenková

Local Government authorities

City councillor for culture, Department of Development and Investment, Social Department, Information and Tourism Centre, Senior House, Technical services, Deputy Mayor, City councillor

NGOs/non profit organisations

Endowment Fund Broumov, City of Culture, Educational and Cultural Centre Broumov/BrauNOW, Children and Youth House Ulita, MAS + Broumovsko, SRRB.

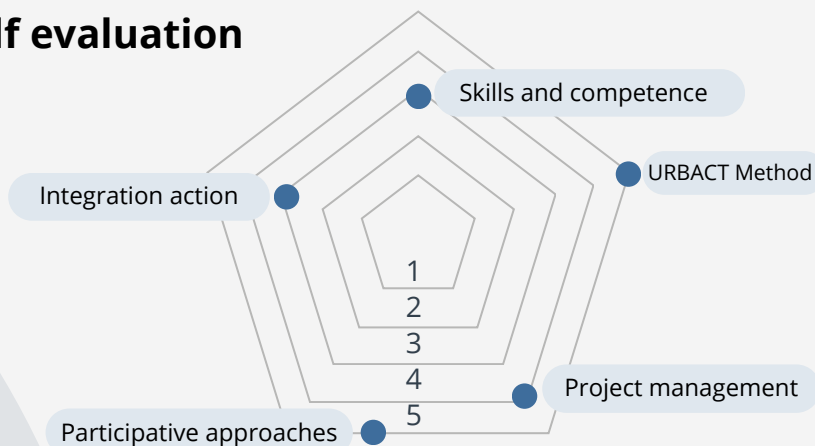
Community organisations

Centre for social services, Romani NGO, Senior Club Radost, Association of Disabled People

Businesses

Owner of the Instax Store shop on the main square, Owner of the Medical shop on the square, Owner of the coffee shop on the square, Owner of the tobacco shop on the square, Community leader, Owners of flower shop on the square.

Self evaluation

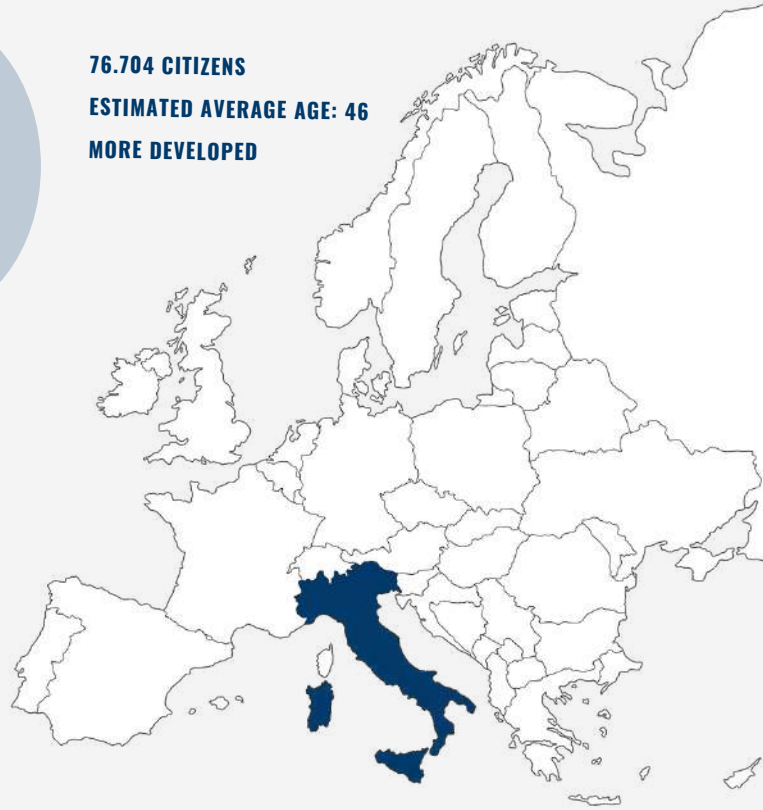


Cinisello Balsamo, IT

The impact of urban regeneration on the social structure and fabric.

Cinisello Balsamo, historically dominated by workers from northern Milan's major industries, has undergone a significant shift since the 1990s. The closure of these industries has reshaped the city's social and economic dynamics, leading to rising unemployment and increased poverty.

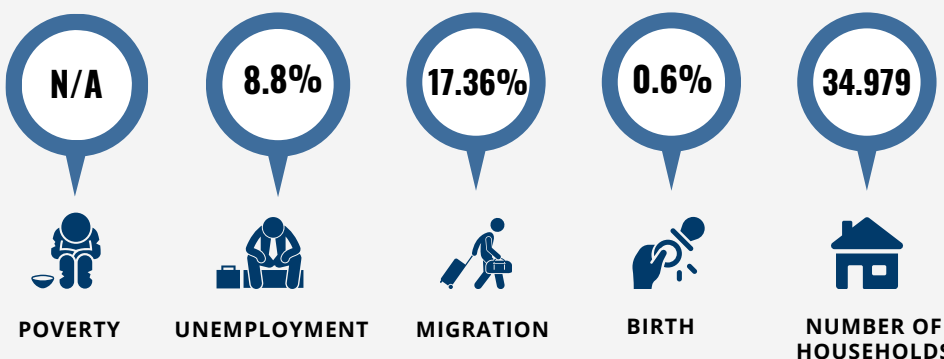
76.704 CITIZENS
ESTIMATED AVERAGE AGE: 46
MORE DEVELOPED



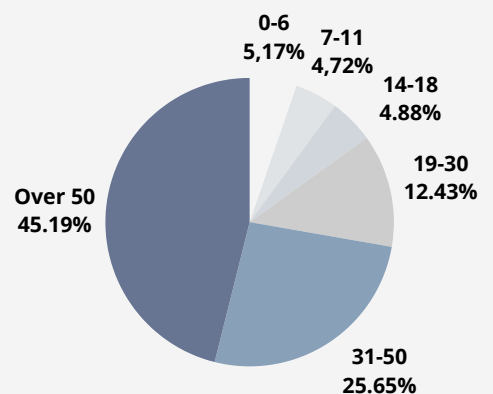
To counter these challenges, there has been a deliberate **effort to stimulate the growth of commercial services and the tertiary sector**. Moreover, initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen ties with neighbouring Milan.

However, a distinctive characteristic typical of larger cities—**pockets of densely populated immigrant communities**—poses a notable challenge in Cinisello Balsamo. The Crocetta district, for instance, comprises 65% non-EU residents and is geographically isolated from the city by expansive roads. Urban regeneration projects have been introduced to revitalise these areas. Yet, the primary focus lies in comprehending how these initiatives in urban regeneration impact the intricate social fabric of the city.

Demographic data



Population by age



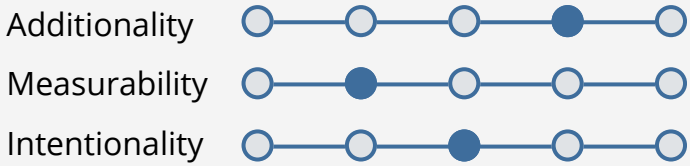


Challenges

Objectives

<p>Lack of capitalization of practices provided by urban regeneration experiences and weak local involvement of citizens.</p>	<p>Identify developed practices to capitalise and build a measurability model to highlight objectives and changes of impact also in order to involve citizens in the process.</p>
<p>Lack of identity and engagement of young citizens and isolation of foreign communities.</p>	<p>Ensure a sense of place and create attractive initiatives for the young.</p>
<p>Deterioration of buildings or stores in Crocetta neighbourhood.</p>	<p>Revitalising buildings through new urban experimentation.</p>

Current approach to social impact



Cinisello Balsamo boasts diverse social projects, yet lacks a unified social indicator framework for external procurement evaluation, resulting in fragmented assessment methods for each initiative. The city engages stakeholders in urban regeneration planning, incorporating community input, through retaining decision-making authority. Seeking a more holistic impact assessment, the city targets understanding urban regeneration's social implications. A pivotal objective is constructing a measurement system, piloted in Crocetta. The strategy plans long-term integration of actions and strategies into future projects, serving as a model for administration. The focus includes creating appealing initiatives for youth and fostering community ties, addressing immigrant community isolation.

Relevant SDGs



Gender Equality

The municipality has launched a series of services aimed at trying to address the gender gap. The main objective is achieving a work-life balance that allows young mothers to avoid isolation and exclusion from the workforce.



Digital

Digital literacy campaign since 2013, starting with schools and then in whole area. Project "Cinisello Balsamo Digital District" continues with digital help desks.



Green

Schools and sports centres equipped with photovoltaic panels, as well as transitioning all street lighting to LED. Thanks to the PNRR new interventions are planned to reduce energy consumption.



Best practices

ENTANGLED

Is a substantial urban regeneration initiative with the objective of overcoming the social and physical isolation of the Crocetta district from the remainder of the city.



CULTURAL CENTRE

The cultural centre Pertini is a cultural centre representing a reference point for the city, The Casa della Cittadinanza is a space for collaboration and sharing among citizens to strengthen social relationship systems, involve them in the design of the space itself, and gather ideas and suggestions.



Key challenge question

How do the actions related to urban regeneration affect the social fabric and mitigate potential negative consequences on the well-being of its citizens?

Micro-challenge

Work on the communication engagement to involve citizens, analyse tailored indicators and monitor the good practices developed.

IAP focus

Develop an impact evaluation system and tailored bottom-up approach, sharing practices.

ULG

Coordinator:

Barbara dal Piaz

Local Government authorities:

The Mayor, The councillors.

Public institution:

Municipality Sectors: social service, education, public works and culture., The local school (primary and secondary), ASST di Cinisello Balsamo by the health service - Consultorio, ALER Milano - public housing company in Crocetta District.

NGOs/non-profit organisations:

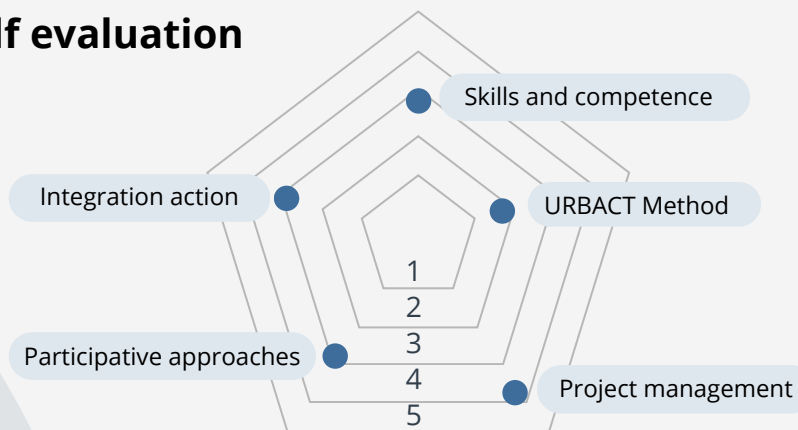
Il Torpedone Social Cooperative, Auser Association, Arcipelago Anfass Cooperative, Sammamet, Cooperative, CSV Association, CinyFabrique Association, Sports associations (Rugby, ACLI, Soccer, etc.)

Community organisations: Neighbourhood committees

Businesses: (bar and other local shops: bakery, fruits and vegetables, drugstore, etc.)

Other relevant stakeholders: The Church (San Pietro Martire), Condominium administrators

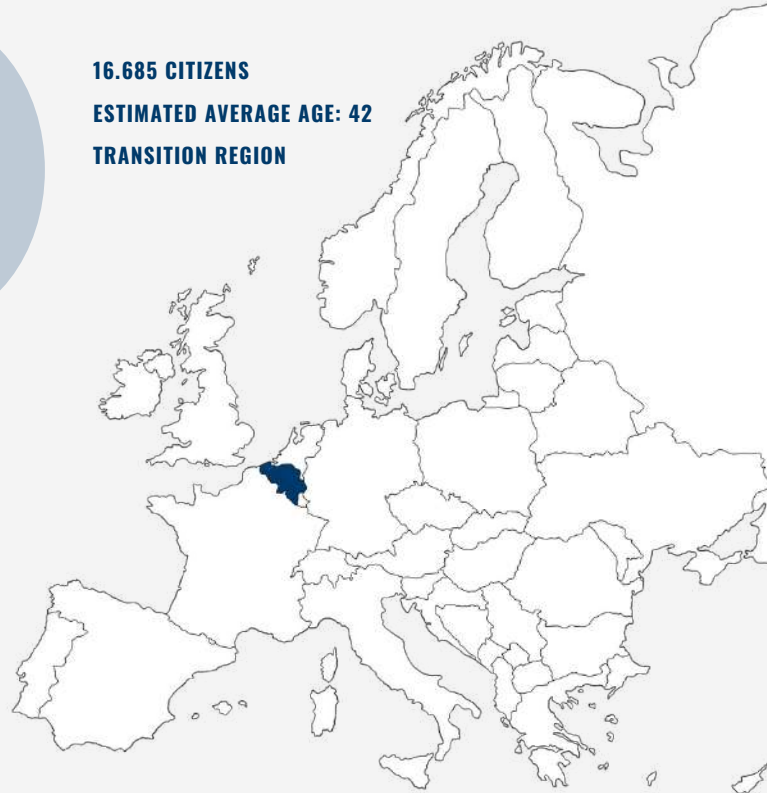
Self evaluation



Hannut, BE

Fostering Urban Innovation and Social Change through Technology

16.685 CITIZENS
ESTIMATED AVERAGE AGE: 42
TRANSITION REGION



Hannut is a rural town situated on the border of the Flamania region in Belgium. The city is strategically positioned, enabling convenient access and communication with the surrounding neighbouring cities. In fact, the town has a strategic and transit position, it is in Province de Liege near Paris 2 hours by train.

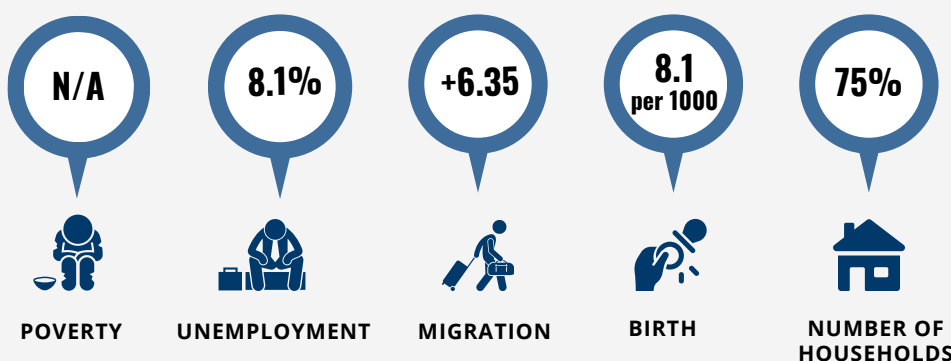
Hannut is a quiet little town set up in a green environment in a rural area and based on the agricultural economy with a good level of quality life evidenced also by the increase of demography. Urban development in the city has primarily expanded along a central commercial street adorned with shops, enhancing the overall quality of life.

The city centre is currently no longer frequented by citizens, especially after the COVID period. Hannut is experiencing a decline in the centre with a decrease of visitors attributed to existing shops' diminishing appeal. This generates a negative impact on the local economy, many shops are currently closed. The downtown depopulation represents one of the main challenges.

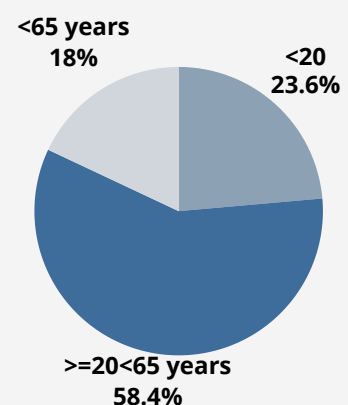
To tackle this challenge, Hannut has initiated a new urban regeneration process, concentrating on revitalising a new area that will serve as a symbol for the city.

The city is focused on a new urban regeneration plan that envisions the development of a hybrid space at the city's entrance. This space will incorporate a library, a concert/cultural hall, and a business centre accommodating both offices and coworking/remote working spaces.

Demographic data



Population by age



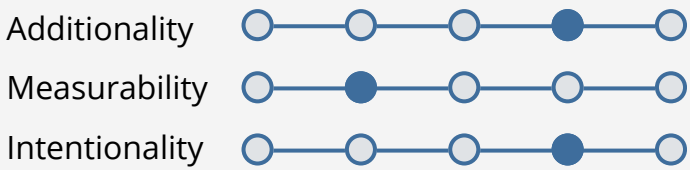


Challenges

Objectives

<p>Increase the attractiveness of the city.</p>	<p>Increase centre's footfall by developing and connecting the new urban area.</p>
<p>Difficulties in managing diverse stakeholders engaged in the urban plan.</p>	<p>Enhancing shared local governance model.</p>
<p>Increase new uses of the city centre.</p>	<p>Keep the city as vibrant as it used to be.</p>
<p>Lack of identity and sense of pride in the city.</p>	<p>Rebuild a sense of place, identity and pride, not exclusively related to retail.</p>

Current approach to social impact



Embracing bottom-up practices, Hannut employs a participatory and innovative strategy, leveraging technology, particularly an app, to engage citizens, especially the youth. This app, encouraging pedestrian movement to the city centre, facilitates data collection for impact assessment. The strategy also emphasises sports, energy efficiency, and inclusion. A new regeneration initiative focuses on developing a neighbourhood with improved connectivity and cultural services, aspiring to become a symbol of the city's identity. Tourism, sustainability, and alternative retail solutions are key components of the revitalization plan. The city aims to enhance public spaces and attract year-round visitors, prioritising their preferences and experiences.

Relevant SDGs



Gender Equality

Gender equality protocols are used



Digital

Ride and Bike as a digital tool



Green

Sustainable mobility, Biomethan initiative, Energy communities



Best practices

Ride and Buy Application

The project enhances sustainable mobility by offering an application that provides monetary incentives for shopping at local stores when shopping is made using a bicycle.



The skate park

One of the practices that best represents local participation strategies is the development of the skate park.



Key challenge question

How to develop a governance model capable of boosting footfall in the city centre?

Micro-challenge

Increase the centre's appeal and ensure the collaboration of different stakeholders.

IAP focus

Analyse the suitable governance model and create a social impact evaluation model led by data-collected

ULG

Coordinator: NOEL Martine - city manager economic affairs and tourism.

Local Government authorities: Social Services and Urbanism

Public institution: Amélie Debroux, Administrative Director, Library, Culturel centre

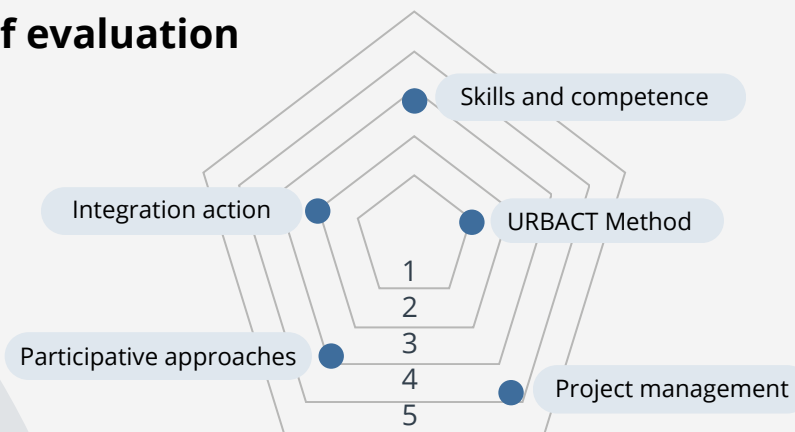
NGOs/non profit organisations: Gestion Centre-ville, Les planches à Nu, theatre group

Community organisations: UCH (Hannut retail union), local development citizens group

Businesses: Eric Goessens, Philippe Boulvin

Other relevant stakeholders : Members of the Urbanisation committee and citizens

Self evaluation



Kamëz, AL

A rapidly growing city near the capital Tirana.

145.637 CITIZENS

ESTIMATED AVERAGE AGE: 37

LESS DEVELOPED



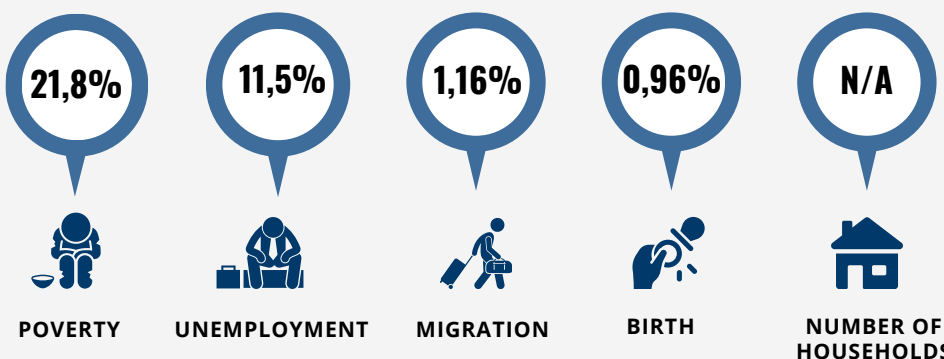
The city faces the challenge of sustainable development to guarantee social inclusion to the whole population, especially for the migrant communities. The earthquake, in 2019, led the city to engage in a significant urban reconstruction plan demonstrating a resilient response to the consequences of natural disasters while also addressing new challenges due to demographic growth.

Kamëz, situated in a transitional area, a mere twenty-minute drive from Tirana, the capital of Albania, is experiencing a notable population surge with an estimated average age of around 37 years. Amidst this growth, the primary challenge lies in fostering sustainable economic and social progress while ensuring inclusivity for all residents. Notably, Kamëz is home to two significant migrant communities, the Egyptian and Romanian, yet their integration remains a work in progress.

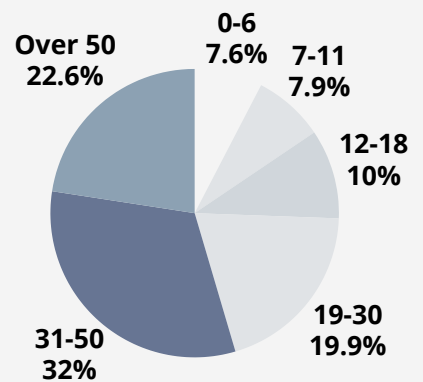
Kamëz is determined to engage all of its residents, with a particular focus on empowering its youth, in the decision-making process to enhance social inclusion. The city is also making substantial investments in education, with a remarkable 38 institutions. This not only underscores their commitment to knowledge and skill development but also to promoting gender equality through education.

Currently, the city lacks the use of impact assessment tools. Hence, their main objective in partnering with URBACT is to craft an integrated action plan encompassing both a visionary outlook and practical steps. This plan aims to introduce a more organized and holistic approach, countering the existing challenges of unplanned and scattered development.

Demographic data



Population by age



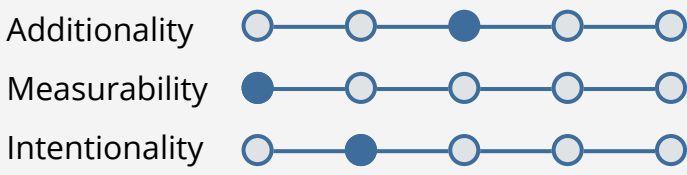


Challenges

Objectives

Being perceived as the ugly periphery of Tirana	Create a sense of identity and autonomy
Lack of a long-standing historical heritage or citizenship (migrants arriving from different cultures)	Strengthening the sense of belonging with the city.
Ensure population growth by offering job opportunities	Improve green-sustainable strategy and Grow more businesses and entrepreneurial mindset
Weak social integration and maintaining social benefits on the long term and avoiding scattered development	Develop a long-term strategy and an action plan and improve social participation and inclusion.

Current approach to social impact



The city lacks methods to assess social impact but promotes citizen participation through public consultations for infrastructure projects. The city has developed tools for involving young citizens in public decisions and improving a holistic approach to address challenges from demographic growth. The Municipal Council approved a plan for territorial, economic, and social development, with a focus on responsible and sustainable resource use, ecological and digital transition, and social inclusion. The city recognizes the importance of creating space, using renewable energy, and integrated waste management for the Green Transition.

Relevant SDGs



Gender Equality

Huge focus on schools and education, also at an early age, allowing a better opportunity for women to work or study.



Digital

There is internal awareness but is not yet implemented.



Green

Developing green strategies for environmental sustainability amid population growth.



Best practices

Public Youth Council

Through this council, municipal administrators ensure active engagement with young people, who are strongly engaged in promoting wellbeing for their city. The Council is a strong participatory action which involves active youth listening in the decision-making process of public affairs.



Valias neighbourhood Paskuqan Park

In order to ensure social impact, the municipality has developed affordable housing initiatives. The post-earthquake reconstruction has been guided by green and socially inclusive approaches. New buildings, sports areas, and green spaces have been developed and 15,500 trees have been planted.



Key challenge question

How to ensure demographic and economic growth while ensuring social inclusion and cohesion?

Micro-challenge

Promote a multidimensional strategy through a holistic approach to impact on diverse socio-economic factors.

IAP focus

Kamëz 2030, a plan that activates the elements of the master plan with a co-constructed and long-term vision.

ULG

Coordinator

Berta Sinanaj

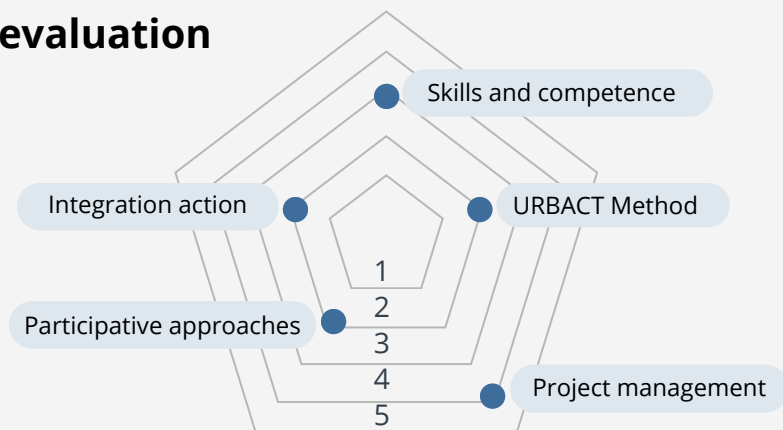
Public institutions

Department of Urbanism
Department of education
Department of Social affairs
Department of green and environment

Other stakeholders

Youth council of the city of Kamëz

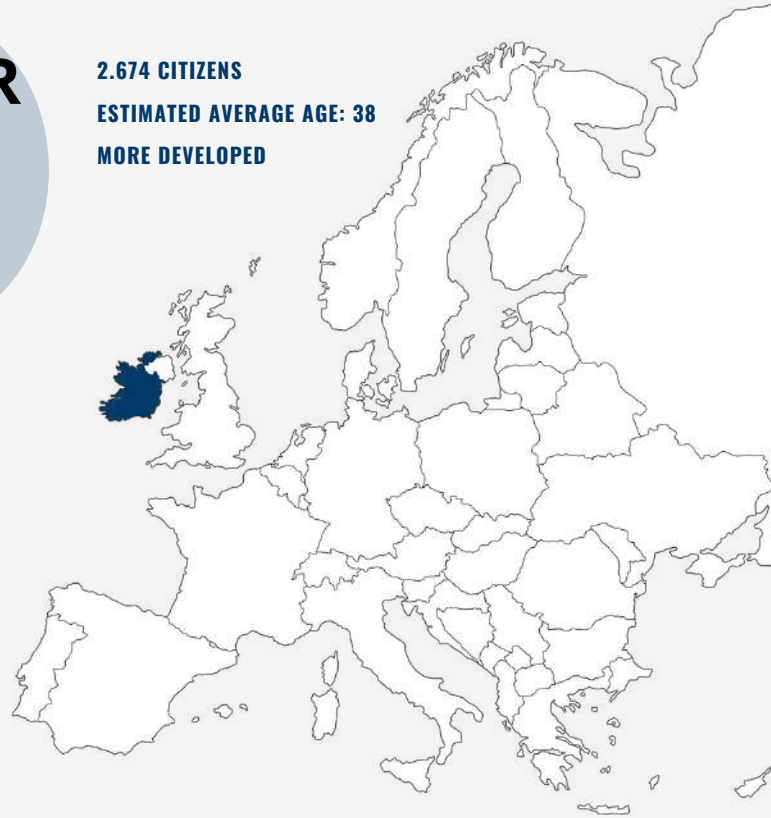
Self evaluation



Longford-Ballymahon, IR

Improve social cohesion through governance

2.674 CITIZENS
ESTIMATED AVERAGE AGE: 38
MORE DEVELOPED

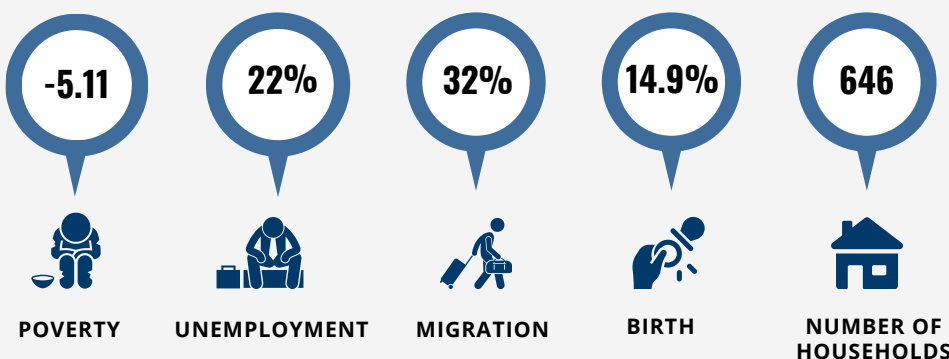


Longford County Council is the local authority responsible for County Longford, a centrally located rural county in Ireland. Ballymahon is one of the secondary settlements within the county, with a population of approximately 2,000 people. In 2022, approximately 40% of the population of Ballymahon was of non-Irish nationality, with the highest proportions of people from Poland, Lithuania and Brazil. It's a small municipality with the presence of different nationalities, currently approximately 20 nationalities.

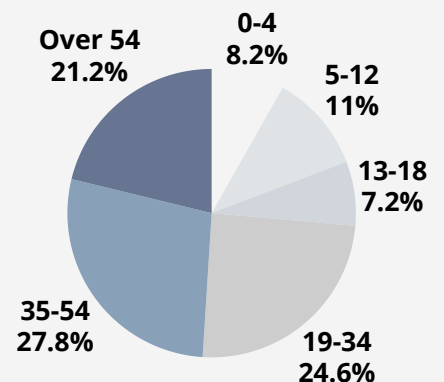
Here the deprivation score is 24.85 indicating that the area is 'very disadvantaged', with 54.9% of the male population and 45.16% of the female population unemployed.

The economic crisis in Ireland had an impact on house building and subsequently on home ownership and houses available for rent. The number of social houses in particular areas of the city has led to social issues and the creation of an intergenerational cycle that is difficult to break.

Demographic data



Population by age



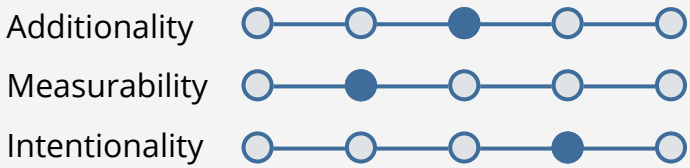


Challenges

Objectives

Lack of integration and connection between the different local communities.	Foster social integration through participatory practices, measurability methods and participatory planning.
Weak engagement and lack of activities for younger citizens.	Improve a bottom-up approach to involve the younger and increase activities after school.
Lack of participation of citizens and stakeholders.	Develop a governance model.

Current approach to social impact



The city has established the town team, constituted by citizens to engage local opinions in public discussions and decisions, but face limitations due to its relatively small size, necessitating the promotion of additional instruments. The city's strategic focus on Ballymahon involves enhancing resources for social and economic regeneration. The village is characterized by a robust culture of bottom-up practices, displaying community cohesion, unity, and a notable commitment to collaborative endeavors among its members.

Relevant SDGs



Gender Equality

Seeking gender balance on Town Team



Digital

New economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity and indigenous innovation and enterprise. Students raise good digital skills from the school system.



Green

Green procurement



Best practices

Urban renovation of a 3-building complex

This initiative will predominantly focus on revitalizing a dormant convent to house a family resource center and an elderly daycare facility. The project is also expected to enable the local authority to explore social housing options in the Longford region

Youth café

One building of the complex will be designated for the youth center, transforming into a youth café which is gonna involve the young target. Additionally, there are plans to repurpose a dilapidated school building for remote working.



Key challenge question

How to develop a governance model that can enhance the integration and well-being of citizens?

Micro-challenge

Increase the participation of all citizens, especially for the young, through a bottom-up approach and enhance integration and social cohesion through governance.

IAP focus

Establishing a robust governance model to ensure the regeneration project effectively benefits the community by meeting its ongoing needs.

ULG

Coordinator:

Lorraine O'Connor,
Town Regeneration Officer

Local Government authorities:

Director of Services, Housing, Regeneration,
Planning, Climate Change, Active Travel, Vacant
Homes Office

Public institution:

Education and Training Board

NGOs/non profit organizations:

Longford Community Development Company, Community
organizations, Bridgeways Family Resource Centre, Convent Day
Care Centre, Tidy Towns, Men's Shed,

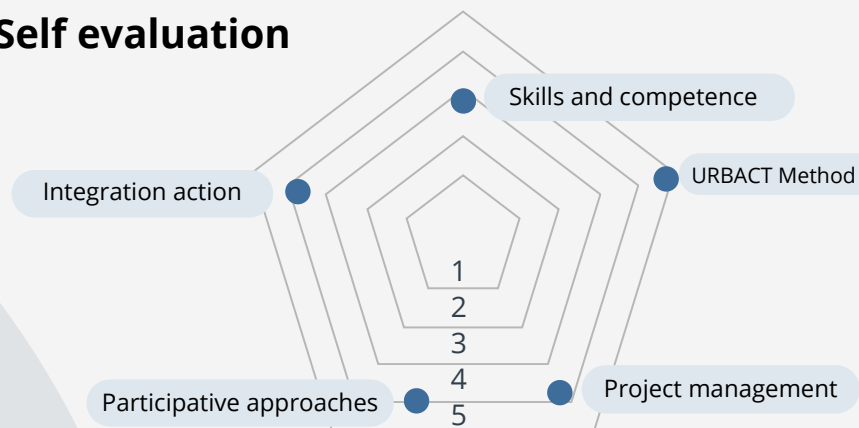
Businesses:

Traders representatives

Other relevant stakeholders:

Local school representatives, Community Garda

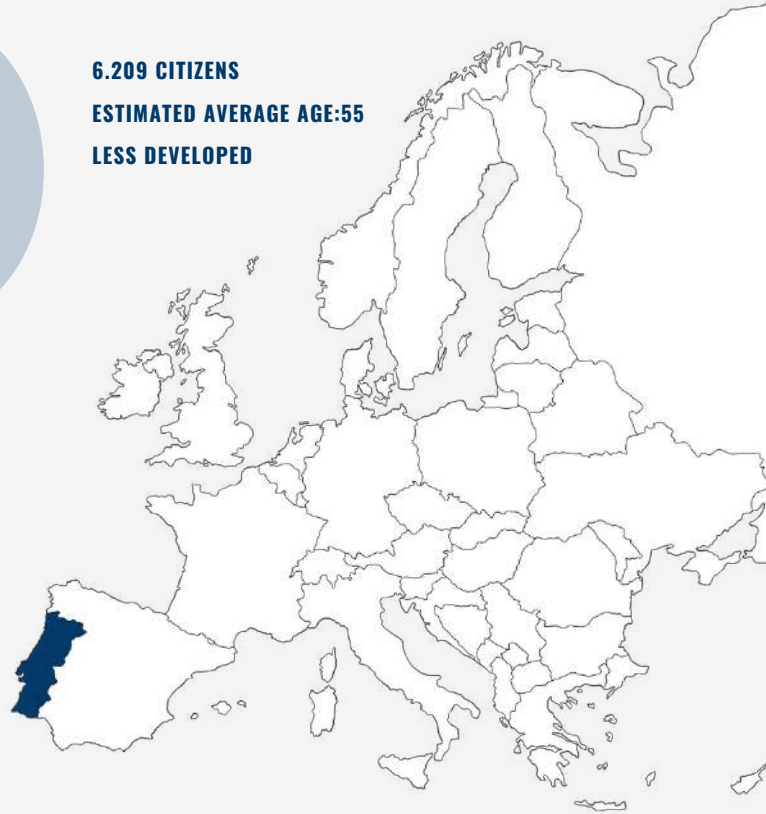
Self evaluation



Mértola, PT

Facing the demographic decline with the climate changes.

6.209 CITIZENS
ESTIMATED AVERAGE AGE:55
LESS DEVELOPED

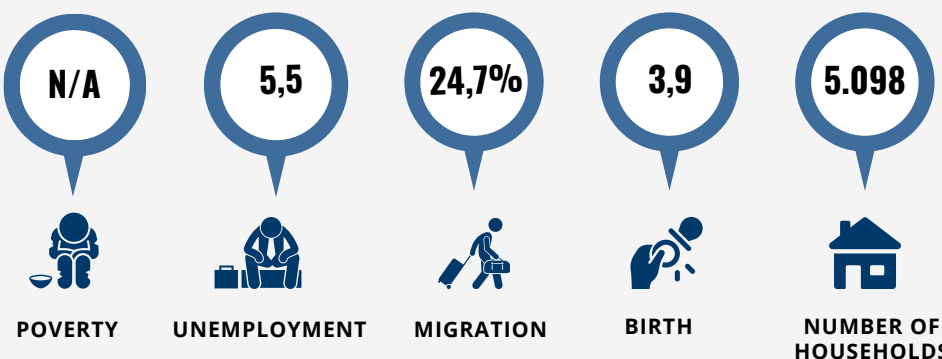


Mértola, a picturesque municipality situated in the interior of southern Portugal, near the Spanish border, stands at a crossroads of rich cultural heritage and pressing challenges. Covering an expansive 1292 square kilometres, Mértola is home to a modest population of 6206 inhabitants, equating to a population density of 4.8 inhabitants per square kilometre.

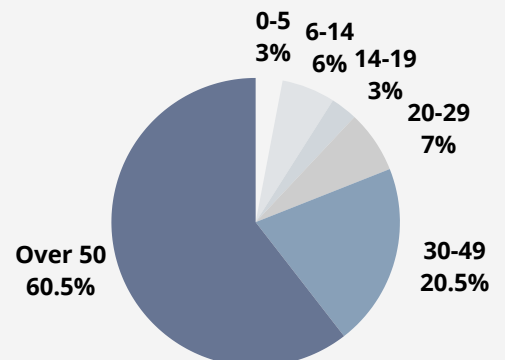
The village of Mértola, nestled alongside the confluence of the Guadiana and Oeiras rivers, is inhabited by approximately 1200 residents and holds an esteemed place on the national UNESCO World Heritage Site candidacy list. For over four decades, Mértola has been actively engaged in archaeological research, culminating in 14 museum centres that meticulously chronicle various epochs of Mértola's history, spanning from the Roman era to the Islamic period, and delving into the ethnography of local crafts and traditions.

Moreover, Mértola boasts affiliation with the Vale do Guadiana National Park, characterised by its rich natural resources and diverse biodiversity, including protected species like the Iberian lynx, Iberian imperial eagle, and golden eagle. However, Mértola confronts a complex web of challenges, including depopulation, an ageing population, climate vulnerability, desertification, and the need for a more participatory and inclusive approach to urban regeneration, all aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda.

Demographic data



Population by age



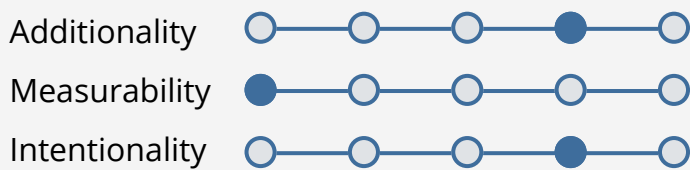


Challenges

Objectives

<p>Face the demographic decline taking into account the impact of the climate change process.</p>	<p>Attract the presence of a stable number of residents actively engaged in sustainable development, addressing the challenges of climate change and desertification</p>
<p>Preserve the historical centre considering the needs of those living in.</p>	<p>Ensure accessibility and well-being for residents preserving the identity of heritage.</p>
<p>Collecting data and ensuring local participation.</p>	<p>Ensured the requirement for measurability model.</p>

Current approach to social impact



Mértola's strategy centers on sustainable development, emphasizing inclusivity and integrated urban policies. The bottom-up approach ensures community engagement and empowerment. Despite the absence of a measurability system, the city aligns with SDGs, aiming to address challenges innovatively. A research center focused on biodiversity and climate change will attract expertise, fostering sustainable development and combating climate challenges. The strategy integrates historical preservation, urban revitalization, and cultural initiatives, creating a balance between local needs and development.

Relevant SDGs



Gender Equality

Involving strategy for the citizens and developing a bottom-up approach to make sure that the process will integrate and empower all.



Digital

The city has digital presence for tourism and using is using digital features also within its museum, making the offer more accessible for different target groups.



Green

Sustainable policy is an integral part as mertola is facing climate related challenges.



Best practices

One night at the market

A participatory design initiative actively involving the community. People were invited to join communal dinners at the local market, creating convivial moments of social gathering. This occasion not only provided the opportunity to participate in enjoyable moments but also served as a platform for discussions and listening to the changes and needs of the city.



Mertola future lab

A platform that collects and monitors projects of urban regeneration which are present in the city. Mèrtola Future Lab is a space for questioning, reflection, experimentation, research, knowledge transfer, creativity, innovation, and action.



Key challenge question

How to reduce population decline in the face of the effect of climate change?

Micro-challenge

Create favourable conditions to attract residents in adverse environmental conditions, and preserve the historical heritage without losing its identity and ensure accessibility for residents.

IAP focus

On actions which ensure social impact and sustainability, need to address various aspects of community development, urban regeneration, and environmental resilience.

ULG

Coordinator: André Sanches

Local Government authorities: vice-mayor

Public institution: Municipality Staff of an architect, a social worker, an archaeologist, a lawyer, an engineer, a geographer, a sociologist

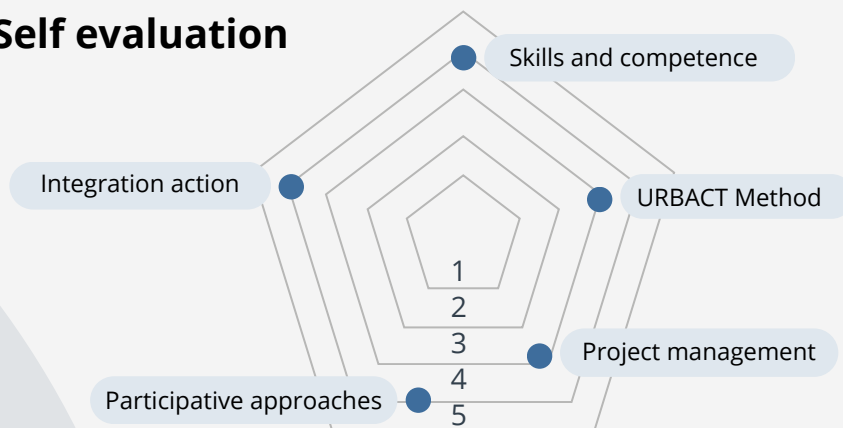
NGOs/non-profit organizations: Campo Arqueológico de Mértola - research centre in archeology and heritage of Mértola; Mértola Heritage Defense Association; Associations based in the historic centre (Montícolá Association, Weaving Cooperative, Terra Sintrópica Association; Entre Imagem Association)

Community organisations: Association of residents of the historic centre of Mértola

Businesses: entrepreneurs of the historic centre; retail

Other relevant stakeholders: Team of external consultants; Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Mértola - Responsible for social support for the elderly in the historic centre of Mértola; Mértola Volunteer Firefighters; Residents of the historic centre

Self evaluation

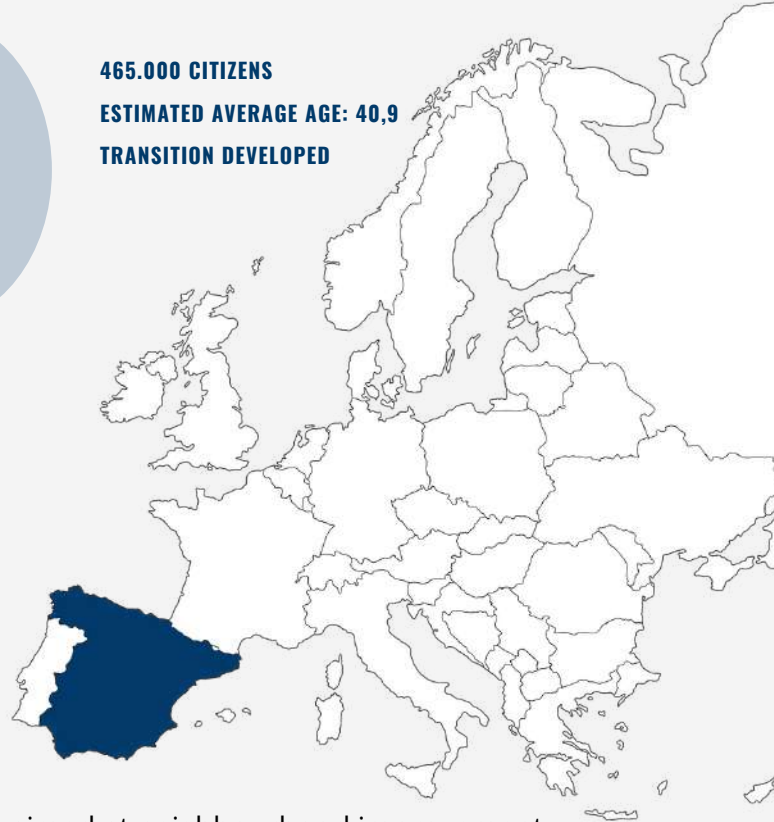


Murcia, ES

Reduce decline through the infrastructural renewal urban action

The municipality of Murcia, boasting a population of 465,000, stands as Spain's seventh-largest city. As the capital of the Murcia Region and nestled in the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula, Murcia's urban landscape is a tapestry of 28 neighbourhoods in the urban centre, complemented by 55 peripheral outlying districts.

465.000 CITIZENS
ESTIMATED AVERAGE AGE: 40,9
TRANSITION DEVELOPED



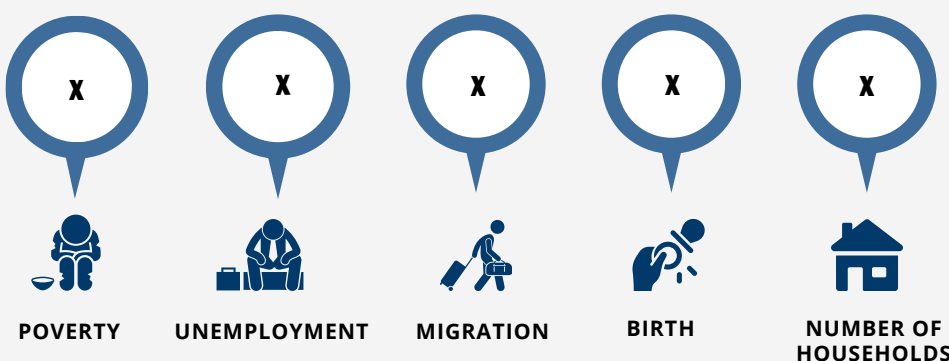
Murcia has been actively engaged in numerous projects aimed at neighbourhood improvement and fostering citizen participation in urban regeneration. This commitment is exemplified by the city's innovative approaches, such as Urban DNA and Urban Acupuncture.

Currently, a significant investment is underway in the southern part of the city, which involves relocating the railway underground over a distance of 7 kilometres. This ambitious project not only liberates space but also enhances connectivity between the southern and northern area.

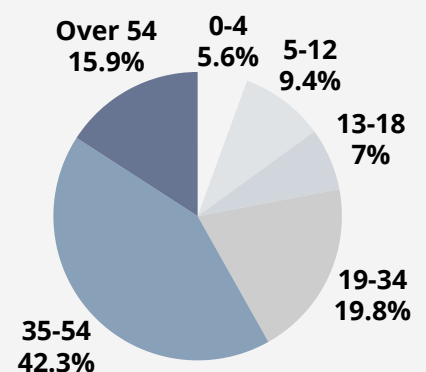
The southern part of Murcia is characterised by its diverse population, and while it has faced certain challenges, the new project goes beyond breaking a physical barrier. It aspires to address psychological barriers and forge a more holistic identity for the area.

Murcia's proactive engagement with URBACT Networks, including the APN and TN, and its recognition through the URBACT Good Practice Label, reflect its familiarity with the program and methodology. The impact of initiatives like "Interactive Cities" and "Innovator" has been invaluable for Murcia, fostering the development of integrated strategies both internally and in collaboration with our citizens.

Demographic data



Population by age



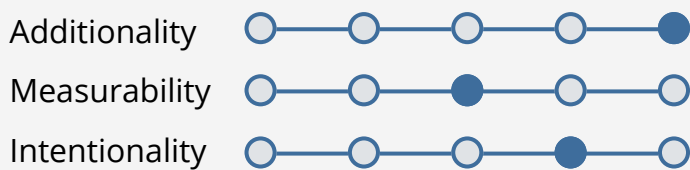


Challenges

Objectives

Remove the psychological and social barrier between north and south	Regenerate the area with green spaces
Reduce areas experiencing decline or neglect	Improve and revitalise neighbourhoods surrounding the new railway
Lack of identity between residents and the city's centre	Design a new storytelling identity for the community and future residents

Current approach to social impact



Murcia's strategy highlights the role of public infrastructure in driving urban innovation and addressing challenges. The "neighbourhood by neighbourhood" Urban Regeneration approach aims to revitalize neglected areas, preventing degentrification through physical, economic, and social interventions. The city is actively engaged in national development plans, focusing on renewing the railway in the city centre to positively impact local businesses, service accessibility, and mobility. With prior experience in URBACT Networks and the Urban Agenda for the EU, Murcia utilizes interactive strategies, fostering internal and citizen collaboration for sustainable urban development. Networks and the Urban Agenda for the EU, Murcia utilizes interactive strategies, fostering internal and citizen collaboration for sustainable urban development.

Relevant SDGs



Gender Equality

Murcia uses internal protocols for gender equality in the municipality



Digital

Murcia excelled in Smart City Strategy, awarded best model in Spain. Implemented sustainable urban development "Murcia IT."



Green

The municipality combines the climate goals and circular economy strategy to create integrated cohesive interventions.



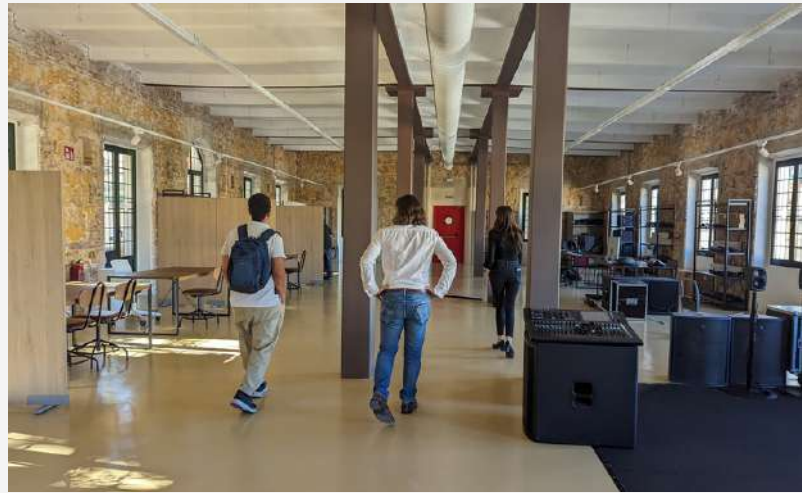
Best practices

Urban DNA and the birth of Urban Acupuncture Therapy

Citizen engagement programs, part of Urbact Interactive City project, involve target neighbors interactively online and offline, fostering dialogue and developing urban solutions based on local needs.

Regenerated former military buildings: occulto.tv

Former military buildings in the southern city, now cultural spaces, include an art pavilion like Occulto.tv. More pavilions are planned for cultural initiatives, close to the upcoming railway urban action.



Key challenge question

How can we mitigate the decline in the surrounding area of the new urban infrastructure initiative?

Micro-challenge

Ensure the sense of identity of citizens and their connection with neighbourhoods of the sud area in the centre while also ensuring cohesion and equal access to city services.

IAP focus

Identify action and urban intervention in the new public space surrounding the railway. Improve the action in the regenerated former military buildings.

ULG

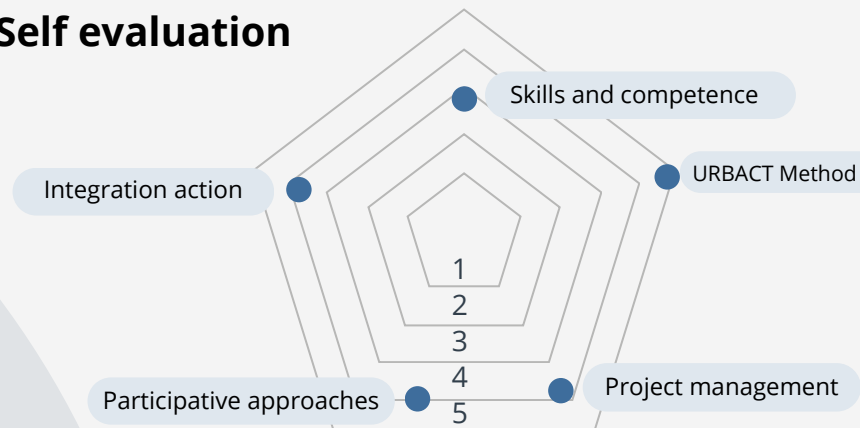
Coordinator:
Kasper van Hout

Public institution:
Municipal "services" (departments), e.g. Parks and Gardens, Culture, Personnel, ICT, Public Construction, Urban Quality.

Community organisations:
Civil society stakeholders, representatives of the collectives of the neighbourhood.

Other relevant stakeholders:
Members of the URBACT Interactive Cities ULG and URBACT Innovator ULG

Self evaluation

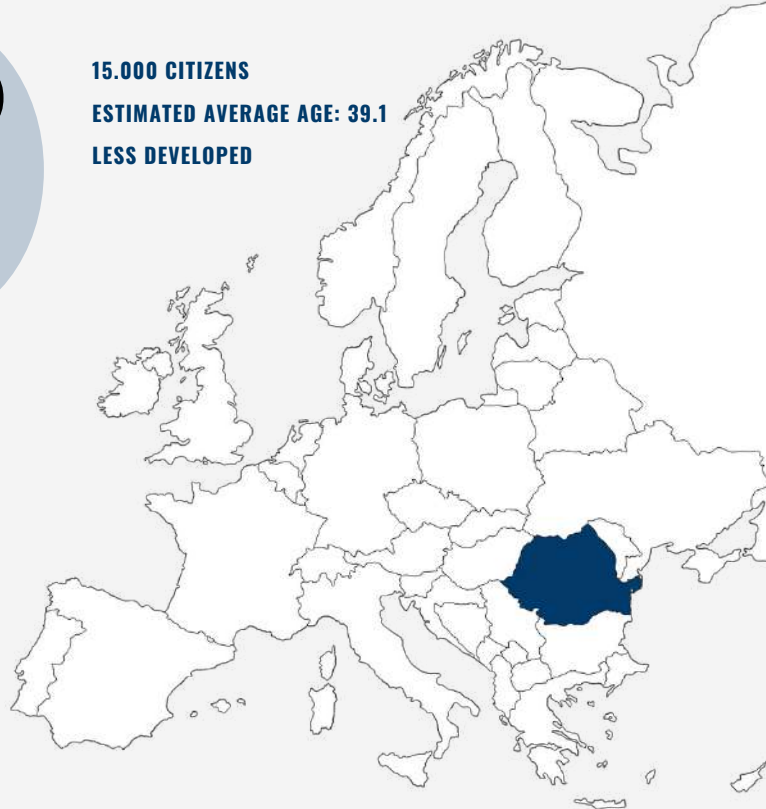


Targu Frumos, RO

Public Space as a Common Good: Mapping and Enhancing

Situated at the crossroads of Romania, Targu Frumos boasts a storied history deeply intertwined with commerce and trade. This compact city thrives on tight-knit community bonds, fostering a social fabric where familiarity is ubiquitous, and a culture of networking and self-sufficiency prevails.

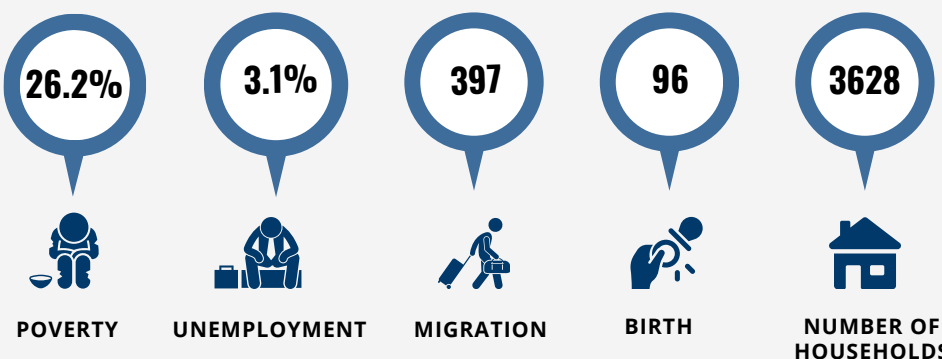
15.000 CITIZENS
ESTIMATED AVERAGE AGE: 39.1
LESS DEVELOPED



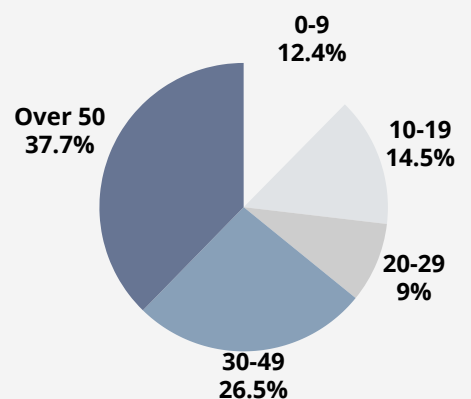
Targu Frumos stands out as a verdant urban landscape, with a remarkable fifty percent of its territory dedicated to urban agriculture, meticulously overseen by members of its Lipovan minority. A central farmers market serves as a hub for acquiring fresh produce and traditional culinary delights. The city takes pride in its robust educational network, with ongoing plans for renovations aimed at bolstering both energy efficiency and educational opportunities for the younger generation. The local job market flourishes, with specialised companies in road construction, piping, and a thriving bakery factory contributing to employment prospects.

Nevertheless, Targu Frumos grapples with a set of challenges. Traffic congestion plagues its two major thoroughfares, and access to higher education remains limited, prompting many young residents to migrate to Iasi in pursuit of career prospects, particularly in the fields of IT and engineering. The city contends with olfactory nuisances emanating from nearby pig and chicken farms, coupled with the pressing issues of insufficient parking spaces, a car-centric societal norm, and the absence of public transportation and dedicated cycling lanes.

Demographic data



Population by age



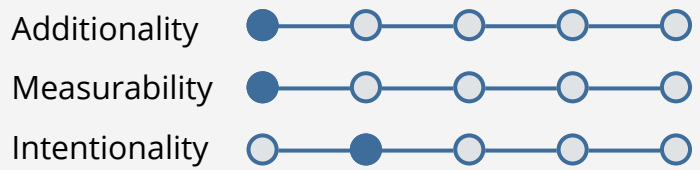


Challenges

Objectives

Lack of valorization of public areas and badly used public land (garages).	To achieve the repatriation of public space and the creation of community-centric facilities, the objective is to systematically increase citizen awareness through evidence-based approaches.
Lack of community engagement.	Increase the know-how of participatory planning.
Lack of understanding of integrated planning.	Learn how to plan and bring in capacity building to the team.

Current approach to social impact



The issue of garages and the use of public space reflects a broader challenge: the lack of valorization of public areas. Effective urban planning requires a comprehensive approach to address the garage problem, creating value and implementing interventions. Initial efforts should involve mapping the city's spaces, emphasising existing areas crucial for community well-being. Shifting from citizens' property as the strategy's starting point, the focus must enhance citizen awareness through evidence-based methods. Presently, social monitoring lacks tools, relying on direct discussions. Local government empowerment includes collaborative decision-making with the community, active engagement, consideration of input, seeking non-binding feedback, and providing transparent, updated information.

Relevant SDGs



Gender Equality

No specific actions or protocols on gender equality.



Digital

The city signed a contract about the rehabilitation of the public illumination service. Smart lighting.



Green

Energy efficiency plans for school buildings.



Best practices

Central farmers market

The city's rich tradition and practices in urban agriculture, coupled with the resulting local internal production, have given rise to the establishment of an internal market. This constitutes a significant identity element that should be emphasized in the overall strategy.



New Waste centre

With voluntary input for waste recycling - approved, starting now to build it - for large domestic waste.

(picture for illustration only)



Key challenge question

How to create an overall vision for the city, improve the existing spaces and encourage youth to stay or even move?

Micro-challenge

Participation - engage the community in the process and increase the know-how of the team

IAP focus

To elevate skills in crafting sustainable development plans and involve citizens in mapping urban spaces, planning new cultural activities, and fostering stakeholder engagement.

ULG

Coordinator:

Marius Udirsteanu

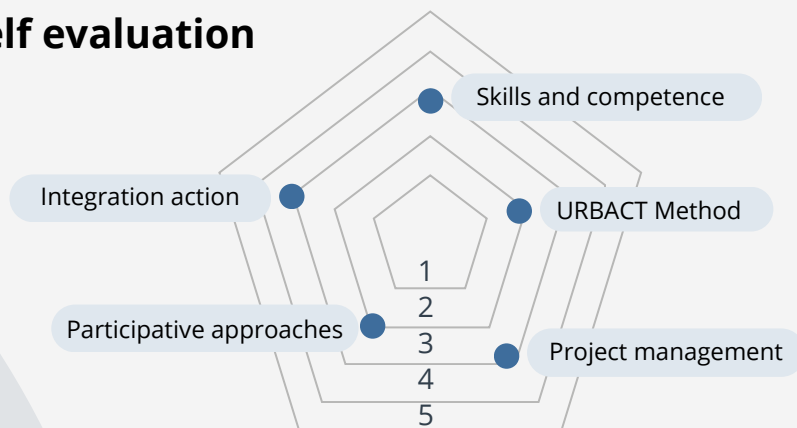
Community organisations:

- Associations of owners (owners of apartments) (potential)
- Departments of Urbanism, Patrimonial department
- Schools
- 5-6 local elected councillors

Other relevant stakeholders

- Garage owners
- University of Iasi (potential)

Self evaluation



3

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY AND NETWORK ROADMAP

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

This part of the baseline study includes a synthesis providing an overview of the network's proposed methodology for achieving good results and a Network Roadmap to guide progress.

Synthesis

The U.R. Impact partnership comprises lesser-known cities across Europe, characterised by diverse sizes and settings. Among these, three cities stand out as medium to large-scale urban areas: Murcia emerges as the largest city within the partnership, boasting nearly 500,000 inhabitants. Following suit are Bielsko-Biala and Kamza, with populations of 170,000 and 120,000, respectively. Additionally, Cinisello Balsamo registers as a medium-sized city, home to approximately 70,000 residents. Notably, Kamza and Cinisello Balsamo both thrive as densely populated urban centres situated adjacent to major cities (Milan and Tirana, respectively). On the other hand, Hannut and Targu Frumos, quaint towns with populations of 17,000 and 15,000 correspondingly, embody rural environments enveloped by greenery while maintaining connectivity with larger urban hubs. Broumov is a rural town as well, bordering Poland, and shelters approximately 7,000 inhabitants. The Longford region, representing the only non-city partner in the network, directs the focus of U.R. Impact towards Ballymahon, a town of around 2,000 inhabitants. This size aligns Ballymahon closely with Mertola and Bovec.

	City (Decrescent order)	Inhabitants	Land surface	Regional level development
1	Murcia -Spain	465,000	881,86 km ²	Low
2	Bielsko-Biala - Poland	166.765	124.51 km ²	Low
3	Kamza-Albania	121,000	21,73 km ²	Low
4	Cinisello Balsamo-Italy	76,500	12,72 km ²	High
5	Hannut-Belgio	17,000	86,53 km ²	Transition
6	Targu Frumos-Romania	15,000	15,13 km ²	Low
7	Longford-Ballymahon-Ireland	10,000 (region) 1900 (Ballymahon)		High
8	Broumov-Czech Republic	7,500	22,27 km ²	Low
9	Mertola -Portugal	2,000	1292 km ² ,	Low
10	Bovec-Slovenia	3.044 Municipality of Bovec, 1,600 city of Bovec	25km ²	Low

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Synthesis

Cities competences and approach to Social Impact

UR impact cities have different level of experience in the three transversal methodological themes: Additionality, measurability and Intentionality, as can be seen in the following table:

City (Alphabetic)	Additionality	Measurability	Intentionality
Bielsko-Biała	Medium	Medium	High
Bovec	Medium	Medium	Medium
Bromuov	Medium	Low	Medium
Cinisello Balsamo	Medium	Low	Medium
Hannut	Medium	Low	High
Kamza	Medium	Low	Medium
Longford	Medium	Low	Medium
Mertola	High	Medium	High
Murcia	High	Medium	High
Targu Frumos	Low	Low	Low

Participatory processes are a prevalent aspect in most UR Impact cities, constituting a cornerstone in community engagement. However, **many cities linger at a medium level of engagement, not fully delving into genuine co-design and co-decision-making with local stakeholders.** Only a few cities have ventured into co-governance, and even fewer have delved into delegating control and decision-making authority.

Measurability stands as the least implemented aspect across these cities. Some have incorporated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for evaluation, thus gaining some familiarity with objective measurement. However, **true assessment of social impact remains largely uncharted territory.** The cities lack experience in methodologies for social impact evaluation, including formulating a theory of change, data collection, and reporting.

Intentionality varies, with four cities exhibiting a high level, while the rest maintain a medium level. Only one city demonstrates low intentionality. **High-intentionality cities have demonstrated remarkable success in formulating comprehensive regeneration plans, fostered through collaboration between municipal bodies and local stakeholders.** These exemplary plans could serve as internal best practices for other cities. Medium-capacity cities aim to enhance integration within their planning strategies. Lastly, **social procurement remains an area largely unexplored or minimally experimented upon across the cities.**

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Synthesis

Cross key themes

Urban regeneration is a multifaceted endeavour that encompasses numerous critical elements, each interwoven with the unique tapestry of cities within the UR Impact initiative. Across the ten diverse cities engaged in this transformational journey, several key themes emerge, reflecting common challenges, innovative approaches, and distinctive characteristics intrinsic to each location.

Place Making, attractiveness and identity:

Crafting a unique identity and safeguarding local heritage hold utmost significance for all UR IMPACT cities. While some aim to establish a distinct identity and allure to draw in new permanent residents, others prioritise enhancing the sense of place for current inhabitants. This theme resonates profoundly across all cities and intertwines with other cross-cutting subjects that are more context-specific:

SOCIAL INCLUSION

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

BRAIN DRAIN AND YOUTH POLICY

HERITAGE AND INNOVATION

GOVERNANCE MODELS

LOCAL COMMERCE AND PROXIMITY
ECONOMY

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Many cities within the UR Impact initiative grapple with the intricate challenge of social inclusion, stemming from factors like shifting demographics, immigrant influx, and economic transitions. This concern is notably pronounced in **Cinisello Balsamo, Ballymahon, Broumov, Kamza, and Murcia**. Cinisello Balsamo and Ballymahon contend with significant **immigrant populations**, highlighting the pressing need for enhanced integration and fostering a sense of citizenship. Meanwhile, Broumov and Kamza host substantial **Roma communities**, striving for comprehensive inclusive regeneration measures. In Murcia, the focus lies on a specific area's development and its linkage to the city centre, with a crucial emphasis on embracing the **more vulnerable or marginalised community** residing beyond the railway zone. Notably, Bielsko-Biała sets a commendable precedent by effectively integrating its **Ukrainian community** through initiatives such as language courses and employment opportunities.

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Synthesis

BRAIN DRAIN AND YOUTH POLICY

The departure of young individuals, particularly those with qualifications, poses a challenge for several cities within the network. **Kamza, Targu Frumos, Bromouv, Bovec, Bielsko Biała, and Mertola** experience an outflow of younger populations who **leave for higher education but often choose not to return**. There's a pressing need to enhance attractiveness, whether by making the study period more appealing or by creating opportunities for qualified job positions upon completion of studies. Meanwhile, cities like Cinisello Balsamo, Ballymahon, and Murcia acknowledge the necessity of implementing improved youth policies to actively engage and empower the younger demographic. Exploring innovative strategies that view younger individuals as valuable assets rather than issues will be a central aspect of this thematic focus

GOVERNANCE MODELS

Within the methodological framework of "additionality," there's a specific focus on exploring **innovative governance models and the concept of common goods**. This entails delving deeper into higher levels of participation on the scale and understanding how local organisations and citizens, working alongside public authorities, can **collaboratively govern spaces and activities while taking responsibility for communal resources**. This focus is particularly pertinent for **Hannut**, especially given its new development areas, and **Ballymahon**, currently undergoing the renovation of a new multigenerational space. Cities like **Cinisello Balsamo, Murcia, and Bovec** showcase emerging examples that are beginning to put these principles into practice, highlighting the evolving strategies and approaches in this domain.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Cities aim to draw tourists to bolster their economy and establish a distinct identity. However, ensuring that tourism remains sustainable for both the local community and the environment is imperative. **The focus lies in attracting tourists while maintaining sustainability in tourism practices**. **Bovec** stands out as a city significantly impacted by unsustainable tourism practices. **Hannut** seeks to attract more transient or day-trip tourists to invigorate local commerce. **Bielsko-Biała** is actively creating tourism opportunities but faces stiff competition from neighbouring regions offering naturalistic tourism like skiing. **Bromouv** attracts considerable local tourism during summers, yet it remains seasonal and transient throughout the year. **Targu Frumos**, located at a crossroads, has the potential to captivate tourists for brief stops. **Mertola** currently manages sustainable tourism practices effectively, maintaining a reasonable number of visitors, but endeavours to encourage longer stays within the city.

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Synthesis

HERITAGE AND INNOVATION

The challenge faced by several cities lies in **balancing heritage preservation with modernisation and sustainability**. It involves **retaining a location's historical essence while adapting it for contemporary use, ensuring environmental sustainability, and fostering innovation**. This entails renovating historical sites, repurposing old structures for new community functions, and integrating modern facilities while honouring the region's cultural heritage. This aspect is pertinent to most UR Impact cities, particularly noticeable in **Mertola**, where there's a specific focus on revising the conservation plan. Additionally, **Bromouv** and **Bielsko-Biała** are actively revitalising spaces that were abandoned in the 1990s, aligning with this need for heritage preservation and modern utilisation.

LOCAL COMMERCE AND PROXIMITY ECONOMY

Cities in the UR Impact network confront a common challenge of reviving local commerce and fostering a proximity-based economy. **This endeavour revolves around rejuvenating local enterprises, nurturing community-centric markets, and advocating for economic endeavours that prioritise local production and consumption**. Striking a delicate balance between preserving traditional small-scale businesses and embracing innovative economic paradigms is imperative. **Bielsko-Biała** focuses on its main street, competing against commercial hubs, while **Hannut** and **Mertola** seek post-COVID recovery by enhancing the quality of commerce in their centres. A similar situation arises in **Bromov**, which emphasises its main square, and **Bovec** strives for year-round commerce vitality. Furthermore, **Kamza**, **Ballymahon**, **Targu Frumos**, **Cinisello Balsamo**, and **Murcia** are all exploring strategies to empower and invigorate local businesses while adapting to evolving market dynamics through modernised economic approaches.

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Synthesis

Policy Challenges, IAP focus and testing actions.

Beyond the common interest in themes and the competencies already in place for impact evaluation, below is a summary of the specifics of each city in terms of focus for the URBACT journey.

Bielsko-Biala

Main policy challenge	Existing plans	Potential focus of IAP	Expected changes/results	Testing Actions Ideas
Low sense of local identity and decline of the city center area. Weak social impact indicators and engagement of stakeholders.	Municipal regeneration program implemented with an annual monitoring system. 11 SGD Goal used in the city's strategy.	Analyze actions to boost the city center's appeal, and improve downtown quality of life, stimulate economic revival, foster local identity, and evaluate social impact through collaboration with stakeholders.	Resident attraction enhanced. Socio-economic revival in Śródmieście Biała developed. The empowerment of residents as stakeholders and leaders in urban regeneration has increased. Impact indicators fit the city's needs.	Make small events in the new squares and streets Use street art to engage youth Test a new impact evaluation method, starting from the KPI in the regeneration plan.

Bovec

Demographic decline, promoting sustainable tourism beyond conventional approaches, addressing shortcomings in communication and local involvement, and aligning regulations with social impact objectives.	Funding program and participatory planning through consultations, incorporating feedback into local strategies. The municipality adopts a participatory budget, allowing residents to vote on ideas for funding. Implementation of the sports center.	Increase the practices and participatory planning, balance resources and tourist activities and increase local opportunities for young people.	Increase of local opportunities and qualified job opportunities. Achieved a balance in tourism offerings. Promoted community participation, and implemented revisions to norms and regulations, in the housing sector.	Activities in the city living room, a new model of "temporary use of land" for the airfield Participatory methods outdoors. Events both for locals and to attract tourism off-season an "off campus".
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BromouV

Low attractiveness, particularly for young residents. Declining city center diminishing local commerce, and a prevailing sense of mistrust between authorities and citizens.	Participatory methodologies, data use, and monitoring for urban practices. Quality of life is monitored, and social indicators guide external procurement evaluations. Citizens are engaged through public participation.	Building competence and skills from sharing European practice, activities focus on methodology to develop a bottom-up approach.	Increased appeal and residents' sense of identity. Tourists prolong the time to spend in the city. The center is attractive for citizens. Enhanced participatory methodologies and fostering bottom-up practices.	Activating the main square with new events pop-up requalification of the square residencies with use of commercial spaces
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SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Synthesis

Cinisello Balsamo

Main policy challenge	Existing plans	Potential focus of IAP	Expected changes/results	Testing Actions Ideas
Lack of capitalization of practices provided by urban regeneration experiences and weak local involvement of citizens. Lack of identity and engagement and isolation of foreign communities. Deterioration of buildings or stores.	Diverse social projects and urban regeneration experiences developed. The city engages stakeholders in urban regeneration planning. New plan to renew deteriorated public buildings.	Develop an impact evaluation system tailored bottom-up approaches, and sharing practices.	Municipalities have a model capitalized by past practices and experiences. Misurability model to involve citizens in the social impact changes. Foster a sense of place. Implement revitalization of buildings.	Simulating the shift of the elderly house before it is actually moved (work on multigenerational and accessibility) Testing co-construction of indicators for social impact for a specific activity An event to engage more citizens in the new bridge and skate park

Hannut

Increase the attractiveness. Manage diverse stakeholders engaged in the urban plan. Create new uses of the city center. Lack of identity and sense of pride in the city.	Participatory and innovative strategy, adopting technology, able to engage citizens. Urban regeneration plan that envisions the development of a hybrid space at the city's entrance.	Analyze the suitable governance and create a social impact evaluation model led by data-collected.	Increased foot traffic in the center by developing and connecting the new urban area. Strengthened shared local governance model. Restored a sense of place, identity, and pride.	Creating a temporary event in the new development site, connected to the city center Create a test on impact evaluation related to an existing project
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Kamza

Lacks a long-standing historical heritage identity for citizens. Weak social integration for the social population growth.	The Municipal Council approved a comprehensive development plan, prioritizing responsible resource use, for the Green Transition. Tools to engage young citizens in public decisions.	Work on: Kamž 2030, a plan that activates the elements of the master plan with a co-constructed and long-term vision.	Enhanced the sense of belonging. Developed green strategies, fostering the growth of businesses and an entrepreneurial mindset. Implemented a long-term strategy and action plan to improve social participation.	Evaluation methods tested on a specific neighborhood. Temporary activation of an area - like the river banks.
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Longford

Lack of integration and connection between the different local communities, weak engagement and lack of activities for younger citizens. Lack of participation of citizens and stakeholders.	The city has formed a town team to involve citizens in public discussions. Ballymahon has collaborative efforts among its members. There is a project to renew buildings to foster social well-being for the local community.	Establishing a robust governance model to ensure the regeneration project effectively benefits the community by meeting its ongoing needs.	Enhanced social integration through participatory practices, measurable methods, and participatory planning. Identified a bottom-up approach able to engage the younger demographic and expand target activities. Implement an effective governance model.	Creating some temporary activities in the building, also during renovation phase Testing multigenerational activities before the new elderly center is ready Testing evaluation methods
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SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Synthesis

	Main policy challenge	Existing plans	Potential focus of IAP	Expected changes/results	Testing Actions Ideas
Mertola	Demographic decline taking into account the impact of the climate change process. Preserve the historical center considering the needs of those living in. Collecting data and ensuring local participation	In the 1990s, Mértola crafted the Plan for the Safeguarding and Valorization of the Historic Center as the primary strategy for heritage preservation.	Actions able to ensure social impact and sustainability, need to address various aspects of community development, urban regeneration, and environmental resilience.	New residents are also addressing climate change. Increased accessibility and well-being of residents, while preserving the heritage identity. The measurable model has been implemented.	New data collection methods to take care of the public space around the houses. Initiate small actions explaining the revision of the conservation plan
Murcia	Remove the psychological and social barrier between north and south. Reduce areas experiencing decline or neglect. Lack of identity between residents and the city's center	National development plans, in which Murcia is renewing the city's central railway to create a new narrative identity for residents in the neighborhood surrounding the new railway.	Identify action and urban intervention in the new public space surrounding the railway. Improve the action in the regenerated former military buildings.	Increased green spaces in the new area. Neighborhoods surrounding the new railway have been revitalized. A new storytelling identity has been designed for the community and future residents.	Activate small events in the new area. Test an evaluation method on a specific action
Targu Frumos	Lack of valorization of public areas and badly used public land (garages). Lack of community engagement. Lack of understanding of integrated planning	Local government empowers community decision-making, collaborates as equals, actively engages and considers input, seeks non-binding feedback, and provides transparent, relevant information.	To elevate skills in crafting sustainable development plans and involve citizens in mapping urban spaces, planning new cultural activities, and fostering stakeholder engagement.	Successfully established public space, raising citizen awareness through evidence-based approaches. Enhanced participatory planning expertise and capacity building within the team	Use GIS map to visualize. Test new participatory method. Initiating a comprehensive city mapping, neighborhood walks with citizens to reflect on the city's future.

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Synthesis

Needs and potential contributions

With a diverse array of backgrounds, U.R. Impact cities bring specialised knowledge that can be shared and utilised across the network.

City	Give	Get
Bielsko-Biała	Expertise in multicultural integration, cultural activities for regeneration, and innovative employment programs	Exchange on participatory governance, social procurement strategies, and sustainable tourism development
Bovec	Knowledge in sustainable tourism, seasonal economic fluctuations, and rural community engagement	Learning opportunities in social impact measurement, urban regeneration practices, and innovative youth policies
Broumov	Expertise in heritage preservation, urban regeneration strategies, and community engagement in public spaces	Exchange on social inclusion, innovative governance models, and social impact measurement
Cinisello Balsamo	Expertise in social inclusion, youth empowerment, and urban regeneration in multicultural neighbourhoods	Learning opportunities in Social impact measurement, participatory planning, and local commerce revitalization
Hannut	Insights into integrated urban planning, participatory practices and proximity-based economy	Knowledge exchange on innovative governance models, Social impact measurement and sustainable tourism strategies
Kamza	Knowledge in youth policies, social inclusion, and community-driven initiatives	Exchange on innovative governance models, social procurement practices, and heritage preservation
Longford	Knowledge in community-based regeneration, social enterprise development, and local employment initiatives	Insights into participatory governance models, social impact measurement, innovative youth policies, and sustainable tourism management
Mertola	Experience in heritage preservation, sustainable tourism, and community-driven cultural activities	Insights into innovative governance models, social impact measurement and local commerce development
Murcia	Experience in sustainable tourism management, Insights into participatory governance models and heritage preservation	Social impact measurement, cultural diversity integration and innovative approaches in local commerce
Targu Frumos	Experience in heritage preservation, innovative approaches in rural areas, and cultural revitalization	Learnings on social impact measurement, participatory planning, and local commerce sustainability

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Methodology

Methodology and Roadmap

The approach will **integrate URBACT's Action planning journey with the Impact assessment process**. This means that while planning actions, preparing implementation, and concluding the IAP, the network will delve into the logic of the Theory of change. In particular, related to the testing action period, cities will:

- **Identifying the Vision and Goals:** The network of cities begins by defining a clear vision for urban regeneration, outlining specific social impact goals they aim to achieve.
- **Mapping Assumptions and Context:** Understanding the context and identifying underlying assumptions is crucial. Cities need to analyse the social, economic, and cultural factors influencing the urban regeneration process. This step helps in recognising potential barriers or challenges. The first two phases have already started through this baseline study.
- **Defining Interventions and Strategies:** Based on the identified goals and understanding of the context, the cities collaborate to outline specific interventions and strategies. This might include actions to include in the IAP but also specific testing actions to implement during the URBACT journey.
- **Co-Developing Outcome Indicators:** Each partner establishes measurable indicators to track progress and assess the impact of their interventions. This work will be the starting point for developing a methodology to use in the future to co-create impact evaluation strategies with local stakeholders.
- **Implementation and Monitoring:** Cities begin implementing the planned interventions. During this phase, continuous monitoring and data collection take place. This involves tracking the progress of the initiatives and collecting feedback from the communities and stakeholders involved. This will also prepare cities for future implementations.
- **Assessing Results and Learning:** Regular evaluation of the outcomes is essential. Cities analyse the data collected against the established indicators to assess the effectiveness of their interventions. This step involves understanding what worked well, what didn't, and why. It also encourages adaptive learning and adjustments to strategies based on this evaluation.
- **Adapting and Iterating:** Based on the assessment results and learnings, the network adapts its approaches and strategies. This might involve scaling up successful interventions, modifying unsuccessful ones, or introducing new approaches to address identified gaps.
- **Communicating Impact and Engaging new Stakeholders:** It's crucial to communicate the achieved social impact to stakeholders, including community members, policymakers, funders, and other cities or networks. This helps in showcasing successes, building

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Roadmap

Activities supporting this cycle will occur via in-person meetings and online seminars. Partners will receive tools and methods applicable at their local level, including:

- Tomorrow's Newspaper
- Problem Tree
- Self-evaluation of participatory practices
- Theory of Change
- Indicators co-construction workshop guide and tools
- Testing action template
- Data collection practices
- Evaluation matrix

The network's focus will center on action planning regarding three overarching methodological topics: Additionality, Measurability, and Intentionality, alongside six thematic issues mentioned earlier.

These areas will undergo in-depth exploration and elaboration during transnational meetings and diverse online sessions, as illustrated in the outlined scheme.

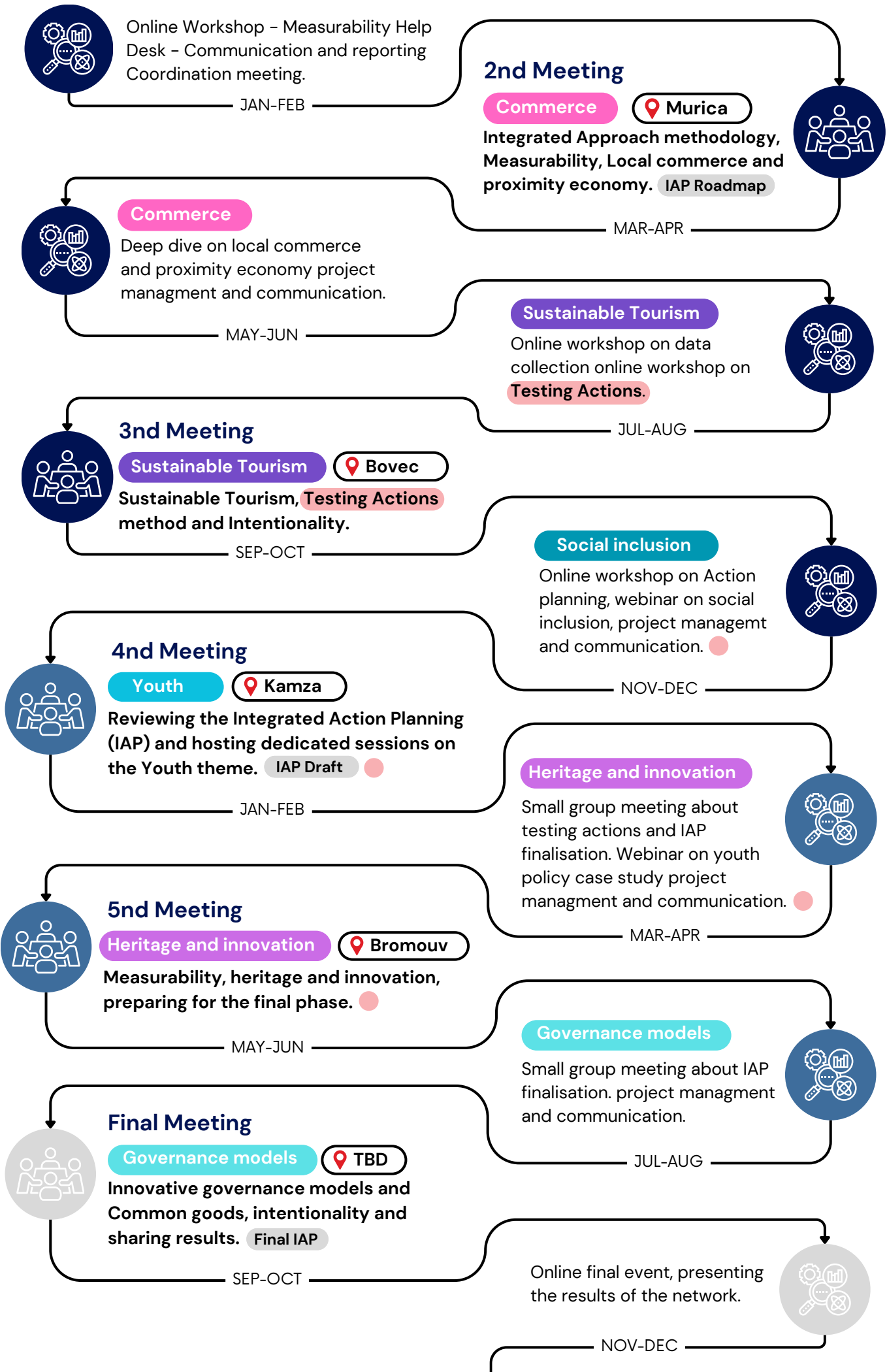


TIMELINE 2024-2025

PLANNING ACTION

PREPARING IMPLEMENTATION

IAP FINALE



SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Roadmap

Transnational meetings

TM1 - Cinisello Balsamo

- Baseline study
- Additionally
- Social inclusion

An in-person gathering aimed at presenting the Baseline study, emphasising additionality, and featuring three partner presentations on distinct participatory methods.

TM3 - Bovec

- Testing Actions
- Intentionality
- Sustainable Tourism

A gathering in Bovec dedicated to Sustainable Tourism, incorporating the Testing Actions method and discussions surrounding Intentionality within sustainability efforts.

TM5 - Broumov

- IAP
- Measurability
- Heritage and innovation

In person meeting, summing up the activities related to measurability and reformulating the methodology where needed. Sessions about heritage and innovation, as well a workshop on the IAPs.

TM2 - Murcia

- Integrated Approach
- Measurability
- Local commerce and proximity economy

A physical meeting in Murcia utilising the Integrated Approach methodology, particularly focusing on Measurability. Thematic sessions will concentrate on the Local commerce theme.

TM4 - Kamza

- IAP Review
- Testing Actions
- Brain Drain and Youth policy

A physical meeting in KAMZA reviewing the Integrated Action Planning (IAP) and hosting dedicated sessions on the Youth theme.

TM6 - tbd

- IAP
- Innovative governance models and Common goods
- Intentionality

Physical meeting to close the work. Sharing the final IAP and looking forward to new opportunities.

Transferring the knowledge from a transnational exchange to the local one

ULG meetings in every city are set before and after the transnational gatherings, ensuring a continuous flow of input and feedback. Partners will receive specific tools for use within their groups during transnational meetings. These meetings might also directly involve ULG members, depending on the topic and local interest. Online meetings serve as an additional opportunity to engage ULG members directly and can be transcribed or translated as required.

SYNTHESIS, METHODOLOGY & NETWORK ROADMAP

Roadmap

Online Meetings:

The network will convene monthly online to maintain continuity and stability in work and exchange. These sessions can take various forms:

- Coordination meetings covering project management-related issues with information sharing and Q&A sessions.
- Help desk meetings offering specific assistance on communication, reporting, financials, and more.
- Thematic focus meetings incorporating invited experts and addressing partner requests.
- Deep dive meetings delving into specific case studies or initiatives.
- Online workshops as interactive sessions complementing exercises initiated during transnational meetings.

The objective of these online meetings is not only to ensure continuous work but also to allocate more interactive and field-related activities to transnational meetings.

One-on-One or Small Group Meetings:

These will be organised as needed, particularly in relation to specific activities such as testing actions, to provide tailored reviews and support for the work carried out.

Peer Visits:

The network will have the opportunity to define peer visits according to similarities and interest and by evaluating the budget availability. These can be related to specific good practices, to IAP peer review or to exchange between ULG members.



ANNEX

CITY PROFILES INTEGRATIONS

PRIORITISING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

Baseline study for U.R IMPACT
Liat Rogel, Lead Expert

Table of contents

- Bielsko-Biała
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Bielsko-Biała, PL

Profile integrations

INTRODUCTION

The city has been through various significant changes, mostly related to the succession of different industrial settlements. The city originated from the unification of two cities, Bielsko and Biała. In the past, Bielsko and Biała operated as two neighbouring cities until their merger in 1951.

The evolution and economic growth of the city have always been led by the **succession of various industrial changes** and the presence of a robust job market, often attracting migrants to live in the city for employment reasons.

Bielsko-Biała was formerly known as "**the city of 100 industries**" due to the diverse industrial sectors that thrived within it. The city was renowned for its textile industry, a legacy still evident in the characteristics of the old industrial buildings. Progressively, the industrial transformation and the economy centred around the automotive industry, thanks to the Fiat economy.

The automotive sector remains a robust foundation of the local economy. Currently, the labour market is led by the IT and ICT business which **represent the offered job more required**. In the city emerges a dynamic socio-economic hub in the Silesian Voivodeship. Here, IT and business services have become increasingly vital sectors in the local economy.

Currently, the unemployment rate is indeed very low. The city offers different welfare services such as hospital, schools also the University is present in the city.

Bielsko-Biała's demography has been characterised by different changes due to the diverse industry change but has been **deeply impacted by the recent events and processes**.

The recent war and conflict in Ukraine which resulted in a **large number of refugees** from February 2022. The city experienced a significant **influx of migration from Ukraine**, involving approximately 7,000 refugees. Primarily comprised of women with children, they arrived shortly after the outbreak of the war.

This was a big challenge for the city in terms of social assistance, inclusion with the local community, and activation of the local labour market.

The socio-economic context of the city has facilitated the **social inclusion of immigrants**. The availability of qualified jobs in the labour market, such as positions for doctors and nurses, aligns well with the skills and opportunities of the new immigrants.

The outbreak of war also resulted in a significant **increase in the business running costs** (i.e. due to the increase in energy costs), and due to that many smaller entrepreneurs from the city centre had to close their businesses. This generates the stop of business in the centre and empty shop buildings.

Bielsko-Biała, PL

In recent years, Bielsko-Biała has observed a constant trend in the city related to the falling number of people living in the city area.

The COVID-19 pandemic had strongly adverse effects on many business entities that had to limit their activities or close down due to a significant decrease in the number of customers caused by the sanitary restrictions.

In this situation, the city authorities decided to provide some support to entrepreneurs who rent a municipal premise by lowering the rental rates so they could reduce their operating costs.

Functional and spatial changes occurred due to the construction of a large shopping centre in the heart of the city. The historical centre along **11 Listopada Street**, which was once the main shopping street connecting the historical Old Town in Bielsko with Biała, lost its original function.

The main **square of Biała was recently renovated** and its previous parking function has been changing towards a traditional market square function where such space is dedicated more to cultural and social events.

CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM TO ADDRESS

A succession of diverse changes related to industrial phases and recent events have led to a profound **weakening of identity among the citizens**, who have experienced the city for different reasons and at different times.

The perception of the historical separation between Bielsko and Biała is still visible in the relationships and behaviour of indigenous people. This context highlights a lack of a unified historical identity, which weakens the bond between citizens and the city. **One of the primary challenges faced is the city's weak and fragmented sense of identity.**

The need is to reinforce the **local identity of the inhabitants** of the regenerated area in the city centre and increase the **engagement of local stakeholders until make resident local leaders** who encourage others to undertake joint regeneration activities.

The city centre (śródmieście Białej), consisting of a new square and a pedestrian street (11 Listopada), is currently inhabited mainly by seniors and there are no longer shops, places or businesses considered attractive for residents. People choose to live outside the city centre because of the better quality of life offered there. This poses one of the main challenges for the city: **revitalising the downtown area.**

The city has a main road divided by four traffic lanes that bisect the city. However, there are special occasions when the road is being partially closed to organise some specific cultural events that are **highly participated by the residents and visitors.** This highlights the challenge of renewing the urban public space and **improving the urban pedestrian area.**

The context highlights the need to preserve historical and cultural heritage. This required to **design and implementation of new regeneration projects** fostering a **sustainable development** and making the centre more attractive, especially for the young citizens.

Bielsko-Biała, PL

One of the main goals of the city is the need to carry out comprehensive regeneration activities to **revitalise degraded areas**, as well as the redevelopment of post-industrial facilities requiring adaptation to new functions and improving the quality of life of residents living in these areas.

All of the challenges will aim to reduce the **inequality of the standard of living in the city centre** in relation to the average level for the rest of the city as well as to the social inclusion of residents at risk of social exclusion or marginalisation.

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence in planning • Monitoring and evaluation • Regeneration activities carried out on the basis of a socio-economic diagnosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty city's centre • Lack of residents engagement • depopulation
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development • Candidacy for the Capital of culture • Closing of 3rd May Street (main street in the city centre) - functional and spatial changes due to that. • Arrival of Ukraine refugees • Development of the city centre area thanks to a branch of the Medical University of Silesia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of inequality • Environmental risks - climate change

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

FOCUS, APPROACH, STRATEGIES, BEST PRACTICES

The strategy focuses on **attracting residents and stakeholders to the city centre** through activities that can have both a social and economic impact. As part of the activities which are planned to be implemented in the city centre area, there is also the **issue of equalising the quality of life to the average level** for the rest of the city.

There are also numerous infrastructure projects aimed at improving the quality of public spaces and living conditions. These projects will contribute to the expansion of recreation areas and improve access to services.

Moreover, in the case of entrepreneurship projects, it is planned to use the **financing mechanism** for these projects based on open competitions for non-governmental organisations to implement activities falling within the competence of the Municipality.

Bielsko-Biała, PL

The new **Municipal Regeneration Program** includes an annual monitoring and evaluation system for regeneration activities, which is **required and planned by the national government strategy**. Due to a **national protocol for urban regeneration plans**, which requires goals and indicators, project authors, whether from public or private entities, are anticipated to provide progress updates on specific projects through **reports and indicators**.

In fact, these updates will **assess the progress of project implementation** and the results that have been achieved. In addition, they will indicate how each project affects the regeneration area and how it contributes to the reduction of unfavourable social phenomena.

The Revitalization Act outlines a specific procedure within public procurement when designating a Special Regeneration Zone (distinct from the Regeneration Area). The objective is to engage the residents of the Special Regeneration Zone, constituting one of the Act's vital social tools. Primarily serving professional activation, it aims to alleviate social and economic challenges within the **Special Regeneration Zone**. Additionally, a distinct procedure applies to orders issued by the municipal office or its units to non-governmental organisations or social cooperatives executing regeneration projects specified in the Municipal Regeneration Programme within the Zone.

In adherence to national principles outlined in the Regeneration Act, guidelines on equality principles must be applied. This includes ensuring **equal opportunities** and non-discrimination, accessibility for people with disabilities, and gender equality throughout all stages of implementation, encompassing programming, monitoring, evaluation, and coordination activities to ensure compliance with the rules.

Currently, the need to carry out regeneration activities comes directly from Bielsko-Biała's Development Strategy until 2030, which indicates it as one of the Areas of Strategic Intervention - local ASI.

Regeneration programming is based on an integrated diagnosis of the city (made in the internal division of the city into urban units, - and small sub-areas). This assessment identifies regeneration needs and guides the planning of actions, outlining preferred directions for implementing revitalization projects aimed at addressing and mitigating crisis phenomena.

Besides this the city adopted **Goal 11 of the SGD's** and successively realised it in Bielsko-Biała in 2004 thanks to the comprehensive regeneration policy implemented in the city, covering the following spheres: social, economic, functional and spatial, technical and environmental.

BEST SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICES

- **Municipal Regeneration Program: Social Impact Evaluation**

The Mayor of Bielsko-Biała will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Municipal Regeneration Program every three years. This assessment will focus on the program's relevance, implementation progress, and alignment with diagnosed needs and planned goals. The analysis will also consider the permanence of changes resulting from the program and assess the potential impacts of external factors.

Bielsko-Biała, PL

- **Social and professional activation through the Social Integration Center in Bielsko-Biała**

The project provides active integration services for residents of the regeneration area who experience multiple social exclusions. The project idea concentrates on:

- increasing the professional activity of socially excluded people, especially people with disabilities,
- reducing the level of poverty,
- changing the social image of a person at risk of social exclusion,
- strengthening family and social relationships,
- increasing social acceptance for people from the area of social exclusion, reducing social isolation and the feeling of loneliness.

- **Let's plan our common space**

This project will focus on arranging the space of 4 backyards around municipal buildings in accordance with the expectations of the residents. The local community will submit their ideas for the development of a specific area in a specific way (e.g. pocket parks, community gardens, green recreation areas, cultural gardens, etc.).

- **Regeneration of Fabryczny Square in Bielsko-Biała for the needs of Medical University of Silesia Branch.**

This activity is focused on young people. The implementation of this project will become an opportunity for the educational, social and economic development of this part of the city. The aim of the project is to create a modern and attractive educational centre that will attract students and academics as well as raise the interest of the local community in various forms of spending free time. In addition, a number of complementary projects are planned to be developed in order to enhance the municipal housing and service resources of the city, which will have an impact on the socio-economic revival of this area and encourage, in particular, young people to live in this area.

- **STRENGTH AND WEALTH OF NEIGHBOURHOOD TIES**

This project involves conducting an open competition of offers for NGOs, in order to implement public tasks in the field of regeneration aimed at building and supporting neighbourhood initiatives among the residents of the regeneration area.

In particular, the activities will affect:

- building intergenerational ties and local identity,
- activation and social integration of residents,
- counteracting social exclusion,
- developing co-responsibility for the living space and functioning of residents,
- creating a new leisure offer,
- acquiring new competencies and skills.

- **PUNKT 11**

It is a place dedicated to the integration of the city's residents through various types of animations not only in the interior of Punkt 11 but also in the space of 11 Listopada Street and the newly rebuilt Wojska Polskiego Square. It uses art and culture as an attractive force, attracting residents to the city centre.

Bielsko-Biała, PL

One of the projects implemented in the centre of historical Biała indicated in the newly created Municipal Regeneration Program will be a project called "Permeation of the City". The aim of this project is to increase the community's self-esteem, faith in their causative power, creativity, and entrepreneurship. Including previously absent groups (including those at risk of exclusion or excluded residents) in the circulation of local culture. Greater integration of residents, both excluded groups and those at risk of exclusion, with other residents of the area - neighbourhood and intergenerational integration. Greater sense of local identity and stronger identification of residents with the area of the historic centre of Biała as their "small homeland".

- **Projects for the development of entrepreneurship:**

In the centre of historical Biała, there are planned activities to revitalise this area in the scope of the economy to increase its attractiveness through projects such as:

- Idea for BBusiness - expert support offering a series of workshops aimed at helping in developing a business plan,
- Start-up premises - providing newly established entrepreneurs with commercial premises on preferential terms "for a symbolic zloty" for a period of 3 years,
- IncuBBator of entrepreneurship: – coworking spaces.

CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT

The city's **activities in the field of urban regeneration** are consistent with both regional documents - the Regional Regeneration Policy of the Silesian Voivodeship, as well as national regulations, i.e. the Regeneration Act. These documents provide a framework for municipal policies in this regard, i.e., the Municipal Regeneration Program which is currently being developed by the city of Bielsko-Biała.

At the moment project has political support from the local authorities. The Mayor is supported by the majority of the City Council therefore **this project and its future outcomes have strong local support.**

The future development of activities initiated during the project's lifetime has a high chance of being continued in the long term but this will depend on many different aspects (i.e. on the city's budget condition as well as the possibility of obtaining external financial resources by project promoters from the private sector.).

ULG

ULG is characterised by the presence of people representing various spheres of the city's social, cultural and economic life.

Several ULG members will actively participate in transnational meetings with project partners, providing them with the opportunity to directly benefit and learn from these gatherings. Additionally, during each ULG meeting, a segment will be dedicated to the international context of the project. All members will receive updates on the outcomes of these meetings, ensuring that everyone stays informed about the project's progress.

Bielsko-Biała, PL

Local Government authorities:

- Przemysław Kamiński – Deputy Mayor

Public institution:

- Jacek Konieczny – Municipal conservator of historical properties (City Hall),
- Aleksandra Tarnawa – Coordinator of Punkt 11 (cultural institution)
- Jakub Krajewski – Culture and Promotion Department (City Hall)
- Dorota Przewoźnik – Strategy and Economic Development Department (City Hall),
- Witold Olszanicki – Strategy and Economic Development Department (City Hall),
- Katarzyna Lis – Housing Management Department (city's institution).
- Paulina Żmijowska – Mayor's Plenipotentiary for young people (City Hall),
- Dariusz Gajny – City Gardener (City Hall)

NGOs/non-profit organizations:

- Agnieszka Kowalska – Local Entrepreneurship Center

Community organisations:

- Jakub Nowak – Local Social Activist

Businesses:

- Patrycja Węgrzyn – Regional Development Agency in Bielsko-Biała

Other relevant stakeholders:

- Anna Tilszer – Director of the Centre for Technology Transfer at the Medical University of Silesia

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

Integrated Action Plan will focus on actions encompassing various aspects, including social, economic, and environmental, as well as technical, functional, and spatial considerations. These integrated efforts are **aimed at contributing to the socio-economic revitalization** of the specific area of interest, which is the downtown area of Biała.

The planned activities are centred around **specific themes** within the aforementioned aspects.

These themes include:

- Enhancing the attractiveness of the city centre and drawing residents back to the downtown area.
- Improving the overall quality of life within the city centre.
- Initiating economic revival within the city centre.
- Cultivating a sense of local identity.
- Assessing the social impact of the implemented activities.
- Collaboratively planning and executing revitalization initiatives in conjunction with stakeholders.

Bielsko-Biała, PL

The IAP will include action to **reinforce the knowledge and strategy able to maintain** a high level of engagement of local stakeholders over the long term so that they can become local leaders who encourage others to undertake joint regeneration activities.

Moreover, the IAP will share actions:

- to effective methods and tools to increase the involvement of stakeholders in active planning and co-implementation of regeneration activities
- encourage local society to initiate bottom-up activities,
- understand how local authorities can support these activities
- can co-decide process while implementing the regeneration policy.

The IAP will be correlated **with the activities from the Municipal Regeneration Program**, which is assessed and accepted by the Managing Authority for European Funds for Silesia 2021-2027, this document is necessary to apply for European funds for this purpose. The regeneration activities planned in this area will be financed from various external sources (e.g., national programs, credits, loans, etc.) as well as with the participation of private funds. Besides this, the activity will involve a deeper **exploration of the impact assessment thought reviewing whether the indicators** in the document are truly suitable for evaluating the generated social change.

This action is aimed at tightening **cooperation with local stakeholders**, which may contribute to developing a better model for monitoring and assessing the effects of implementing projects included in the Municipal Regeneration Program, ensuring a more effective assessment of the effects of implemented actions in the future.

RISK FACTORS

The profound identity challenge due to its cultural roots emerges as a risk.

The migration flow, considering the characteristics and reasons that led people to move to the city, does not make the flow and inclusion permanent. While on the one hand, it has generated socio-economic growth, on the other hand, it continues to **increase the risk of the identity fragility** that characterises the city's demographics.

The cultural focus which characterised the ULG will lead the job of the IAP adopting culture as an **agent of change**. However, this could pose the risk of not impacting a multidimensional strategy without integrating it into other important dimensions.

As for every European city, Environmental risks related to climate change, or the availability of resources are taken in consideration.

Bovec, SI

Profile integrations

INTRODUCTION

Bovec has a natural and scenic landscape. It's a **natural paradise where one can live with a high quality of life**. It's a small town not close to the urban centre.

The town has had city rights since 1952, has been an independent municipality since 1995, and comprises 14 hamlets.

The social and economic context is deeply influenced by different **historical factors** and **natural disasters**. Until the construction of the railway, Bovec was a very important transit area between Aquileia and Villach.

The city was **marked by different conflicts and wars**. The 1st World War destroyed the town severely and made local people refugees due to the 29-month-long Soča Front. The government changed from Austro-Hungarian to Italian. The end of World War 2 first brought a two-year division into A and B zones, and only in 1947 did it become part of the SFR Yugoslavia, and the socialist system lasted until **independence in 1991**.

Slovenia and with it the Municipality of Bovec was transformed from a socialist republic into an independent republic with democratic party politics with a capitalist system.

Alongside the past historical events, the city has been hit by **different natural disasters** such as 3 strong earthquakes in 1976, 1998 and 2004 and the Mangart landslide which cut off the western part of the municipality from the world for a few months in 2000.

These events contributed to **generating urban renovation** due to the reconstruction of commercial and residential buildings, which included public housing (30 apartments).

However, the process of renovation was led mostly by the citizens who **renovated buildings through loans or selling their properties** to not residential or foreign people. This generated a **renovation process that was led by the business goals** rather than local citizens.

Bovec has experienced significant **demographic changes** due to the impact of the 2008 economic crisis and the socio-economic context. The economy is led by the car and chemical industry which occupies most people. Bovec has a 3.1% of **unemployment rate** which would be even higher if a portion of the population wouldn't leave Bovec for job opportunities elsewhere. Bovec has currently a **worrying population ageing** with a relevant **young migration flow**.

The town **lacks services and educational opportunities**. In Bovec, different services are a ride drive, even the hospital is far away 80-1000 km from the town of Bovec and hamlets.

Bovec, SI

Schools are available up to the age of 15, with only around 190 students. Secondary schools are located in Nova Gorica and Ljubljana, the nearest gymnasium is in Tolmin 34km away, which is not in close proximity to Bovec and is not well connected by roads or public transportation. Furthermore, there is also the absence of cultural and appealing activities for young people.

The **natural features attract various tourists** and temporary residents, such as remote workers, seeking places immersed in nature. The presence of the river and various mountain trails, along with the bike path, creates opportunities for visits, especially for **sports-oriented tourists**. The natural and scenic characteristics have led many tourist **agencies to promote Bovec as a tourist destination**. Tourism grew very fast until COVID-19 and has grown after and will increase prominently. After socio-economic growth based on the wood and textile industries in the past, tourism became **the main economic field which turned into mass tourism**.

In **the summer the population triples due to tourism**, mostly due to the tourists themselves, but also due to the necessary workforce connected to the sports events.

In those months more than **30 agencies operate**, more than half of which are companies from other countries, offering adrenaline sports such as zipline, white water sports, parachuting next to hiking, and mountaineering. Bovec is popular also for camper tourism.

CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM TO ADDRESS

One of the main challenges is represented by the **demographic ageing**. This is due to the diverse context aspects such as the absence of school grades after 15 years of age, which **forces young citizens to move away to other cities to attend schools**. **The distance between Bovec and the nearby major urban centres** doesn't allow them to attend schools returning back to their hometown.

For this reason, young students from Bovec often move to other cities, such as Nova Gorica or Ljubljana, and become adults soon.

The absence of universities and the **lack of job opportunities**, particularly those requiring qualifications and career prospects, discourage people from returning to Bovec. Often, to be closer to their children, **families choose to leave Bovec** and move to other cities.

However, the city registers a flow **of immigration by foreigners** as attractive to the natural beauty.

Tourism is tied to short sports activities. This generates a **very transient** tourism that **doesn't bring real long-term economic benefits to the local community**. Many of the activities promoted by agencies do not necessarily lead to overnight stays in Bovec, failing to create any real economic growth for the town.

From June to September the town is invested by a **relevant tourism flow**. During the summer Bovec experiences **over-tourism** which generates **negative impacts on the resident's life** such as **noise pollution and overuse of local resources**.

Bovec, SI

In this season the population doubles and the **overcrowded areas** and **traffic** generate longer time for commuting.

Conversely, during the autumn and winter seasons, the number of people in the town decreases intensely, turning Bovec into a sort of **"ghost" town**. The tourism flow stops and a lot of businesses close, awaiting the next summer. Currently, the ski centre probably will close therefore only winter tourism activities are at risk.

As a result of this process, job opportunities also decrease because they are mostly tied to the tourism flow. **Tourism does not generate long-term job opportunities**. Moreover, what is earned in the summer may not be sufficient for residents throughout the whole year. Bovec has two factories, but they represent a limited career choice for people.

Besides those challenges, the **hospitality facilities are still insufficient**. This current lack has led many **property owners to focus on short-term rentals**, to the detriment of those looking to stay longer in the city.

Houses are still reasonably priced for foreign investors creating a **growing investment opportunity for property** purchases to profit from short-term rentals. The foreign people are the first actors in this market.

The available **houses** are, therefore, **not purchased with the intent to be lived but instead to be rented out**. This is due to the **lack of regulation** to prevent this process.

To further complicate these challenges, the **lack of engagement from the local community** undermines the sense of identity and community in Bovec. Consequently, it becomes imperative to enhance community involvement and participation.

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small dimension easy to find connections • Nature (preserve-ecological well-being) Triglav national park • Nature as a resource for attraction and inspiration focus • Isolation to relax • Heritage • Local people storage • Foreigners taking residence in Bovec • Location close to other countries create a good relationship and give the opportunities to create an international environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative closed mindset of people in Bovec-resistance to change • Ageing population and population decrease • Lack of job opportunities beside the tourism • Low consideration for traditional jobs • Trauma for past events • Isolation (in terms of relations, resources, far from the centre of power) • Short stays of r tourists (effect on the nature, environment) • Lack of accommodation for citizens (tourism effect) • Tourism is too much aggressive (effect on the nature, environment)

Bovec, SI

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of economics basic asset for the yearly sports activities • Moment of growing of the tourism (work on the sustainable tourism) • The quality of life is high • Destination to feel safe and relaxed • Ideal place for remote working • Research centre in Bovec (topic nature) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over- tourism: too much advertisement, not manageable tourism • Unusual migration flow • Negative impact on citizen's well-being • Natural disasters climate changes (lack of snow and water) • Free EU market, investments in Bovec • Land and accommodation lack or too expensive for the locals • Over development • Transit mobility (no toll roads and very nice roads)

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

FOCUS, APPROACH, STRATEGIES, BEST PRACTICES.

Currently the Municipality of Bovec is working on incorporating social impact into its planning in order to guarantee it. However, the city has developed a **small funding program** for culture, sports, and youth through NGOs, which includes youth questionnaire reports (detailing activities, number of participants, time spent, etc.) to assess these activities.

The city has promoted additionally: **participatory planning** practices through consultations. Some local strategies take into account the feedback shared during these consultations. Bovec engages the local community through a **participatory budget** based on voting for ideas that secure funding. The sports centre with a gym field will be implemented thanks to participatory local planning. The intentionality procurement instrument has not yet been fully developed, but Bovec employs basic procurement for movie production with local labour.

Codesigning spaces and fostering collaborations play a significant role in implementing the necessary strategies to address these challenges. However, sustaining such projects requires long-term planning and support. Seeking tenders and partnerships that allow for the continuity and enhancement of these initiatives is crucial to ensure lasting social impact in urban regeneration.

BEST SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICES

- **Buška izba:**

Buška izba, the city's living room, took shape during the transfer of best practices from May 2021 to December 2022. The transfer of best practices was initiated by the Towns Living Room in the Municipality of Idrija in cooperation with the Institute for Spatial Policy (IPoP), the national URBACT point.

Bovec, SI

During the transfer process, the local group examined the demographic situation in the municipality of Bovec. With the help of an online survey, they identified the needs for the existence of the urban living room and collected the preferences of the local population regarding the content and activities that should take place in the urban living room. The Municipality of Bovec offered the ULG a space in the Stergulčeva hiša, a house that also houses the city museum, two conference halls and a bar, and until recently also served as a tourist information centre. The ULG formulated guidelines for five thematic areas of work: Socialisation, intergenerational cooperation, education, heritage and culture transfer and well-being. After a three-month test phase, the space proved to be very suitable for the above-mentioned activities.

- **ARC**

In 2020, during the challenging backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, an initiative by a small group of creative associates took shape, culminating in the establishment of Project ARC. This endeavour was conceived to connect local youth through a diverse range of social, sports, and scientific activities. As Project ARC gained momentum in 2021, its evolution resulted in the formation of a nonprofit NGO, dedicated not only to community engagement but also to actively involving the youth in tourism pursuits that foster sustainable development. Comprising about 35 active members between 15/36 years of age, ARC Bovec has pioneered innovative community projects, including those related to tourism.

CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT

The city's governance reflects a dynamic environment with ongoing discussions on key issues, contributing to a nuanced approach in decision-making. Bovec benefits from local political support, where officials actively engage in discussions related to the project.

They focus their efforts on promoting youth, strengthening the community and caring of the elderly as well as with a responsibility towards environmental solutions.

The city has a policy framework that aligns with the project's goals, providing a foundation for effective collaboration and implementation.

The regional and national government policies demonstrate alignment with the local actions in Bovec. The city's initiatives resonate with broader governmental objectives, indicating a cohesive approach that facilitates seamless integration of local efforts into the regional and national context.

Bovec, SI

ULG

The ULG consists of various non-profit local organisations and local communities, diverse institutional public bodies, especially representing schools and educational services. Additionally, sports agencies are members of the ULG.

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

The IAP will focus on the integration of young individuals into local politics, promoting intergenerational collaboration, and identifying **suitable spaces for all demographic segments at the local level**. To achieve these aims, the IAP can **start from the practices already implemented, such as Buška izba**, and focus on aspects that do not have the desired results.

The action will enhance the already-implemented **participatory planning** and find a way to generate more innovative practices able to impact complex challenges.

In order to face the challenge, Bovec needs to create a **strategy with a concrete vision able to impact the negative demographic** and focus on the needs of local people listen by through different actions: meetings, workshops, events, surveys, stakeholder visits, and invited experts. Moreover, the IAP will analyse the practice and enable one to generate tourism more sustainably. IAP can also include the sharing of practical knowledge and competencies in **sourcing funds and project management**.

RISK FACTORS

The context described brings the different challenges which, without an adequate strategy, **endanger the entire survival of Bovec**. Considering the challenges outlined, without a well-defined intervention plan and effective strategies in place to counter the demographic decline and address deficiencies in essential services, particularly in the education sector, Bovec is increasingly at risk of facing a significant decline in the years to come.

Currently, overtourism poses various risks to the quality of life for those residing in Bovec. It is crucial to engage agencies and educate them to align with the town's objectives. This aspect holds significance **in bridging the gap between Bovec's goals and the interests of these agencies**.

Broumov, CZ

Profile integrations

INTRODUCTION

Broumov is a small city on the borders of Poland and has a rock wall as a natural border from the rest of Czechia. The geographical characteristics made Broumov isolated from **the rest of the country** but in the heart of Europe and also surrounded by the natural **environment**.

The city is the **cultural centre of the Královéhradecký region**. Broumov was initially settled by **Benedictines** from Germany who arrived in the 800s, significantly influencing the city through their culture, traditions, and heritage. They devise an **urban plan anchored in their fundamental values**, shaping the city around agricultural activities, education, and spiritual pursuits.

Broumov is in fact historically a cohesive place recognized for its qualities related to education and work.

The urban, cultural, and artistic heritage still holds significant value for the city. The **Benedictine monastery** is in fact one of the **historical heritage** more famous of the Czech Republic.

The Benedictine community stayed in the city until the Second World War when they were expelled from Broumov as Germans. The communist government provided houses to blind citizens who then moved there.

This change **breaks the bond with heritage**, its preservation and culture. During the communist regime, there was an emphasis on equal rights, focusing on work for all, with an emphasis on productivity at the expense of historical elements. **The monastery lost its cultural and educational role** in the city and became a prison. Other buildings were damaged and neglected.

From the 1990s, with the fall of communism, the connection with the city's cultural heritage, neglected until then, resurfaced. This occurred especially with two main moments, the early 2000s to 2005 and then from 2006 when bottom-up actions and practices revitalize the monastery, restoring its cultural function and giving Broumov a stronger cultural identity.

Broumov was a historical industrial town in the past mostly changed after 1945. After the end of World War II, the original inhabitants - the Sudeten Germans - were forcibly removed and resettled by the Czechs. These people had **no connection to the land or the place**. This rupture was still evident some 20 years ago. Now more and more people are moving here who have a relationship with the region and care not only for the town but also the landscape.

The city has a relevant presence of a diverse community with a high of Romani. **In 2023 about 10% of the population Romani community** usually lives in two localities not frequented by local citizens.

Skinheads appeared in Broumov in the mid-1990s - they provoked several violent conflicts and since then the image of Romani people has deteriorated.

Broumov, CZ

The city's demographics are characterised by a **continuous outflow of young citizens**. This trend is progressively leading to a decline in the city's young population, primarily due to the high **unemployment rate**. Besides this, the local population has a **low education** and many have to lead with foreclosure.

CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM TO ADDRESS

One of the emerging challenges arises from the **lack of services and the availability of attractive activities for the youth**. Broumov has secondary schools and some higher education institutions, but they impose a limited choice for young people, especially young girls. For this reason, many of them attend higher education institutions in other cities which are distances 30 km and 1 hour with bus from Broumov.

Young residents who opt for university education typically do not return to Broumov; instead, **they prefer to build their future in cities** that provide better opportunities. **The current young migration process deeply impacts the demography**, in the last years about 600 young citizens have left Broumov.

The challenge is to reverse the demographic trend and **encourage young people to invest in their future in their hometown**.

The city is experiencing a significant **depopulation of the downtown area**, which is now less frequent. **The central square is no longer a vibrant and active space**, with many shops and bars now closed. The remaining open cafes are only two, both managed by the most longstanding proprietors.

Due to a **lack of clientele**, one of the cafes, following closure for renovations, keeps postponing its reopening, while the other closes early and does not operate continuously. This process generates a **negative impact on the local economy** and the public space and the need to **attract people to the city centre in order to revive it**.

This underscores the importance of **revitalising and valorising the historic centre of Broumov**. The centre is living in a depopulation consequence of a **declining sense of identity** and a not-rooted participation, especially for young citizens, as a consequence, many buildings are empty.

This also correlates to the **mistrust between authority and citizens**. The context highlights the need to build a better trust relationship in order to increase the participation of citizens and a **sense of belonging**.

Broumov is known as one of the worst cities to live in the country. Moreover, the city has always been perceived as "the town at the bottom," isolated from the rest of the country. Besides, the city is also classified as one of the worst cities to live in.

In fact, the need is to work on the methodology to reinforce the **results of a bottom-up approach**.

The context highlights also a weak social inclusion within the local community, which is evident when examining the diverse neighbourhoods in terms of ethnicity as for the Romani community.

Broumov, CZ

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural centre • The cultural centre of the region • Quiet place • Mutualism solidarity culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depopulation of the city centre • Empty buildings • Lack of participation • High unemployment • Low level of education • Known as one of the worst cities to live in
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different local communities • Historical heritage • Use the empty shops to work during the season • City government has a vision of the future • Partnerships across Europe and also with the Polish side • Currently government open to integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop owners are dwindling, and they sense a lack of support from the city. • No strategies in place to reopen the shops.

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

FOCUS, APPROACH, STRATEGIES, BEST PRACTICES.

In order to face the challenge Broumov has to develop a strategy to **reduce the low attractiveness** of the city, especially for young students. The strategy will enhance the appeal for those returning after university by improving services and offerings tailored to this demographic, such as in schools and commerce. Additionally, place emphasis on acknowledging and measuring the value of existing aspects like silence, community, and culture. Simultaneously, focus efforts on cultivating a sense of identity and bolstering self-confidence.

Broumov will increase the lengths of stay of tourists and balance also to winter, integrating new policies about local consumption and production. The strategy will focus also on making the centre more pedestrian. Besides, the city will strengthen its methodology by creating an evaluation system to demonstrate a monitor and increase the collaboration between active groups and the city (also by capacity building for local authority and for the groups) and be inclusive in the process (more target groups and different languages).

This will be inclusive of the **practices and strategy already implemented**. In fact, Broumov ensured different urban and bottom-up practices through the **participatory methodology**, using also data and monitoring activities.

The quality of life of its inhabitants is monitored annually on a national scale - Broumov is slowly emerging from the last places of the ranking. The city has a registration **system** which **monitors** some population trends over time (ageing population, arrival of new settlers, trend monitoring).

Broumov, CZ

Commissions with different focuses are established as advisory bodies to the City Council, which also address social impacts. The city used a set of **social indicators to evaluate external procurement** to monitor general conditions for public procurement, level playing field for employees, etc.

Public participation is encouraged in discussions about the future use of the Burgher Brewery and **Café Herzog**, a historic café on the square. Lastly, the former swimming pool is slated for biotope restoration and a relaxation zone, with preparations ready for implementation.

The Strategic Council of the Broumov Region is a platform for regional (supra-municipal) and interdisciplinary cooperation. The founders are the Broumov Region Development Agency (NNO), the city of Broumov, the towns of Police nad Metují and Teplice nad Metují and the Broumov Region Business Club. The aim is to **improve the quality of life** in the region through social, economic and cultural development.

The city government has a vision of the future for the city and many prepared projects which are waiting for financing. (this is more expensive on the infrastructures because they were destroyed). Moreover, the newly elected people represent a government open to integration and inclusion. There are Romani people on the advisory board.

The strategy to face the challenges included the club of entrepreneurs who help with some study abroad or exchange.

The AMOS program facilitates students in gaining valuable experiences. Charles University engages in activities within the monastery, with the idea of establishing a university department there. The university has formed partnerships across Europe, including collaborations with the Polish side, and sees European connectivity as an advantageous prospect. Additionally, the utilization of empty shops for seasonal work is being considered.

Various urban regeneration initiatives are underway, each at different stages of development. The implementation of these projects is contingent upon securing financial resources. These include the planning and application process for a car park and the area around the city office, with a focus on public realm cultivation and paved areas. The **Small Square and V Kopečku Street** are undergoing a revitalization process, supported by a planning study. **The Spořilov** city part is seeing infrastructure development for the construction of 40 family houses, of which 30 have already been sold. Additionally, there are plans for the creative library centre and the **Elementary Art School**, both involving the reconstruction of existing buildings. Broumov is ongoing with the elderly house and as a former project worked on train and bus station/terminal and the area of Park Alejka.

Broumov, CZ

BEST SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICES

- **OLD BREWERY: A PARTICIPATION PRACTICE**

One of the key practices revolves around the regeneration of an old brewery. The intention is to organise guided tours, providing citizens with the opportunity to actively engage. With the involvement of approximately 700 individuals, the aim is to gather choices and opinions, allowing citizens to contribute to decisions regarding the initiatives planned for the brewery.

- **The corner Shop - LEASED SHOP**

In order to revitalise the downtown area, the local ONG represented in the ULG has leased a shop, giving citizens the opportunity to use it for activities of their choice.

- **.Food Hub**

In order to revitalise the city centre the ULG will develop a food hub in the old building of the original slaughterhouse. Moreover, the ULG will reconstruct the dilapidated brewery building or the original mill.

CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT

The biggest support is coming from the coalition - especially from the mayor Arnold Vodochodský and councillor for culture Michal Čepelka and their whole political party "Broumov's wave" (Broumovská vlna).

Broumov is very good at linking the city's strategies with other regional and national strategies.

ULG

Pavla Jenková - coordinator of the project and local group coordinator will be part of every TNM and ULG, so the transfer is via her + 1 member of ULG. During ULG meetings we will share information from visited TNM.

Local Government authorities:

- Michal Čepelka - City councillor for culture
- Jaroslav Betáš - Department of Development and Investment
- Miloš Andrš - Social Department
- Jitka Exnerová - Information and Tourism Centre;
- Senior House
- Dana Hejníšová - Technical services
- Kamil Slezák - Deputy Mayor
- Pavel Trojan - City councillor

NGOs/non-profit organisations:

- Pavla Jenková - Endowment Fund Broumov - City of Culture
- Žaneta Vávrová - Educational and Cultural Centre Broumov/BrauNOW
- Dáša Zbořilová - Children and Youth House Ulita
- MAS + Broumovsko - Kristýna Jagošová
- SRRB - David Duda

Broumov, CZ

Community organisations:

- Martin Minařík - Centre for social services
- Naděje Jiří Bartoš - Džas Dureder (Romani NGO)
- Eva Horáková - Senior Club Radost - Association of Disabled People

Businesses:

- Jan Záliš - Owner of the Instax Store shop on the main square
- Milan Sokol - Owner of the Medical shop on the square
- Kateřina Agnolozzi - Owner of the coffee shop on the square
- Inka - Owner of the tobacco shop on the square, community leader;
- Dalibor and Eva Novotní - Owners of flower shop on the square

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

The challenge describes bringing the need to base the IAP on practices able to **foster local participation** with the objective of increasing the wide number of citizens and communities. The IAP will give input to develop and strengthen the outcome of the bottom-up approach.

The actions mentioned will be a part of the strategy chosen for the main objective: **revitalization of the city centre**.

Currently, the city doesn't plan funding for the IAP however Broumov is very successful in different grant applications (for example National Recovery Plan, Interreg, Visegrad Fund).

RISK FACTORS

Shop owners are dwindling, and they sense a lack of support from the city. Depopulation is occurring due to a lack of attractiveness, with no strategies in place to reopen the shops. The **mistrust between authority and citizens** can represent one of the main risks for the whole IAP project.

Cinisello Balsamo, IT

Profile integrations

INTRODUCTION

Cinisello Balsamo has historically always been a **city inhabited by workers employed** in the large industries of northern Milan. Since the nineties of the last century, the large industries have progressively closed and the social and economic fabric of the city has transformed. In order to face **unemployment and the increase in poverty**, much focus has been placed on the growth of commercial services and the tertiary sector in general, also improving connections with the city of Milan. This resulted in two phenomena.

The increase in the **middle class that has moved from the city of Milan to the suburbs**, and the increase in **non-EU immigration**. Both phenomena happened thanks to the low cost of living and housing supply.

CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM TO ADDRESS

Cinisello Balsamo is facing a phenomenon typical of large cities, such as the experience of rental rates.

The isolation of some neighbourhoods with a high concentration of immigrants characterises the city. The Crocetta district represents one of the most **problematic neighbourhoods**. Here 65% of the population is a non-EU member. This has always been a risk of isolation for the local community. The population composition exhibits notable diversity, characterised by a substantial presence of migrants hailing from both new EU member countries and non-EU member countries.

Its multicultural characteristic is particularly evident in various school cycles, where it is not uncommon to find classes with a significant number of children and students who frequently do not speak Italian. **The language barrier** poses a hindrance to the accessibility of educational content and the learning process.

The demography described highlights a weak **sense of identity in the city**. There is a **general disaffection of the citizens** towards city life with increasingly low participation. The connection and the proximity with Milan bring especially young citizens to prefer Milan to their own city.

Considering the multicultural aspects, the school is a key asset within the social inclusion for residents. For this reason, the local **school system** has been invested in a renewal process to increase the quality. Today who benefit from the educational system are both local residents and families from outside the area. In fact, in response to a decline in enrollment, implementing the Montessori method transformed the school into a high-quality community model in an underprivileged neighbourhood, increasing enrollment.

Cinisello Balsamo, IT

However, this has **intensified the existing weak sense of connection with the city**, which many view as a temporary place for their children's education rather than a long-term residence. Frequenting the neighbourhood solely for school enrollment creates a disconnect with the community, as it is not fully experienced but rather perceived by many families as a transitional point in their daughters' education and daily organisation.

The Crocetta neighbourhood is marked by the presence of numerous highly deteriorated privately-owned buildings, with only one structure being publicly owned. Besides, many buildings are degraded and many stores are closed.

Taking into account the socio-economic challenges of the neighbourhood, the Crocetta district is distinguished by the presence of a highly active social private network, marked by the development of various social projects.

However, despite various intervention initiatives developed, although many have proven to be effective practices for the neighbourhood, **there is a lack at the municipal level in incorporating and adopting these already developed practices**. It appears that the local administration has not fully integrated these practices into models, and the approach to addressing challenges continues to involve an initial strategy without capitalising on the local experience.

Besides the absence of an impact measurement system and shared communication about projects **contributes to generating a fracture**, often conflictual, between municipal action and the objectives of local citizens.

Cinisello Balsamo, IT

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich history of resources, social activities, and implemented projects, especially in Crocetta. • It is an organised and increasingly competent territory with a broad offering of education and training, attracting young individuals who choose to stay. • The school, incorporating methods like Montessori and the "school without a backpack," has experienced an increased presence. • The reputation of the area, exemplified by figures like Pertini and the presence of Parco Nord, makes it appealing even to those from outside Cinisello. • multicultural neighbourhood, with a strong understanding of the territorial network and a diverse array of services, including support for more vulnerable areas. • 6. Its proximity to Milan enhances its attractiveness. • Crocetta displays a positive social fabric, with young residents identifying strongly with the neighbourhood and tenants showing interest in agreed-upon rents. • Key figure, open and deeply involved in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sense of identity and place • Challenges in communication and accessibility of activities. • Interventions linked to temporary projects, requiring a more defined methodology. • Welcome of foreigners in Crocetta and high turnover of residents. • Issues in the construction and management of private buildings. • Sant'Eusebio neighbourhood is multicultural with foreign students. • Disparities in services and a demand for more widespread services. • Difficulty in attracting people from Milan for certain activities. • Cohesion among residents, especially against the Entangled project. • Questions about the real impact of the school on the neighbourhood. • Physical barriers in Crocetta: highways and separate roads. • Administrative and financial issues in some buildings. • Need for demolition and reconstruction of some houses. • Lack of methodological public heritage from past experiences. •
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The foreign population can be seen as an opportunity for a new citizenship. • Co-designing the House of Citizenship - a non-conventional service but also a space open to suggestions and proposals from the citizens themselves. - Intergenerational. • Working on methodological engagement to "educate" citizenship in discussions about common goods, such as resource spending, etc. - Accompanying change. • Involve the municipal leadership to ensure a more integrated and impactful approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation of immigrant communities • Not the entire population shows support for urban regeneration projects; some express opposition.

Cinisello Balsamo, IT

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

FOCUS, APPROACH, STRATEGIES, BEST PRACTICES.

Cinisello Balsamo has a huge variety of social project and practice developed, however the city doesn't adopt a set of social indicators for external intentionality procurement to evaluate.

There is a lack of a comprehensive evaluation system. Each program or project employs its own set of tools and systems to assess and monitor outcomes. Frequently, the focus remains centred on the project's objectives and the specific results anticipated.

The city involves stakeholders in planning the urban regeneration through **local government actively involves the community and takes their input into account**, but maintains the final decision-making power. Besides, the local government asks the community for non-binding feedback on specific decisions and policies. In the planning of entangled, for example there is a written agreement to consult the citizens in process, especially the elderly people for the new elderly house.

The city aims to shift its focus toward understanding how the actions related to urban regeneration affect the social fabric, **to mitigate potential negative consequences on** the well-being of its citizens. For this reason, one of the main objectives is to build **a system for impact measurement**, using the Crocetta neighbourhood as a reference, which will serve as a pilot/test area. The neighbourhood will be involved in a new urban project in the future. For this reason, the strategy takes into consideration the future project's objective. The approach will allow long-term goals that will be integrated and related to the future project to enhance the **integration of currently developed actions and strategies**. This will develop actions that can effectively generate long-term impact, sharing as a model for the administration by capitalizing on the developed best practices. **The building of a measurability method became important to oriented choice and strategy.**

The development of measurement methods will significantly highlight citizens' needs and enhance the level of involvement and information. The strategy's objective is to reinforce **participation and measurement**, initiating the development of shared indicators as crucial elements for the active engagement of all. This will make citizens more aware of the impact of projects.

The strategy to face the challenges will focus on the creation of **attractive initiatives for the young** and the ensuring of a **sense of place for the local community**. The context described engages the city to focus approach able to **reduce the isolation** of immigrant communities.

The city is currently **implementing numerous initiatives**, encompassing both minor and major interventions, related to urban regeneration and the renovation of public buildings that host various services. The city has successfully secured funding from ERDF/ESF for an urban regeneration program, named 'Entangled,' **which focuses on the Crocetta district**, the same district earmarked for the UR Impact project. Ongoing efforts are directed towards sourcing additional funds to bolster local initiatives.

Moreover, financial resources from the municipal budget have been allocated to support social programs and services that align with the IAP, particularly within the designated district.

Cinisello Balsamo, IT

BEST SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICES

- **ENTANGLED**

Entangled is a substantial urban regeneration initiative approved by the Lombardy Region and financed with a 15 million euro contribution from ERDF/ESF funds. It secured this funding through a regional call, where it achieved the top ranking among 17 cities in Lombardy, including 11 provincial capitals.

The project encompasses the following key areas of focus:

- Structural and urban interventions
- Replanning service provision within a broader context
- Renovation and optimization of spaces to establish 'new pathways' for social and cultural mobility
- Activation of fresh processes promoting social cohesion and integration through the enhancement of specific service areas of excellence

The objective is to overcome the social and physical isolation of the **Crocetta district** from the remainder of the city. All the objectives of these actions align closely with the URBACT approach and the goals of the UR Impact project, particularly concerning the measurement of social impact resulting from urban regeneration endeavours. However, the project needs a fostering in communication and local information to ensure the entire local support.

- **CULTURAL CENTRES**

The cultural centre Pertini is a cultural centre representing a reference point for the city, providing access to a library, and a FabLab offering a diverse range of activities. Additionally, there is a photography museum. The centre hosts various events and activities. The Casa della Cittadinanza is a space for collaboration and sharing among citizens to strengthen social relationship systems, involve them in the design of the space itself, and gather ideas and suggestions. This space is a social reference point with a multigenerational function; the objective is to bring together multiple generations with diverse activities tailored for various age groups, thus representing a meeting point for the neighbourhood.

- **REGENERATION EXPERIMENTATION**

In order to address the issue of deterioration of private buildings, the administration will undertake an urban experiment involving the renewal of a public building, incorporating the development of a social space in the former Porter's lodge. This initiative aims to enhance social cohesion and social inclusion. The experimentation will thus create a model project that can serve as an activator for other private buildings.

Cinisello Balsamo, IT

CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT

The political landscape in the city is characterised by the presence of the Lega Nord, Forza Italia, and Fratelli d'Italia parties, collectively representing the city's governance. While the opposition views the current projects as opportunities, their approach differs. Currently, all parties have convened at a round table to engage with the U.R. Impact and the associated Urban Regeneration Programme Entangled, initiated by the Mayor.

A notable level of overall alignment is evident within the city, transcending political affiliations at the national, regional, and local levels. However, disparities emerge in terms of problem-solving and issue management. The city adopts a strategic perspective in addressing local challenges, considering the broader context and typically **employing a bottom-up approach**.

Presently, the city enjoys significant backing from the regional government, positioning itself as one of the most proactive cities at the regional level in the realms of social innovation and urban regeneration programs.

ULG

Through the services available in the area and initiated with the funding from their administration, a good level of communication in the area is ensured. Firstly, through the Center for the Elderly. Then, through the **Casa della Cittadinanza** which maintains a continuous and strong relationship with the citizens. All these services are managed by associations and/or cooperatives selected through a public tender.

Thanks to the professionalism present in these services, there is confidence in the ability to effectively share the knowledge and experience gained with the network. Furthermore, they intend to involve some of these entities in transnational activities and create a work table that engages all the stakeholders involved in the path promoted by UR Impact.

The ULG will include a border actor including the actors with different positions and points of view about the strategy chosen.

Local Government authorities:

- The Mayor Giacomo Giovanni Ghilardi
- The councillors: Riccardo Visentin; Riccardo Malavolta; Daniela Maggi; Gabriella Fumagalli; Fabrizia Berneschi.

Public institution:

- The Municipality Sectors: social service, education, public works and culture;
- The local school (primary and secondary)
- The ASST di Cinisello Balsamo by the health service - Consultorio
- ALER Milano - The company that owns public housing in Crocetta District

Cinisello Balsamo, IT

NGOs/non-profit organisations:

- Il Torpedone Social Cooperative
- Auser Association
- Arcipelago Anfass Cooperative
- Sammamet Cooperative
- CSV Association
- CinyFabrique Association
- Sports associations (Rugby, ACLI, Soccer, etc.)

Community organisations:

- Neighbourhood committees

Businesses:

- Bar and other local shops: bakery, fruits and vegetables, drugstore, etc.

Other relevant stakeholders:

- The Church (San Pietro Martire)
- Condominium administrators

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

The primary focus of the IAP will revolve around adhering to deadlines for securing EU or national funds. A significant concern lies in **monitoring the impact that these initiatives currently** have and will have on the well-being of the city's residents. The different practices ensure the need for the **development of a social impact evaluation**. The IAP will focus on building a measurability system able to monitor and evaluate the social impact. The IAP will also focus on the **possible bottom-up approach** that will be adopted in future city planning.

Besides, the IAP will include activities correlated to the **sharing practices**.

RISK FACTORS

Cinisello Balsamo's experience, especially in the Crocetta neighbourhood, underscores the significance of engaging and informing local citizens about municipal actions. The absence of measurement systems can result in a lack of comprehensive insight into the impact in terms of goals, resources, and achieved changes. The risk is the potential creation of internal fractures between public decisions and the needs and ideas of the citizens.

Hannut, BE

Profile integrations

INTRODUCTION

Hannut is a rural town situated on the border of the Flaminia region in Belgium. The city is strategically positioned, enabling convenient access and communication with the surrounding neighbouring cities. In fact, the town has a strategic and transit position, it is Province de Liege near Paris 2 hours by train. Hannut is a quiet little village set up in a green environment in a rural area and based on the agricultural economy with a good level of quality life evidenced also by the increase of demography. The city doesn't experience a significant migrant flow; residents who temporarily relocate for career or educational pursuits typically return to Hannut to embrace the green well-being of life, choosing it as an ideal place to raise their children. The average income calculation such as 24.808 € represents a good level of quality of life.

Urban development in the city has primarily expanded along a central commercial street adorned with shops, enhancing the overall quality of life.

CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM TO ADDRESS

The city centre is currently no longer frequented by citizens, especially after the COVID period. Hannut is experiencing a **decline in the centre** with a decrease of visitors attributed to existing shops' diminishing appeal. This generates a negative impact on the local economy, many shops are currently closed. The **downtown depopulation** represents one of the main challenges. In addition to that, it deeply impacts the feeling of pride for the city people had before.

To tackle this challenge, Hannut has initiated a new urban regeneration process, concentrating on revitalising a new area that will serve as a symbol for the city.

The city is focused on a new **urban regeneration plan** that envisions the development of a hybrid space at the city's entrance. This space will incorporate a library, a concert/cultural hall, and a business centre accommodating both offices and coworking/remote working spaces.

However, this highlights a new challenge generated by the **contrast between local organisation initiatives and private actions**. The new area will be managed from the private sector in a public area which is also characterised by a good level of local cultural organisation action. The private sector leads the new area and will provide a large offering of cultural activities. This choice creates the risk of **possible competition** between actors with no equal economic resources.

It is an issue that becomes even more complex without a **proper governance system** capable of turning the private actors into a resource for territorial growth rather than an adversary for local organisations.

Hannut, BE

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours from Paris • Good position in the middle between three cities: Liege, Namur and Brussels • Conviviality and community relationships • The city has a mobility plan, especially to connect the villages around the city - for example for students to come with by circles to schools • Ride and buy application - • An active cultural centre in collaborations with the schools • Integration of street art with cycling paths • People chose to come back to Hannut to make a family • Growing population • Working with regional funds on environment plans to protect nature • Sports activities of different types • Work on tourism thanks to a tourism development plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city centre is missing more quality shops and there are many empty shops in the centre since covid • Not enough city users to enjoy the retail • Not enough space for cultural activities - • Many roads for such a small land means a lot of money • Decrease of pride feeling
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include many stakeholders in the planning of the new area • To work across departments to connect the new area with the central centre • Use data collection abilities to go beyond outputs and look at the impact • Creating a landmark for Hann 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new area may cause to even more decline of the city centre • Losing a public are to a private stakeholder and not having more control • Having stakeholders against the project because of competition (the cultural centre) • Loosing quality of the city centre • Too much human activity on the surrounding nature may cause to floods

Hannut, BE

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

FOCUS, APPROACH, STRATEGIES, BEST PRACTICES.

The city, like every Belgian city, follows a strategic plan for the elected period of six years. The current plan is set to conclude by 2024, and preparations are underway for the new plan. Under this framework, the city has developed good practices based on bottom-up activities. The **participatory planning and innovative approach** are two vehicles in Hannut's strategy. The city is moving towards the development of an intervention methodology that can connect decisions and resources into a unified strategy capable of addressing various challenges.

The use of **technology** has represented a resource capable of enhancing the **engagement of locals** and their involvement in the city's objectives. Moreover, this has been the vehicle to involve especially the young target. The city has indeed developed a specific app to encourage walking towards the city centre. This has allowed the creation of a data collection tool for different users of the application.

The adoption of **digital tools in achieving goals related to urban regeneration** has created the possibility to work on building a methodology for social impact assessment, starting from the use of a substantial amount of data already available. Thanks to the technology implemented the city can design urban strategies and **focus on the need to intercept by apps**.

One of the strategy's objectives is to develop a social **impact assessment using the collected data from the app, aiming not just for numerical representation but to highlight the generated change**. This will ensure a strategy based on a long-term objective including practice already developed.

The municipality diligently endorses sports initiatives, implements systematic measures to reduce energy consumption and costs in public buildings, and rigorously endeavours to **facilitate the integration** of individuals with disabilities into various aspects of daily life.

The **new regeneration action** will be to develop a new neighbourhood surrounded by new social housing. The urban plan of the new neighbourhood is focused on the increased accessibility to the centre, cultural services and housing through a new library and a new housing complex. This will create a new area that will become a new symbol of the city's identity and the centre's appeal. The plan also has projected the different ways to connect the area with the city centre.

However, the strategy needs to be based on a **shared local governance model** to enhance the potential for actions by multiple actors with different natures and purposes to prevent actions that could generate negative impacts on local well-being.

The urban plan designs a neighbourhood sustainable and inclusive accommodating the needs of disabled individuals and supporting retail in the city centre through sustainable mobility solutions. The strategic focus is on **boosting tourism and exploring various urban functionalities** to ensure the city's vibrancy.

Hannut, BE

The city sees an opportunity in tourism, given its picturesque environment with open spaces, green areas, and serene rural villages. Despite being accustomed to these features, the city now considers them treasures and organises pedestrian routes to showcase them.

The goal is to reclaim its past status as a **destination due to the high quality of retail and services it once offered**. Recognizing that retail is no longer the primary option, the city is determined to find alternative solutions to maintain its appeal. The city aims **to enhance the quality of public spaces and parks**, creating inviting environments for social gatherings after work. The objective is to **attract visitors throughout** the year and understand the reasons behind their choice to spend time in the region.

It is working on devising and implementing alternative incentives to attract people to the city centre, with a focus on strengthening overall city attractiveness.

BEST SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICES

- **Ride and Buy Application**

The project enhances **sustainable mobility** by offering an application that **provides monetary incentives** for shopping at local stores when shopping is made using a bicycle. This initiative, conceived by young students from local schools, has been successfully implemented. In addition to this, continuous efforts are made to maintain the attractiveness of local shops. The mobility application was developed by involving young people during the Friday for Future outings.

- **The skate park**

One of the practices that best represents local participation strategies is the development of the skate park, which involved young people responsible for the executive plan.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE CITY?

The majority, and potentially even from the opposition mostly share the same objectives. The champion for this initiative is the Deputy Mayor for Economic Affairs, Olivier LECLERCQ. Additionally, backing is expected from the administrative leadership, Amélie DEBROUX.

ULG

Local authorities:

- Olivier Leclercq, deputy mayor for economy and finance
- Martin Jamar, deputy mayor for social matters and sport
- Amelie Debroux, administrative leader
- Public services
- Agnes Walthéry Urbanism
- Catherine Mathieu for social matters, especially disabled people

Hannut, BE

Non - Profit Organizations:

- Elodie Lambert and Johanne Godin, directors of the library
- drienne Quairat for the cultural centre
- Nathalie Landauer and Thierry Jamart for the city centre management
- Annick Leroy and Xavier Matyn for “Les planches à Nu”
- Caroline DeLbar and Laurent Collin for the rural development of Wallonia

Businesses:

- Eric Goessens and PhilippeBoulvin for private companies
- Nadine Mengels and Pascal Fauville for local retailers union
- Committees
- Sylvain Benoît for youth organisation
- Vincent Mossia for the local Academy
- Luc Mantulet and Jeans Claude Dubois for Urban développement
- Citizens
- Marie Mischotten

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

The IAP will focus on sharing possible governance models fit to the local actor's needs. Furthermore, the goal will be to analyse how the practices used have generated a local social impact, addressing these questions: *How has the life of those using the app changed? How has the life of merchants changed thanks to the app?*

Understanding the social evaluation model, working from the data collected by the app, and implementing the governance model will be part of the IAP objectives.

The funds will come from both **public and private sectors**, one of the major parts will come from the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, and the other will be from Private investors.

RISK FACTORS

The potential loss of quality in the city centre is a significant risk, impacting the overall urban experience. Furthermore, increased human activity in the surrounding natural areas could lead to environmental issues, such as floods, emphasising the importance of sustainable planning and risk mitigation measures. A comprehensive risk assessment and strategic planning are crucial to address these challenges and ensure the balanced and sustainable development of the city.

Kamëz, AL

Profile integrations

INTRODUCTION

Kamëz is one of the most highly populated municipalities in Albania. The city covers 37 square kilometres and was established in 1996. This makes Kamëz a relatively **new city both in terms of its history and urban development**. In these years, the population has experienced significant demographic growth, Kamëz registered 145,639 residents, of which 31.9% are 31-50 years old. Moreover, the municipality registers 35,488 families of residents.

The demographic landscape is characterized by a **notable influx of people**, with 70% originating from Albania's northern and southern regions, alongside a significant presence of Egyptians and Romanians.

Kamëz is situated between various urban centres and in proximity to the airport. Geographically, Kamëz holds a strategic position, situated between the capital city of Tirana, Kosovo, and Montenegro. Furthermore, Kamëz is located near the "Mother Teresa" International Airport, Rruga Nene Tereza, Rinas 1504, and the port of Durres. The proximity to Tirana and the mere twenty-minute drive from Tirana create a strong tie with the capital. The geographical location of Kamëz places it in a key node and transit role for the country.

In 2019, Kamëz faced a seismic event, necessitating the construction of new apartments and the revitalisation of affected districts.

CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM TO ADDRESS

In recent years, **demographic growth** has created multiple challenges that need to be addressed. One of the primary: ensure ongoing population growth while promoting inclusion and social cohesion.

The migration flows contribute to a diverse cultural landscape but also lead to dispersed development. Identifying the correct strategy to establish an efficient dialogue with the different communities is one of the main challenges to solve. This emerged in post-earthquake intervention plans. Even though services and public heritage have been provided, the administration still faced significant difficulties in integrating the Romani community into social inclusion. **Weak social integration and cohesion** present different risks for the city, such as creating fractures and fragmentation within the growing population. This creates a scattered development, especially in the common sense identity. The **fragile sense of identity among the residents** is also influenced by the lack of a deep-rooted history for the younger generation and Kamëza's proximity to the capital. On one hand, the city's proximity to the capital can be viewed as an opportunity for its residents, but the close connection to Tirana presents a challenge to Kamëza's identity, potentially causing the city to feel like a suburb of the capital itself.

For these reasons, there is a growing need to strengthen the sense of belonging within the city. The municipality needs to improve a policentric centre by **transforming unused public spaces into spaces for everyone** to respond also the lack of space for young people.

This context is the backdrop to the current population's demographic growth and the significant environmental impact that creates on the territory. Data collected indicate the **need to improve the right practice and promotion of participative approaches** to guarantee social integration. Kamëz demonstrates a high level of technical skills, such as project management. This is proven by the reconstruction plan after the earthquake however, the city needs to strengthen skills in analysis and understanding of social integration and in promoting participative approaches.

Kamëz, AL

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management • Political support Attention to green strategies • Key node area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottom-up approach • Low-level social integration • Lack of a long-standing historical heritage.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different culture presents • Public spaces and polycentric municipality • Comparison and participation of diverse cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of dialogue among different cultures • Lack of economic resources • Seismic area

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

FOCUS, APPROACH, STRATEGIES, BEST PRACTICES

In front of the scattered development, the city is deeply engaged in improving a holistic and multidimensional approach able to answer whole challenges arising from demographic growth.

The primary goal of strategies is to **ensure the responsible and sustainable use of available resources** while promoting social inclusion.

In July 2022, the Municipal Council approved the **New Plan for the Territorial, Economic and Social Development of Kamëz Municipality**. The main challenges consist in the responsible and sustainable use of the territory, in the ecological and digital transition and in social inclusion.

The municipality already has a strategic vision that takes into account various factors that can impact the quality of demographic growth.

Kamëz recognizes the importance of creating space, the use of renewable energies and integrated waste management, integrating elements of the Green Transition.

Currently, the city does not employ methods to assess social impact. **Citizen participation is promoted through public consultations**, which are obligatory for public works. These meetings mainly focus on infrastructure projects such as the construction of public buildings and roads, etc. and involve discussions between municipal officials and citizens. This process ensures additionally.

However, the city developed a significant tool for **involving young citizens in public decisions** and diverse significant urban projects for the citizen's well-being. Even if the current challenges increase the need to develop a holistic strategy, the city can consider different good practices already established.

Kamëz, AL

BEST SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICES

- **Public Youth Council.**

Through this council, municipal administrators ensure active engagement with young people, who are strongly engaged in promoting wellbeing for their city. **The Council** is a strong participatory action which **involves active youth** listening in the decision-making process of public affairs. This is a youth engagement practice required by the country of Albania for each municipality, ensuring that young people contribute to the decisions of the municipal council in every city.

- **Valias neighbourhood Paskuqan Park**

In order to ensure social impact, the municipality has developed affordable **housing initiatives**. The post-earthquake reconstruction has been guided by **green and socially inclusive approaches**. New buildings, sports areas, and green spaces have been developed and 15,500 trees have been planted. Valias, the principal neighbourhood reconstructed after the earthquake, represents today a **best practice for the city** and covers a relevant role in the social impact as well as the transformation of Paskuqan Park. The reconstruction has been led by a forward-looking plan able to develop a sustainable approach for the citizens. The neighbourhood is characterized by 270 new apartments, schools, a multifunctional centre and green space. In order to straighten the tie between citizens and the public administration, public **offices were built in Valias**.

- **Schools and Education Services**

The city recognizes **education and training** able to drive social change and generate social impact. In recent years, 38 **school buildings** have been renovated or built, with 7 of them being financed by the EU through the UE4Schools program. This action is considered strategic to attract young people, especially young families or women. The educational infrastructure creates a positive environment that has a positive impact on the gender gap and **improves social inclusion**. The large presence of **early-age schools** allows work-balance for families, especially for mothers. The city gives particular attention to the inclusion of young women in market labour and provides incentives for female micro-enterprises, and lonely mothers.

- **Practice to respond to natural disasters' consequences**

The whole practice shared and the choosing approach to respond to the heart quake represents an intervention and recovery model. The actions implemented used the reconstruction phase as a channel of urban innovation. The model has been clearly green-oriented and has become the leverage of the citizen's well-being through the establishment of the new services.

CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT

The municipality enjoys strong public support for the URBACT network, with committed elected officials, including influential politicians who champion the cause.

Political backing for the URBACT project is diverse:

- Socialist Party (currently in power) led by Mayor Mr. Rakip Suli.
- Social-Democratic Party.
- Democratic Party (Opposition Party, with its councillors in the city council, from whom the support is highly expected)

At regional and national levels, policies align with shared challenges and objectives. In July 2022, the government approved the "Local General Plan" for Kamza, fully in sync with the "National General Plan for Territorial Development." These are national-level interventions (urban planning and infrastructure), with the Municipality providing advisory input (while the Ministry holds an executive role).

However, for local-level interventions, the Municipality enjoys substantial autonomy in shaping its territory, as long as it complies with the Local General Plan. Given the recent approval of the local master plan, concrete actions in terms of planning and design have yet to materialise. This makes the Action Planning Network of the U.R.Impact project a pioneering initiative.

Kamëz, AL

ULG

The ULG will involve the participation of Local Government authorities, including members of the departments of Kamza Municipality who are engaged in the topics of the U.R. Impact project, as well as community organizations, specifically the Youth Council of the City Board and members of the Council.

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

The challenges and social impact actions considered in urban regeneration practices lead Kamëz municipality to highlight some key starting points for IAP:

Mapping, planning and programming of interventions on spaces (municipal property) that are currently not used for social purposes (such as most of the banks of the two rivers that cross the Kamëz territory). Creation of a concrete program which involves the rethinking of the city centre and the creation of new habitable centres and services, with the aim of orienting the development of the territory towards a polycentric city.

Albania is a non-EU member state for this reason access to structural funds like ERDF is not available. Nevertheless, there are specific programs, often ad hoc Programmes and Financial Instruments, in nature, such as UE4Municipalities, that provide funding for physical interventions. These programs are integrated into the broader IPAIII program, which serves as a pre-accession instrument to the EU and shares some characteristics with structural funds.

Other tools are:

- Central Government Programs (for territorial development)
- Direct funding from the central government for the implementation of thematic projects.
- Financing through our municipality's annual budget.
- There are also financial instruments from donors (UNDP, AICS, GIZ etc.) available to municipalities to finance local development projects.

The aim of Kamëz 2030 is to develop a plan that activates the elements of the master plan with a co-constructed and long-term vision.

RISK FACTORS

The development of a holistic strategy in addressing the identified challenges is the necessary approach to make an impact on various factors, but it risks creating action plans difficult to manage and develop in real practice. Moreover, it's important to guarantee the active participation of the migrant community in order to prevent the risk of developing inefficient strategies. Considering that the country is not part of the EU, access to potential resources differs, which poses the risk of inequalities in terms of economic resource availability. Moreover, the seismic nature of the area is important including the risk of natural disasters in the urban plan.

Longford Ballymahon, IR

Profile integrations

INTRODUCTION

Longford County Council, the local authority overseeing County Longford, a centrally located rural county in Ireland, manages an area with a population of 40,000 inhabitants. Longford is a small municipality with the presence of different nationalities, currently approximately **20 nationalities**.

In 2022, 40.6% of the population of the urban area of **Ballymahon** was of non-Irish nationality, with the highest proportions of people from Poland, Lithuania and Brazil.

Ballymahon is not a tourist area; it mainly developed along a main road where the majority of houses and bars are concentrated, forming a very small village.

The urban fabric is in poor condition, the public sector needs to be strengthened and there is a lack of connectivity. The area is inhabited by an approximate population of 2,000 with a demographic growth increase.

The **deprivation score is 24.85** indicating the socio-economic disadvantaged. Unemployment impacts different targets of the local population, with 54.9% of the male population and 45.16% of the female population unemployed.

The **economic crisis** in Ireland had an impact on **house building** and subsequently on home ownership and houses available for rent. The number of social houses in particular areas of the city has led to social issues and the creation of an **intergenerational cycle** that is difficult to break.

The county has experienced social and economic decline in recent years, particularly in Longford Town, the primary settlement with a population of 10,000.

Longford Ballymahon, IR

CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM TO ADDRESS

Despite the creation of activities aimed at generating social inclusion, there is a lack of participation from the new foreign communities present; **their involvement in the local community is a challenge**. In fact, individuals from various countries often face challenges in integrating with the local community. They tend to stay within their respective groups rather than actively engage in integration with the local community.

Until today, there is an emerging interest in participation, primarily thanks to the younger generations of recent years. It is likely that over time, this will contribute to enhancing the involvement and social inclusion of foreign communities. The **school represents the only point of contact** that brings together generations from different communities.

However, the **involvement of the young target** represents a challenge also due to the lack of services and attractive actions. Sport is the main activity for local youngsters.

These challenges have to be considered in another macro-challenge: the **high levels of unemployment** that necessitate resources for the social and economic regeneration of the Ballymahon area.

Moreover, demographic growth raises the urban challenge regarding the availability of a house for the increased population. **There is a shortage of housing**, both private and social and affordable housing in Ballymahon. There is a need for sustainable housing solutions, taking into account the needs of those in social and affordable housing and private housing and the need for housing to be close to services.

In this urban area, the city needs to work on the **provision of social services** for the residents and the challenges faced by the **service providers due to inadequate and inappropriate space to provide services**.

Recognizing Ballymahon as a crucial focus for investment in town regeneration, Longford County Council specifically targets social services, linking them with local schools, and affordable housing, and improving public spaces to enhance connectivity in the area.

Besides, the challenge in facing **engagement by local communities**, ensuring that **urban regeneration projects** bring about required social change and integrating affordable housing into the town core.

The city needs to **improve a governance model** as a key to bringing together several different stakeholders and needs to ensure that all are heard and views taken on board. Moreover to answer the challenges described the village needs to foster methodologic aspects including participatory practices, measurability methods and participatory planning.

Longford Ballymahon, IR

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing teachers for English language and for special needs • The town team is involved in other projects: walkway small projects • Existing town team representative of different organizations • Existing project in the three buildings: not only a physical regeneration but also governance • Services for elderly and disability • Center Parcs - brought more jobs • Meat factory working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack social integration • Lack of local engagement • Shortage of housing • High unemployment • Separate communities of different cultures: polish, brazilian. Nigerian. • No felt need from the communities to integrate because of the community activities • Parking is not available and people are not stopping here for shopping for example • Need for social and affordable housing • No main community structure for sports or bigger events • Young people not interested in sport have no alternative • Drug market • Young people are seen around the day, around school but then in the afternoon they disappear • Big need for affordable housing
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural city • Create a center for mental health, youth caffè • Focus on education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural division • High unemployment • Separate communities of different cultures: polish, brazilian,nigerian. • No felt need from the communities to integrate because of the community activities • Parking not available and people are not stopping here for shopping for example • Need for social and affordable housing • No main community structure for sports or bigger events • Young people not interested in sport have no alternative • Drug market • Young people are seen around the day, around school but then in the afternoon the disappear • Big need for affordable housing

Longford Ballymahon, IR

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

FOCUS, APPROACH, STRATEGIES, BEST PRACTICES.

The social impact evaluation has not yet been implemented. The city adopts **green procurement and the SDGs** as part of the basis for the Local Authority procurement practices but it is not standard at present.

The town team is a local group composed of citizens to involve local opinion in public discussion and decisions. However, the group is not composed of a large number of members which creates the need to foster the additional instruments.

The strategy of the city is focused on Ballymahon with the improvement of resources for the **social and economic regeneration of the town.**

The village is distinguished by a robust culture of bottom-up practices, and the community exhibits cohesion, high unity, and a considerable **sense of hospitality.** Within this context, there is a notable commitment to collaboration between members of the local community.

There is a good practice of school institutions with a school primary and secondary oriented to university study and vocational, high-quality school. 95% of students possess an iPad, showcasing strong digital skills. They are actively engaged in sports, embodying the essence of a well-rounded student who appreciates music, shows, theater, and emphasizes personal well-being. The entire school system is strongly oriented **to social integration and inclusion.**

The area has a center dedicated to fostering youth participation and is adept at addressing situations characterized by social issues.

However, a **broader regeneration plan** which included the renovation of these three buildings is still missing. This could foster an integrated urban regeneration.

BEST SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICES

- **Urban renovation of a 3-building complex**

This initiative will predominantly focus on revitalizing a **dormant convent** to house a family resource center and an elderly daycare facility. The project is also expected to enable the local authority to explore social housing options in the Longford region. Despite the buildings being separated by roads, there is an aspiration to explore physical interventions to improve connectivity between the services and the targeted enhanced areas. The complex is composed of three buildings which are slated for renovation and will be returned to the community, each with a specific purpose: young involvement, increased senior service and multifunctional space.

- **Youth café**

One building of the complex will be designated for the youth center, transforming into a youth café which is going to involve the young target. Additionally, there are plans to refurbish a former library into a youth center and repurpose a dilapidated school building for remote working.

Longford Ballymahon, IR

- **The 'Pobal le Cheile' project**

The project however focuses on the delivery of infrastructure for social projects. U.R.Impact allows Longford County Council to ensure that this project delivers for the community that it will serve, through a strong governance model and ensuring to bring all stakeholders to the table and ensure they have a voice.

- **MAPS and UrbSecurity initiatives**

Longford County Council has previously participated in MAPS and UrbSecurity initiatives. The Town Team has also played a significant role in interacting with local communities. The URBACT approach of involving the Urban Local Group (ULG) has proven highly effective in initiating discussions with local communities and involving them in matters relevant to them.

- **Project Ireland 2040**

Project Ireland 2040 aims to make our cities, towns and villages more attractive and 'liveable' and offer a quality of life that more people are willing to choose in the years ahead. Within this, there is specific reference to Ireland's Rural Fabric, which includes reversing town/village and rural population decline, by encouraging new roles and functions for buildings, streets and sites, supporting the sustainable growth of rural communities, to include development in the rural areas and promoting new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity and indigenous innovation and enterprise, as well as more traditional natural and resource assets (e.g. food, energy, tourism), underpinned by the quality of life offering. This project aims to address those objectives in the identification of new uses for empty buildings, supporting the sustainability of the rural community of Ballymahon and providing new employment opportunities for local people both in the services that will be provided and through the development of a co-working space, as well as improving the liveability and quality of life in the area.

CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT

The regional and national government policies align with the local actions of the city, ensuring a cohesive approach to urban development and governance.

This is a highlight from the development of various national-level plans and objectives implemented: *Project Ireland 2040, Action Plan for Rural Development, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region, Longford County Development Plan 2015 – 2021, Ballymahon Local Action Plan 2018.*

ULG

LCC will schedule ULG meetings so that learnings from transnational meetings can be shared with the ULG. ULG meetings following transnational meetings will include an item on the agenda and a presentation on the learnings from the transnational meeting. The tools used at the transnational meeting will be used in the ULG meeting to ensure their involvement in the co-production of the IAP.

Longford Ballymahon, IR

The preparation of the IAP will include opportunities for the ULG to review the actions and outputs to ensure that the findings reflect their discussions and inputs into the development of the IAP.

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

The main focus of the IAP will be the development of a strong **governance model** to ensure that the Pobal le Cheile regeneration project has a positive impact on the community, in terms of ensuring that the delivery of this project meets the needs of the community into the future.

It will also provide the opportunity to look at the wider town and **potential future regeneration projects** to ensure that those projects deliver for the community through a focus on deepening participatory planning, measurability methods and additionality channels.

There are various funding opportunities for potential actions identified, including national schemes such as **Rural Regeneration and Development Fund** for public realm/community infrastructure works, Department of Housing funding for affordable housing schemes, LEADER funding for capacity building and governance supports.

RISK FACTORS

Limited community activities hinder social cohesion, while inadequate parking affects commercial activity. The absence of sports and event structures leaves young people with few alternatives, potentially contributing to the visibility of a drug market. Affordable housing shortages further compound challenges, necessitating urgent attention to foster community well-being and economic development.

Mértola, PT

Profile integrations

INTRODUCTION

Mértola is one of the historically wealthiest municipalities in Portugal. It is a small, picturesque town located near the Spanish border. The village has a **modest population of residents**: 6,209, with nearly 150 residing in the historical centre. Covering an expansive 1292 square kilometres, the population density is 4.8 inhabitants per square kilometre. It is a quiet village characterised by strong bonds between neighbours, and mutual assistance.

Mértola is situated at the confluence of the Guadiana and Oeiras rivers, Mértola is home to around 1200 residents and holds a distinguished status as a candidate for the national UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In historical terms, Mértola was a crucial city during the Arab period. The city **attracts tourists**. The tourist flow is currently balanced, without causing significant negative impacts on the territory, but rather serving as a valuable resource for the city.

And one of its values lies in the well-preserved historical architecture, which is an important heritage from the mediaeval village dating back to the time of Islamic rule.

Mértola is currently experiencing a significant **influx of young migrants**, primarily driven by a **high unemployment rate** and the lack of sufficient educational opportunities and services. This demographic shift is underscored by an **ageing population** structure.

Moreover, the geographical area of Mértola is affected by an increasing **desertification process**. Drought and reduced rainfall have become more frequent, impacting agriculture and the availability of water resources. The increasing frequency of extreme weather events, such as storms, floods, tropical nights, and heat waves, poses a risk to the local economy and also the health and safety of the local population.

Mértola, PT

CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM TO ADDRESS

The context described highlights the combination of different challenges due to the **demographic decline** and the effect of **climate change**. The Lack of qualified employment opportunities fosters young and adult people to leave Mértola in search of better career prospects and quality life.

In fact, the current **climate change and increasing desertification process impact local agriculture** and so the **local economy** influences the citizens' lives.

This generates **multiple challenges strongly connected** to one another.

The actual context leads to a **growing disconnect between young individuals and their hometowns**, diminishing the likelihood of them returning, thus perpetuating the population decline.

The first challenge is to **reduce the demographic decline** considering the impact of the climate change process.

The important cultural heritage that characterises the Mértola's historical centre arise the need for **preservation and conservation actions** to protect local heritage. Besides this, the city needs to renovate the centre through actions able to reduce the lack of places for cars, accessible roads and buildings, services and commerce and internet connection. The centre had steps and low-accessibility roads. The characteristics described discourage the citizens from choosing the historic centre and, at the same time reduce the sense of belonging.

Therefore, the challenge is to preserve the heritage while **considering the needs of those living in the city centre**. Many of these residents, particularly the elderly, require easy **urban accessibility**. Therefore the characteristics of the historical centre and architectural barriers make accessibility difficult for daily actions (such as going shopping, reaching local services or the accessibility of urgent services such as ambulances).

In order to face the challenges describes the **lack of current data** able to lead the strategy **choices and objectives tied to the local needs**. This lack is reflected also in the **weak engagement of local residents and stakeholders**.

Collecting data and ensuring local participation are two important **methodological challenges** that need to be taken into consideration for planning and strategy.

Mértola, PT

Strengths	Weakness
<p>Heritage Preservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds allocated for museums, archaeology, and conservation efforts. <p>Community Well-being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on fostering neighborly relationships, support, and care. <p>Tranquillity and Authenticity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on maintaining a peaceful and authentic environment that fosters a sense of belonging. <p>Sustainable Tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to balance and manage tourism flow to maintain the local charm. <p>Effective Social Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-functioning social policies covering housing, services, and other needs. <p>Renovation Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly renovation scheme offering up to 20k per house, with a total budget of 100k annually, adhering to conservation rules. <p>Municipal Investment Initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilising empty municipal properties for retail or other purposes in the city centre. Investing in job creation strategies such as research centres and elder care facilities. 	<p>Community Engagement Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of citizen participation leading to a diminished sense of belonging. Communication obstacles hindering effective engagement strategies. <p>Population Decline and Demographic Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in population, especially among the youth, impacting community vitality. Ageing population leading to specific challenges in healthcare and social services. <p>Infrastructure and Accessibility Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor physical conditions in infrastructure like lighting, streets, and outdated water systems. Accessibility issues for the elderly due to inadequate roads, pavements, and building structures. <p>Housing and Real Estate Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing speculation resulting in high property costs and a lack of affordable rental options. Difficulty in accommodating young people due to expensive housing and limited offerings. <p>Tourism and Urban Planning Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism is dominated by second-home ownership, posing challenges in maintenance and construction limitations. Insufficient green public spaces impacting the community's recreational and environmental needs. <p>Services and Opportunities Deficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate healthcare services available to the residents. Limited social and economic opportunities for the youth, including job prospects and social activities. <p>Municipal Administration Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small municipal teams potentially impact project efficiency and effectiveness.

Mértola, PT

Opportunities	Threats
<p>Engagement and Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door-to-door activities and new communication methods for better engagement. <p>Heritage and Tourism Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise heritage to attract newcomers and boost tourism. • Create new services around heritage sites. <p>Economic Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use tourism as a job source. • Renovate housing and repurpose empty spaces for retail. <p>Development Initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop riverfront attractions. • Collaborate with universities to innovate through a biological centre. • Use urban regeneration for local development. <p>Funding and Collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek funding for new programs and encourage collaborative efforts. 	<p>Challenges and Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change impact. • Bureaucratic slowness hindering progress. • Historical centre cater mainly to tourists, leading to loss of local residents. <p>Demographic and Social Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depopulation, especially in the historical centre. • Speculation and gentrification affecting housing. • Concentration of social needs in the city centre. <p>Concerns Regarding Tourism and Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential negative impact of excessive tourism on local charm. • Risk of degradation of public spaces. • Threat of decharacterization without community involvement. <p>Civil Protection and Safety Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks posed by heavy rain, floods, and fire, particularly to older structures. <p>Engagement and Interest Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty reaching and engaging people in processes. • Lack of interest in local jobs or housing among residents.

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

FOCUS, APPROACH, STRATEGIES, BEST PRACTICES.

Mértola's strategy is strongly tied to **sustainable development** and focuses on the creation of inclusive and impactful policies in terms of socially sustainable and integrated urban development.

Besides, the city **has developed a bottom-up approach** to make sure that the process will integrate and empower all. This is a starting point that needs to be strengthened to face challenges.

The city has not implemented a measurability system; however, **all the SDGs have been at the centre of local planning.**

The strategy adopted is focused on turning complex challenges into an innovation process able to impact different aspects and ensure local well-being.

Mértola, PT

This will be promoted by the creation of a **research centre focused on biodiversity and climate change issues**. Expertise, researchers will **be encouraged to move to Mértola** and contribute to finding new strategies in answer to climate change.

In this way, Mértola will **ensure the presence of a stable number of residents** actively engaged in sustainable development, addressing the challenges of climate change and desertification.

The strategy will **create new highly qualified jobs**, focused on research and mitigation of the effects of climate change.

The outlined strategy implements a **multidimensional approach** to address issues to reduce the negative impact of the challenges and demographic decline at the same time.

In order to **preserve the historical heritage**, in the '90, the city developed the Plan for the Safeguarding and Valorization of the Historic Centre of Mértola. Until now, this plan is the sole strategy available for heritage preservation and serves as the foundation for the upcoming strategy. The future approach will **prioritise local needs in urban decision-making**

The historical heritage preservation will involve allocating space in the historic centre for social and affordable housing, directly improving residents' access to quality homes in a challenging real estate market. To address the **needs of residents** while **preserving the distinctive identity of the centre**. In fact, the strategy aims to **enhance accessibility** to guarantee the well-being of residents's lives. Mértola will renew historical and architectural heritage, promoting a sense of identity and belonging while fostering social cohesion among local residents. Alongside, the revitalization of the historic centre aims to **attract cultural entrepreneurs** and **remote workers**, driving local entrepreneurship and creating jobs in various sectors.

Cultural **tourism** is stimulated by creating and preserving cultural spaces and museums, potentially **boosting the local economy** and enhancing interactions between tourists and residents.

Furthermore, the plan focuses on preserving **Mértola's unique identity by renewing historical and cultural heritage**, preventing cultural homogenization often seen in rapidly developing urban areas.

The entire strategy described will be based on the development of a methodology to monitor and evaluate, aiming to create **data-driven policy-making**.

Data-driven policy-making and the bottom-up approach are considered in the strategy's two prerequisites to pose the **citizens as the centre of policies**. This will be ensured through the planning of the **measurability social impact evaluation**.

Moreover, Mértola supports social entrepreneurship addressing local challenges, provides affordable housing options, initiates eco-friendly practices, ensures accessibility for all, and encourages investments for social and environmental benefits.

Mértola, PT

BEST SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICES

- **ONE NIGHT AT THE MARKET**

This was a participatory design initiative actively involving the community. People were invited to join communal dinners at the local market, creating convivial moments of social gathering. This occasion not only provided the opportunity to participate in enjoyable moments but also served as a platform for discussions and listening to the changes and needs of the city. This initiative was an integral part of a project focused on the food supply chain.

- **MERTOLA FUTURE LAB**

It is a platform that collects and monitors projects of urban regeneration which are present in the city. Mèrtola Future Lab is a space for questioning, reflection, experimentation, research, knowledge transfer, creativity, innovation, and action. It acts as a venue for testing transition solutions towards a more inclusive, secure, resilient, and sustainable future. The site functions as a central hub for mapping and showcasing initiatives aimed at revitalising urban spaces.

- **HERITAGE FORUM**

The Heritage Forum initiative comprises community sessions that involve residents in decision-making regarding the future of their historic centre. This approach values their opinions and raises awareness about the significance of heritage and sustainable development.

CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT

On a national level, Mèrtola has the support of the **General Directorate of Territory**, along with a network of other relevant entities and departments for assistance. At the **local level**, the political executive, led by Vice-Mayor Dra. Rosinda Pimenta is actively engaged in the URBACT project. In general, the policies aim to address the social and economic needs of disadvantaged populations.

ULG

The URBACT Local Group members will adopt a participative approach, incorporating various strategies:

- **Clear Communication:** Establishing transparent and effective communication channels to disseminate information, insights, and best practices gained from transnational network activities to the ULG members.
- **Bottom-up Approach:** Encouraging ideas and feedback from ULG members actively, which can be solicited and integrated into the learning process.
- **Participative Governance:** Involving ULG members in the decision-making process.
- **Meetings with Stakeholders.** Organise key meetings and workshops with relevant stakeholders and professionals, to discuss the new approaches, experiences, and potential strategies derived from transnational network activities.
- **Maintain ongoing and regular communication** with the ULG members throughout the project, to ensure that they are informed about the progress and outcomes of transnational activities, enabling them to stay engaged and informed.

Mértola, PT

- Continue sharing updates and insights even after the transnational network activities have concluded, to keep a long-term engagement and knowledge transfer in a sustainable learning network.
- Create Clusters and Involve them in the Integrated Action Plan definition, and focus on a specific aspect or theme relevant and related to this cluster.

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

The Integrated Action Plan will focus on **social impact and sustainability**, and need to address various aspects of community development, urban regeneration, and environmental resilience. The actions must also consider other demographic groups, such as youth, the active workforce, the retail sector, and the various cultural and tourism aspects.

The action plan has to include different actions:

- access European urban experts, academics and researchers as well as practitioners, policy and decision-makers at different levels.
- revising the actual urban plan of the historic centre of Mértola;
- create the time and space for reflection and strategic co-creative planning.
- explore pertinent solutions in a safe space for sharing, reflecting and experimenting with innovative approaches.
- create a more efficient policy advocacy to accomplish more adjusted public policies.

Some of the areas involved need to be:

- Community Engagement and Social Inclusion
- Housing and Urban Conditions
- Urban Regeneration and Environmental Sustainability
- Public Space Enhancement and Placemaking
- Horizontal and collaborative Governance Model
- Resilience and Safety
- Urban Action Plan

The Integrated Action Plan should focus on creating a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient urban environment that addresses the social vulnerabilities of the ageing population while **attracting new residents and businesses**. It should involve active collaboration among stakeholders, prioritise environmental sustainability, and adhere to modern urban planning principles

The has different economic funds in place:

- Financing Program Portugal 2020 and 2030
- Financing Program Alentejo 2020 and 2030
- Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR)
- Local Housing Strategy
- State Secretariat for Tourism
- Programa Operativo de Cooperación Transfronteriza España-Portugal (POCTEP)
- Rural Development Plan (RDP)

Mértola, PT

RISK FACTORS

In the current policy emerges the **bureaucratic and slow-paced** nature which sometimes hinders timely implementation in alignment with the community's immediate needs. It remains challenging to align local strategies of small villages, such as Mértola and approaches with laws and **policies designed primarily for larger urban centres.**

Climate change represents the first risk for the future of Mértola. Tourism represents a resource for the city. However, there is the risk of the increased processes which could turn tourism into **over-tourism** with a negative impact on the little village.

A lack of interest in local jobs and housing, combined with an influx of people without corresponding improvements, poses potential strains on resources and a diminished quality of life. Moreover, in front of a ensure of new residents, the risk is also to not offer services and basic needs for the future. This will arise part of the current challenges rather than solve them.

Murcia, ES

Profile integrations

INTRODUCTION

Murcia is situated on a plain in a valley created by two mountain ranges and encompasses the city itself, located on the banks of the Segura River. It is a vast municipality covering 881.86 km², characterized by its agricultural nature (Murcia is also known as the orchard of Europe), with a climate featuring hot summers, mild winters, and limited precipitation. This unique combination of rural and urban backgrounds converges in the extensive Murcia municipality.

The primary **economy is service-based**, with significant importance placed on (residential) tourism and agriculture (exporting products throughout Europe, including fruits, vegetables, and wine). Murcia is a growing city and the seventh-largest city in Spain, serving as the capital of the Murcia Region, with 465,000 inhabitants and a substantial percentage of young people and migrants.

The presence of various **well-established socio-economic infrastructures**, including two universities, hospitals, public transportation (buses, trams, and public bicycles), and tourist attractions, has attracted diverse groups of people to reside in the city.

In the past year, the city has experienced depopulation in its centre, shifting the socio-economic focus from the centre to the surrounding neighborhoods.

In the southern area across the river, **neglect and decline** are more evident in neighborhoods such as El Carmen, San Pio, and X Santiago El Mayor. The characteristics of the southern area across the river differ significantly from those in the north of the city.

The area has been involved in a significant infrastructural initiative that includes the development of high-speed train routes and the burial of 7 kilometers of underground railway tunnels.

The introduction of **high-speed trains** will connect Murcia to Madrid, and the connection to Alicante will improve transportation, including bus transport.

Murcia, ES

CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM TO ADDRESS

Murcia is suffering a **degentrification process that** has pushed the middle class to prefer to live mainly on the outskirts of the city instead of the city's centre.

This creates a **difference between the level of well-being** and required action able to reduce the differences in diverse districts.

The **progressive depopulation** and **decline of the centre** have led to the abandonment of significant heritage, necessitating restoration actions.

These aspects highlight also a **lack of ties and identity of residents** with Murcia's core.

The challenge is to enhance and **revitalise central areas facing neglect** starting from the area surrounding the new railway, therefore: El Carmen, San Pio, and X Santiago El Mayor.

The new **public infrastructure presents an opportunity** to initiate a significant structural and innovative change for this area stigmatised as neglect.

The interment of the railway **restores a public space** to residents, offering the opportunity **to generate new social aggregation actions**.

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise in green and innovation • Tourism • Welfare infrastructure • Experience in urban project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration of neighbourhoods • Service decentralisation • Loss of local identity • Lack of citizen input • Internal inequality
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage to revitalise • Multicultural demography • Young people come to the city • New public space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase cost of life

Murcia, ES

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

FOCUS, APPROACH, STRATEGIES, BEST PRACTICES.

The strategy adopted by Murcia illustrates how **public infrastructure can drive urban innovation** and create a framework for developing actions to address challenges. The Urban Regeneration approach adopts a "**neighbourhood by neighbourhood**" strategy to enhance and revitalize areas experiencing decline or neglect, preventing degentrification through physical, economic, and social interventions.

Murcia is actively involved in the development of **national development plans**, specifically in the renewal of the railway in the city centre. This infrastructural intervention is expected to have a positive impact on local businesses, service accessibility, and mobility. The renewal process aims to establish a new **storytelling identity for the community** and future residents, particularly in the neighborhoods surrounding the new railway.

The municipality has prior **experience with URBACT Networks** (APN and TN) and has received the URBACT Good Practice Label, demonstrating familiarity with the program and its methodology. Initiatives like "Interactive Cities" and "Innovator" have had a positive impact in Murcia, aiding the municipality in developing strategies both internally and in collaboration with its citizens.

Murcia is actively participating in the Urban Agenda for the EU Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage, leading two of the eleven actions implemented by the partnership. The city has also engaged in programs of ERDF European territorial cooperation, including URBACT III (Interactive Cities), Interreg med, Sudoce, and ERF art 7.

The urban regeneration projects are managed through **collaboration and integration among various departments**. This ensures an **integrated and participatory design approach starting from the** design of the social impact. Murcia adopts a multidimensional **approach** able to address the challenges arising from the degentrification process.

The city implemented **procurement**, especially for green projects. The full implementation of the social impact evaluation has not been carried out yet. However, the Social Welfare Department adopts **KPIs to measure projects in the ending phase**.

In addition to these initiatives, Murcia has **implemented bottom-up participatory** practices involving diverse groups for public consultation to address the **needs and contributions of all citizens**, including for example immigrant communities and people with disabilities.

The engagement of citizens results in the development of projects and actions tied to the needs shared.

Murcia, ES

The approach highlights a focus on the sustainability of the mobility model. The new **urban mobility model** being implemented combines Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and interconnection nodes, integrating the already existing public transport, bike-lanes, electric mobility and municipal bike-sharing services, with dissuasive parking sites and pedestrianised areas, actions funded by ERDF and Next Generation funds, that are contributing to a more sustainable urban development for the city centre.

The Municipality combines the **climate goals and circular economy strategy** to create integrated cohesive interventions, creating synergies between local, European and other funds, aiming to improve the quality of life of our citizens, creating **more attractive and livable neighbourhoods**, also by focussing on environmental sustainability, promoting **public transport**, cycling and walking, to reduce pollution.

Murcia has successfully implemented the **Murcia Smart City Strategy** (8M€ ERDF funded), being awarded best Smart City Model in Spain (2016), and the only Sustainable and integrated urban development strategy to be financed in the Murcia Region (2017) called "Murcia IT" (innovation & tradition, with 17,5M€ ERDF), and a Pilot Experience by the National Ministry of Development, developing a local urban agenda, within the implementation of the Spanish Urban Agenda.

The approach chosen wants to create more vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive areas that offer a **high quality of life for all residents**.

BEST PRACTICES

- **Urban DNA and the birth of Urban Acupuncture Therapy**

These are two programs that involve citizens, employing a citizen engagement and participation concept. This approach engages target neighbors and their surroundings interactively, both online and offline, allowing ample space for dialogue and mutual understanding. **The programs develop urban solutions and practices based on the needs of local citizens**. These initiatives are part of the URBACT Interactive City project.

- **Regenerated former military buildings: occulto.tv**

In the southern part of the city, several former **artillery military buildings** have been regenerated and transformed into public and cultural spaces, including libraries; some are managed by the municipality. Within one of these buildings, there is a pavilion dedicated to the creation of art and music, serving as a promotional channel for the products crafted in this **cultural space**. Occulto.tv is an **artistic initiative** developed in one of the pavilions. This project organizes and **hosts avant-garde artistic events and concerts**. Soon, another pavilion will be dedicated to the development of cultural initiatives. These former military buildings are not far from the central area that will undergo urban action related to the railway.

- **Renewal and urban regeneration project**

The new infrastructure building thanks to the objectives outlined in the National Development Plans, will introduce a new railway in the city centre.

This change will **significantly impact the lives of residents in the surrounding areas of the station**, including the neighbourhoods of El Carmen, San Pio, and X Santiago El Mayor.

Murcia, ES

Furthermore, the urban project will **enhance connectivity between the southern and northern** areas of Murcia, reducing service inequalities across neighbourhoods.

The internment of the 7 kilometre railway will expand public space, freeing up the area for other urban projects, including promenades, parks, transforming the station into a new cultural space. This practice will reduce the decline and the neglect which is currently characterised the area.

ULG

On the one hand, the ULG will consist of a willing representative of a selection of municipal “services” (departments), e.g. Parks and Gardens, Culture, Personnel, ICT, Public Construction, Urban Quality, etc. with preference for members based on age and years working for the municipality/working in the current position (understanding younger people and/or people who are new to their functions have not yet fallen into routine behaviour and are more likely to detect room for improvement).

The other part of the ULG will be composed of civil society stakeholders, representatives of the collectives of the neighbourhood(s) the actions will take place, either from minority collectives (immigrant background, elderly people, youth, women’s centre, associations, etc.) as well as interested neighbours.

The ULG will be completed with those members of the URBACT Interactive Cities ULG (finalised sept/oct 2018) and URBACT Innovator ULG (finalised nov/dec 2021) that wish to participate as, they know and manage the URBACT method and methodology and are able to provide an outside view, whilst being aware of the inner workings of the municipality because of their previous experience.

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

The IAP will concentrate on the new area surrounding the station, identifying strategies and actions to be implemented after the completion of the infrastructural project. The strategy will identify the intervention able to enhance resident well-being and include them in the new storytelling.

The IAP will consider to improve and strengthen the planning of the artistic and cultural actions developed in the regenerated former military building. The action will focus to ensure the participation of the citizens working on the inclusion of their needs, opinions and residents in the action chosen.

Therefore the IAP will straighten the tie of residence with the events and action organised. Besides this, the IAP will facilitate the planning actions for the building that is going to be regenerated.

The IAP will actively promote initiatives aimed at establishing connections with other cities and engaging local stakeholders. This effort is intended to nurture collaboration, form partnerships that can facilitate the development of new projects, and influence policy. This influence extends to both local levels within the city council's jurisdiction and policy development at the European level. It ensures a foundation in the realities of urban communities, addressing their most urgent challenges.

The strategy will be actively support by the Murcia’s Mayor and the different municipality departments which ensure the value of project thank their collaborative and integration action.

Murcia, ES

RISK FACTORS

Even if the urban regeneration in the south centre area will bring important positive changes in the lives of citizens, it is important to consider the risk of increasing the cost of living in the area.

Innovations in infrastructure, coupled with a decrease in neglect risks, contribute to an increase in housing prices, prompting the more vulnerable socio-economic groups to relocate from the area.

Targu Frumos, RO

Profile integrations

INTRODUCTION

Targu Frumos is a quiet city located in a rural area surrounded by fields and villages.

It is located in a transit point and is well connected, as it intersects two European roads also near the big urban centre of Lasi which distance 1 hour from Targu Frumos.

The economy of the city is led by **agriculture** with half of its surface dedicated to urban agriculture, Targu Frumos has a rich history rooted in commerce and exchange. In fact, the community is characterised by a thriving urban **agriculture scene**, with many residents actively **participating in cultivation for personal and commercial purposes**.

Greenhouse ownership is widespread, contributing to both personal provide and local markets. A minority Russian population in the community engages in farming and preserves creation, showcasing a unique blend of cultural practices. The city has developed a diverse **urban agriculture landscape** that not only fosters **self-sufficiency** but also strengthens the **communal bond among residents**.

Targu Frumos is characterised by a **strong sense of mutualism among locals**, as it is a close-knit community where everyone knows everyone, fostering a strong bond among citizens. The characteristic of being a small city facilitated the attitude for networking and self-help and in fact, it's a vibrant community relationship, where everyone knows everyone.

The city has a **historical heritage** dating back over 500 years, the majority of its buildings were constructed post-World War II, primarily of the collective housing type. In the past 15 years, the municipality has been committed to **modernising not only these buildings but the entire city**.

Substantial investments have been made towards this goal, funded both from the city's budget and through various projects supported by European funds. Despite being a small city, it boasts a **high-quality educational system** which guarantees the elementary and the high-schools. The University is missing and this with the lack of qualified job opportunities pushes **the younger generation to migrate**.

The young citizens leave the city in pursuit of better-paying jobs in Western Europe, with many of them establishing new lives in those countries and their offspring acquiring citizenship in their respective host nations.

It also exhibits a high percentage of **population ageing**, a **decrease in birth** rate and a **lack of qualified population**.

Targu Frumos, RO

CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM TO ADDRESS

One of the main challenges is linked to the **lack of recognition of the value of public space**. The surge in the number of cars in past years has generated traffic congestion and highlights the shortage of parking spaces and garages for owners of cars.

To address this issue, the municipal administration has, in recent years, formulated a plan for the construction of private garages. However, in many cases, garage owners have used them for purposes other than their original intent. Many of these garages no longer serve their initial purpose, having transformed from places for cars into storage spaces, with **vehicles still parked on the already congested streets**.

For over 20 years, this represents an issue for Romanian cities that have grappled with finding a solution for the garages that emerged shortly after 1990.

In fact, this challenge still generates a **negative impact on the public urban space** also fostered by the **absence of public transport and cycling lanes**. In the last years, large municipalities have already proceeded to eliminate garages, in many cases facing opposition from the citizens. The resistance of owners shows reluctance to restore public space through the proper use of the garages. Today, it is crucial for the **city to break this dynamic**, reclaim public space, and return it to the community.

Besides, the city is now **facing a lack of labour force** as well as an ageing population. Young citizens migrate in search of better-paid jobs in Western Europe, many of them settling in those countries, their children also having the citizenship of the respective states. The limited access to higher education led many youths to migrate to Iasi for career opportunities in fields such as IT and engineering. The lack of young people makes this challenge complex, and for this reason, the city needs to create opportunities to **attract young people**.

The city has challenging living conditions and **diminished income** opportunities resulting from the closure of state-owned factories established during the communist regime.

The city also contends with the olfactory drawbacks of nearby pig and chicken farms. Targu Frumos needs to create more opportunities to **generate local innovation**.

Targu Frumos, RO

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic position - from history this is a crossroads for many people, even the name is about commerce and exchange. • Half of the city surface is actually dedicated to agriculture and cultivation (Urban Agriculture) - managed by the minorities • Green - Positioned in a green area and has a central park • Good community relationships, everyone knows everyone - positive attitude, self help, • Good network of schools • Company for road construction, Piping, - job opportunities • Bakery factory • Good small commerce - shops, restaurants, bars... • Day Hospital • Culture and leisure happening in the park and in front of the culture house • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic with two big roads • No high education, students mainly move to IASI when they stay • Youths are then staying in IASI to work in qualified jobs - IT, engineering,.. • The pig farm and chicken farm are creating bad smell • Insufficient parking spaces, no public transport, no cycling lanes • Car use culture • No touristic elements to attract people here (there was a fight in the first world war..) • No use of the geographical position • Cables for the electricity and internet are above the ground (esthetics and security compromise)
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new highway will also pass here • Industrial park building near the highway, moving the existing companies in the industrial park. Taking outside noise and air pollution. • Benefit from the local production of the vegetable. Build a storage to conserve and sell in different moments • Build a factory for secondary food products • Technological high schools - transform them into professional school for agriculture and hospitality (need for tractor drivers for example) • Farmers Market, not every day but maybe in the weekend (attractive also from a touristic point of view) • To create more events, traditional events, festival.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even more traffic if there is more attraction • People not appreciating change, and are against interventions (for example the garages) • The minority producing the food • Highway - timing is not clear

Targu Frumos, RO

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL IMPACT IN URBAN REGENERATION

FOCUS, APPROACH, STRATEGIES, BEST PRACTICES.

Include: existing relevant local relevant regional strategies, specific thematic focus identified within the challenge network.

The issue posed by garages and the use of public space is symptomatic of a larger problem: the lack of valorisation of public space. Planning has to address the “garage issue” through a broader perspective capable of creating value and implementing a truly effective intervention strategy.

For this reason, urban planning has to begin with a **mapping action** of the city's spaces to highlight existing areas and identify those public spaces essential for the well-being of the community. This will move the focus from the citizens' property as the starting point of the strategy to **increasing citizen awareness through evidence-based approaches**.

Currently, there are **no tools for monitoring the social aspect**, monitoring is done only by evaluating direct discussions with citizens as well as communication on official online pages (website, social media, etc.). Until now the local government **has empowered the community to make independent decisions**, collaborates with the **community as equals to co-create** the city or neighbourhood, actively engages the community and considers their input while retaining final decision-making authority, seeks non-binding feedback from the community on specific decisions and policies, and provides the community with transparent, relevant, and up-to-date information. For example, for the **urban regeneration of the spaces in the central area** (the area between the esplanade to the west, 1 Mai Street to the east, Petru Rares Street to the north and Cuza Voda Street to the south) by arranging green spaces, sidewalks, parking lots, etc.

The approach will continue to ensure the **involvement of citizens as stakeholders** in answering the challenges and local needs.

Affordable housing Initiatives and accessible public spaces represent one of the priority actions adopted to generate social impact.

BEST SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICES

- **Central farmers market**

The city's rich tradition and practices in urban agriculture, coupled with the resulting local internal production, have given rise to the establishment of an internal market. This constitutes a significant identity element that should be emphasized in the overall strategy.

The central farmers market serves as a hub, providing the community with access to fresh produce and local delicacies. Additionally, the city boasts a robust network of schools, with ongoing plans for renovations aimed at improving energy efficiency and expanding educational opportunities for the youth. The local economy is further supported by thriving businesses specializing in road construction, piping, and a bakery factory, contributing to enhanced job prospects in the region. Moreover, it could be a practice able to attract tourist interest in local products.

Targu Frumos, RO

- **New waste centre**

The centre is managed through voluntary efforts focused on waste recycling, which has recently been approved and is now in the initial stages of construction. This initiative specifically targets the recycling of large domestic waste. The city plans the renovation of an abandoned centre to be repurposed to host cultural activities.

- **Photovoltaic park**

The city will develop a photovoltaic park. It's a work in progress related to a recent application.

- **Energy rehabilitation of 2 schools and a high school.**

To continue to foster the quality of the educational system the city started the energy rehabilitation of the high school and the elementary schools, still in the approval process. PNRR pays for the energy efficiency, inner design is by the municipality.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE CITY?

Efforts will be made to involve both political forces (the mayor and elected city councillors) and the citizen and citizens' associations. The current mayor aims for a transformation of these plots and plans to initiate the garage demolition procedure starting next autumn.

ULG

The ULG will be composed of garage owners, elected local councillors, staff of the mayor's office, and will directly involve citizens who own garages.

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

The IAP will kick off with initiatives aimed at enhancing and strengthening planning skills, beginning with the necessary tools to **create plans for sustainable development** and increase the capacity building to the team in integrated planning.

The IAP will develop the mapping of public space through the engagement of local citizens which will involve urban walks with citizens to reflect on the future of the city and identify areas for improvement.

Besides, the actions will concentrate on identifying the most **effective methods to engage citizens** in this project and to secure funding sources for urban regeneration. Furthermore, the action will include the planning of future initiatives for the cultural centre.

For a portion of the desired project activities, a budget will be allocated from the city's funds. For the remaining portion, non-reimbursable financing will be sought, or, as a last resort, a bank loan may be considered. The IAP could include the possibility of ensuring as much **knowledge as possible to attract European funds** and investments for the most efficient application of them.

Targu Frumos, RO

RISK FACTORS

Enhancing the city's attractiveness runs the risk of perpetuating existing challenges and issues, particularly in terms of traffic congestion and inadequate parking facilities. While the city is actively engaged in developing effective strategies to address these issues, there persists strong resistance to change and potential interventions that may impact private property. Without a concerted effort to foster a sense of responsibility and awareness regarding the value of public space, there is a looming danger that these existing challenges will be exacerbated by the citizens' lack of awareness and understanding of the problem.