

The logo consists of the text 'HUB-IN' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The 'IN' is enclosed within a white circle that has a downward-pointing arrow shape at its bottom edge. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a long, arched hallway with a wooden ceiling and walls, illuminated with a strong red and blue light. People are visible in the distance, and the perspective is looking down the length of the hallway.

**HUB-IN**

# D5.5 HUB-IN Guidebook for Cities

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# HUB-IN GUIDEBOOK

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## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This deliverable contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation or both.

# ABOUT HUB-IN

## MISSION

Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the Transformation of Historic Urban Areas (HUB-IN) aims to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in Historic Urban Areas (HUA), while preserving their unique social and cultural identity and the environment.

The project adopts innovation and entrepreneurship as the main drivers of urban regeneration in HUAs and is fully aligned with the international agendas for Cultural Sustainable Development (UNESCO) and Cultural Heritage Strategy (Council of Europe).

In the first stage of HUB-IN, a network of Hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship were developed in the HUAs of eight pilot cities (Belfast, Braşov, Genova, Grand Angoulême, Lisbon, Nicosia, Slovenska Bistrica, Utrecht). In the second stage, the resulting methods and tools will be scaled up to a global network of HUAs in follower cities. The Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship has tested, demonstrated and piloted activities of co-creation and co-design in three main areas that hold potential for the Hubs' sustainable transformations: 1) Cultural and creative industries, 2) New lifestyles and 3) Endogenous Natural & Social Resources.

## VISION

HUB-IN expects to contribute to reverse trends of abandonment and neglect of historic heritage in a systemic way through the creation of networks of Hubs where innovation is the main driver. The project is also anticipated to have a direct impact on the creation of new sustainable opportunities for local traditional businesses and for the development of new creative skills and jobs.

## CONSORTIUM



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|        |  |    |
|--------|--|----|
| 1.     | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....   | 7  |
| 2.     | INTRODUCTION.....  | 8  |
| 2.1.   | About HUB-IN .....   | 8  |
| 2.2.   | Purpose of the guidebook.....  | 11 |
| 2.3.   | Intended audience.....   | 11 |
| 2.4.   | How to Use this Document.....  | 12 |
| 2.4.1. | Relationship to other deliverables.....  | 12 |
| 2.4.2. | Methodology .....  | 13 |
| 2.4.3. | Document structure.....  | 13 |
| 2.5.   | Limitations of this Document.....  | 14 |
| 3.     | INSIGHTS FROM HUB-IN PILOT CITIES.....   | 15 |
| 3.1.   | Tactical insights based on intended outcomes.....                                      | 15 |
| 3.1.1. | Pilot cities' action plans, implementation insights, and entrepreneurial ecosystems .. | 15 |
| 3.1.2. | On entrepreneurial ecosystems.....   | 15 |
| 3.2.   | Outcome: Creating the ecosystem infrastructure.....                                    | 18 |
| 3.2.1. | Case study: Grand Angoulême “Caravane Creative Lab” .....                              | 19 |
| 3.2.2. | Case study: Utrecht Professionalising BKC .....  | 21 |
| 3.2.3. | Transferability and knowledge exchange.....  | 23 |
| 3.3.   | Outcome: Acceleration programmes & challenge calls.....                                | 26 |
| 3.3.1. | Case study: Genova Experimental call .....   | 27 |
| 3.3.2. | Case study: Slovenska Bistrica’s Crouzator .....                                       | 29 |
| 3.3.3. | Transferability and knowledge exchange.....  | 31 |
| 3.4.   | Outcome: Placemaking.....  | 35 |
| 3.4.1. | Case study: Lisbon Heritage Pop-Ups in Colina do Castelo.....                          | 36 |
| 3.4.2. | Case study: Slovenska Bistrica “Pestro Mestro” Small Local Projects .....              | 38 |
| 3.4.3. | Transferability and knowledge exchange.....  | 40 |
| 3.5.   | Outcome: Data collection and visualization.....  | 43 |
| 3.5.1. | Case study: Nicosia Heritage Walks and their Twins .....                               | 44 |
| 3.5.2. | Case study: Utrecht Governance Models.....   | 46 |
| 3.5.3. | Transferability and knowledge exchange.....  | 48 |
| 3.6.   | Outcome: Co-creation and community engagement.....                                     | 52 |
| 3.6.1. | Case study: Braşov City as a Classroom .....   | 53 |
| 3.6.2. | Case study: Nicosia Activations of the HUA (Creative Workshops) .....                  | 55 |
| 3.6.3. | Transferability and knowledge exchange.....  | 57 |
| 3.7.   | Outcome: Policy & Regulation.....  | 59 |
| 3.7.1. | Case study: Belfast Waterfront Promenade Framework .....                               | 60 |
| 3.7.2. | Case study: Braşov Transforming the Public Realm .....                                 | 62 |

|           |  |           |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 3.7.3.    | Transferability and knowledge exchange.....                      | 64        |
| 3.8.      | Outcome: Art and creativity.....                                 | 67        |
| 3.8.1.    | Case study: Genova Public Art project “La via delle storie”..... | 68        |
| 3.8.2.    | Case study: Grand Angoulême Metropolitan Open Call.....          | 70        |
| 3.8.3.    | Transferability and knowledge exchange.....                      | 72        |
| 3.9.      | Outcome: Sustainability.....                                     | 74        |
| 3.9.1.    | Case study: Belfast Sustainability Audit.....                    | 75        |
| 3.9.2.    | Case study: Lisbon Sprout Tank – Mocathon.....                   | 77        |
| 3.9.3.    | Transferability and knowledge exchange.....                      | 79        |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>OTHER INSIGHTS FROM HUB-IN.....</b>                           | <b>83</b> |
| 4.1.      | Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Ingredients.....                       | 84        |
| 4.2.      | EU Innovation Scorecard and HUB-IN.....                          | 86        |
| 4.3.      | Financial Sustainability of the HUB.....                         | 90        |
| 4.4.      | HUB-IN Approach to Ethics.....                                   | 92        |
| 4.5.      | Monitoring and Evaluation.....                                   | 93        |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>FURTHER RESOURCES.....</b>                                    | <b>95</b> |
| 5.1.      | Overview of HUB-IN Resources.....                                | 95        |
| 5.2.      | GLOSSARY.....  | 97        |



# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the HUB-IN project, eight pilot cities have developed their hubs of innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity. These hubs have sought to revitalize the pilot Historic Urban Area (HUA), stimulate resident engagement with their social and cultural heritage, and redefine their local HUA.

This document – the HUB-IN Guidebook for Cities – is aimed at follower city hub teams seeking inspiration and guidance to develop their historic urban areas. It aims to exchange experiences and knowledge from the eight pilot cities’ hubs and identify common insights, to aid replication in other contexts.

Organised thematically along the intended **Outcomes** identified in the Actions of the eight pilot cities’ Hubs, this guidebook provides insight into how cities realized specific Actions, and how these Actions contributed to meeting the overall ambitions for their HUA, the stakeholders engaged, and lessons learnt. In parallel, it links these insights to the elements of an “entrepreneurial ecosystem”, to assist follower cities in seeing how discrete Actions add up to longer-term transformation in historic urban areas.

Oriented towards practitioners, this guidebook zooms-in-and-zooms-out from individual Actions and City Hubs to present tactical “on the ground” findings from the pilot cities and from the HUB-IN project as a whole. This is not a detailed step-by-step on “how to create your Hub” – and a broad 4-stage process of creating a Hub is outlined in the [HUB-IN Framework](#) and the [Toolkit](#) – this report supports this by detailing how the HUB-IN pilot cities worked collaboratively with a host of local organisations and communities to create a HUB-IN place that worked in their context.

This document sits alongside the City Storytelling booklets (WP4), Monitoring Reports (WP5) and City Leadership Guide (WP6) to provide insights into the cities’ HUB development and implementation process and outcomes, and help with future replication of the co-creation pilots tested as part of the HUB-IN project.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1. ABOUT HUB-IN

Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the Transformation of Historic Urban Areas (HUB-IN) is an EU funded project that wants to transform and regenerate Historic Urban Areas (HUAs) while preserving their unique cultural and social identity and the environment.

#### What?

Eight city pilots worked on their selected Historic Urban Areas to transform them into a "Hub of Innovation and Entrepreneurship" (Hub) by co-developing new business models and innovative solutions that will bring together sustainability and cultural heritage.

HUB-IN cities developed Action Plans for their HUA based on the needs and values of the local community, according to the principles of circular and sharing economy.

The pilot cities took steps to ensure that local stakeholders and citizens were enabled to contribute to the regeneration of their HUA using co-creative engagement methods and innovative tools, and developing alternative financing models and acceleration programs for start-ups.

#### Why?

Through HUB-IN, the eight pilot cities' overall objectives were:

- Reverse trends of abandonment and neglect of historic heritage
- Create new sustainable opportunities for local traditional businesses
- Develop new creative skills and jobs

#### How?

##### *The HUB-IN approach:*



*...is heritage-led and forward looking*

We build on the "spirit of the place", meeting the needs of residents whilst attracting investment, jobs and improving quality of life.



*...is iterative and human-connected*

We shift mindsets (from "user-centered" to "human-connected") to create and develop more holistic and stronger narratives and strategies for equitable, inclusive, beyond carbon-neutral futures.



*...is resilient and regenerative*

We see places as living organisms that people can rethink, restore and replenish. We want to support cities economic, social and environmental wellbeing to enable them to handle future crises.



### **The HUB-IN place:**

The HUB-IN pilot cities followed key principles that define a HUB-IN place:

**Use cultural heritage** as a source of inspiration, innovation and celebration, strengthening their unique identity and informing their future

**Bring together** human needs, individual and societal, and the tools to address them, whilst simultaneously staying within the means of the planet

**Experiment** and enact open innovation through inclusive and informed co-creation

**Thrive through learning** and exchanges of information from people, technology and nature

### **The Hub-In methodologies, tools and frameworks:**

To support pilot cities in this journey, the consortium of experts and cities worked together to develop the [HUB-IN Framework](#), which acted as a guide for all stakeholders involved. This is supported by [methodologies and tools](#) for various stages across the HUB-IN journey.

Central to realising a HUB-IN place is working co-creatively with stakeholders across the “**quadruple helix**” of public, private, academic and community sectors (see Figure 1). Through engaging co-creatively with multiple stakeholders, HUB-IN pilot cities have developed numerous formal and informal partnerships – i.e., developed and enhanced their “entrepreneurial ecosystems” – and found numerous ways to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in their Historic Urban Areas for enhanced social, cultural and environmental outcomes related to Heritage.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Public sector</b><br>Include Municipalities, government departments related to heritage territory and culture, and political stakeholders, etc         | <b>Private sector</b><br>Include large organisations, consultancies, local businesses, business representatives, creative startups and entrepreneurs (individuals and organisations), etc  |
| <b>Academia</b><br>Include universities and colleges (notably those related to creative arts, media and culture), schools, skills training providers, etc | <b>Community/ Voluntary</b><br>Includes residents, students, artists, local workers, cooperatives, trusts, community organisations, resident associations, non-governmental organisations and other non-profit organisations, individual volunteers, etc |

Figure 1: Quadruple Helix with types of stakeholders in each sector

## **Result**

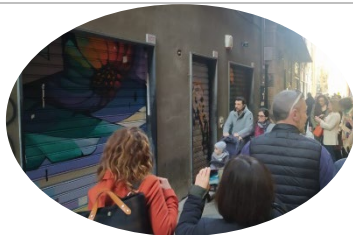
Eight Historic Urban Areas of diverse geographic locations, socio-economic characteristics and local ecosystems provided a rich and fertile ground for peer-to-peer learning and cross-fertilisation.

Intracity and intercity collaboration and co-learning is at the heart of HUB-IN. The opportunity to network, learn and work with other cities and stakeholders in the project increased the capacity of teams and intensified the transfer of knowledge, strengthening both the HUB-IN network and the results at a local level.



The Belfast HUB-IN project furthered the transformation of its Maritime Mile through innovation, celebrating Belfast's future and rich maritime past through creative inspiration, community participation and skills.

The Braşov HUB-IN project reclaimed its Historic Centre to create an authentic, multicultural, sustainable and inclusive place that promotes cultural exchange, innovation, learning, and collaboration.



The Genova HUB-IN project brings new life into the historic centre by rediscovering its identity, heritage and culture, and introducing new services for the community through creativity and entrepreneurship.

The Grand Angoulême HUB-IN project co-created a metropolitan walking trail which connects CCI stakeholders with the varied heritage of the territory, and promotes a shared culture and platform for learning and creation.



The Lisbon HUB-IN project "Colina do Castelo" creates a dynamic ecosystem where local creatives and traditional businesses collaborate to preserve the history while driving sustainable development.

The Nicosia HUB-IN project developed innovative, interactive and sustainable ways for visitors to explore and experience the Walled City and its cultural and creative heritage.



The Slovenska Bistrica HUB-IN project "the Crouzet" encourages emerging entrepreneurs, artists, and creatives to leverage its craft tradition and modern creativity to revive traditional industries and create a local regeneration and innovation ecosystem.

The Utrecht HUB-IN project established the community of creative entrepreneurs in the Werkspoorkwartier, enhancing opportunities to add jobs to the area, while helping preserve affordable workspaces, and supporting cultural facilities.



## 2.2. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDEBOOK

The purpose of this guidebook is to provide follower cities with insights into the Actions realized by the eight HUB-IN pilot cities (Belfast, Braşov, Genova, Grand Angoulême, Lisbon, Nicosia, Slovenska Bistrica, and Utrecht) to revitalize their Historic Urban Areas (HUA). It assists in the exchange of experiences and knowledge from the eight pilot cities' hubs, to identify common insights to aid replication in other contexts.

To support follower cities looking for inspiration and guidance in developing their hubs, this guide deliberately zooms-in-and-out of individual Action Plans and cities. The focus of this document is on tangible insights, processes, and recommendations at the tactical level of Action Planning and programme implementation, across the different cities. By doing so, this guidebook helps transfer the insights and knowledge from HUB-IN pilot cities to a wider network of follower cities.

Within the HUB-IN [Framework](#), this document relates to “collaborate and share” and “grow the network” elements of the framework (see Figure 2).

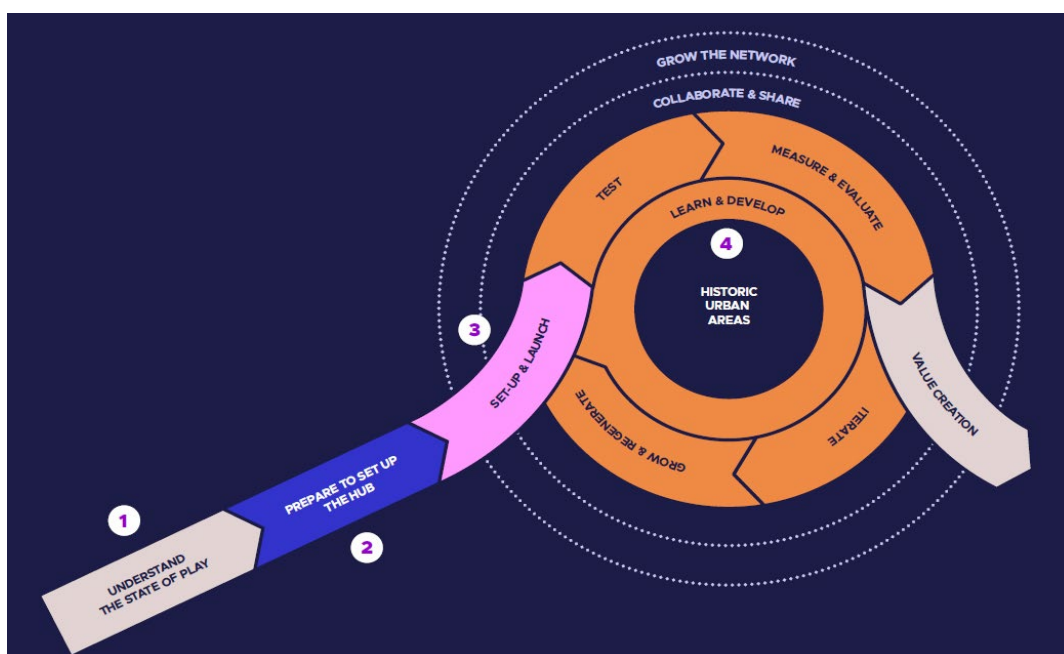


Figure 2 HUB-IN Framework

## 2.3. INTENDED AUDIENCE

This guidebook is intended to be used by Hub teams from follower cities looking to replicate one or more city Actions from the HUB-IN pilot cities. It may also be used by pilot cities looking to derive inspiration or replicate Actions from other pilot cities.

Since each city - and even each Hub within the same city - has its own context, this document focuses on providing practitioners insight into the tactical “on the ground” findings from the different types of Actions, as a means of informing what Actions follower cities may choose to develop, why they may choose them and how they may develop them, based on what the pilot cities have tested and delivered.

Organised thematically along the intended **Outcomes** identified in the Actions of the eight pilot cities' Hubs, this guidebook provides insight into how cities realized specific Actions, and how these Actions contributed to meeting the overall ambitions for their HUA, the stakeholders engaged, and lessons learnt. Oriented towards Hub teams in cities looking to create a Hub, it seeks to transfer knowledge – and inspiration – from pilot cities' individual Actions and Hubs, relating these to the broader ambition of long-term cultural change and urban entrepreneurship.

Importantly, this is not a detailed step-by-step on “how to create your Hub” – as a broad 4-stage process of creating a Hub is outlined in the [HUB-IN Framework](#) and the [Toolkit](#), and distilling this to a “magic formula” would be contradictory to the HUB-IN approach centred on co-creation and collaborative learning. Rather, this report supports the foundational elements of HUB-IN with insights into how the HUB-IN cities collaborated with a wide variety of organisations and communities to co-creatively transform their HUAs into a HUB-IN place in their specific context, deriving recommendations and linking to relevant resources to enable follower cities to replicate HUB-IN with their stakeholders, in their specific context.

## 2.4. HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

### 2.4.1. Relationship to other deliverables

This Cities Guidebook is one of three HUB-IN deliverables for follower cities - all of which respond to the initial research question set out in the diagram below and draw from the monitoring of the project’s lessons learned, results and conclusions, each focusing on different target audiences.

- **The Cities Guidebook (this document)** is oriented towards practitioners, providing insight into the tactical “on the ground” findings from the different types of Actions, as a means of informing what Actions follower cities may choose to develop, why they may choose them and how they may develop them, based on what the pilot cities have tested and delivered.
- [The City Storytelling](#), oriented towards a general audience, provides insights into the pilot cities regeneration Actions and experiences.
- [The Leadership guide](#) provides a high-level overview of the project’s findings and conclusions with key recommendations for European leaders at the local, national and international level.

In this way, the three documents work together as a ‘signpost’ to how Hubs of Innovation can help transform historic urban areas, and why and how follower cities may replicate the pilot cities regeneration Actions and experiences. This is depicted in Figure 3 below:

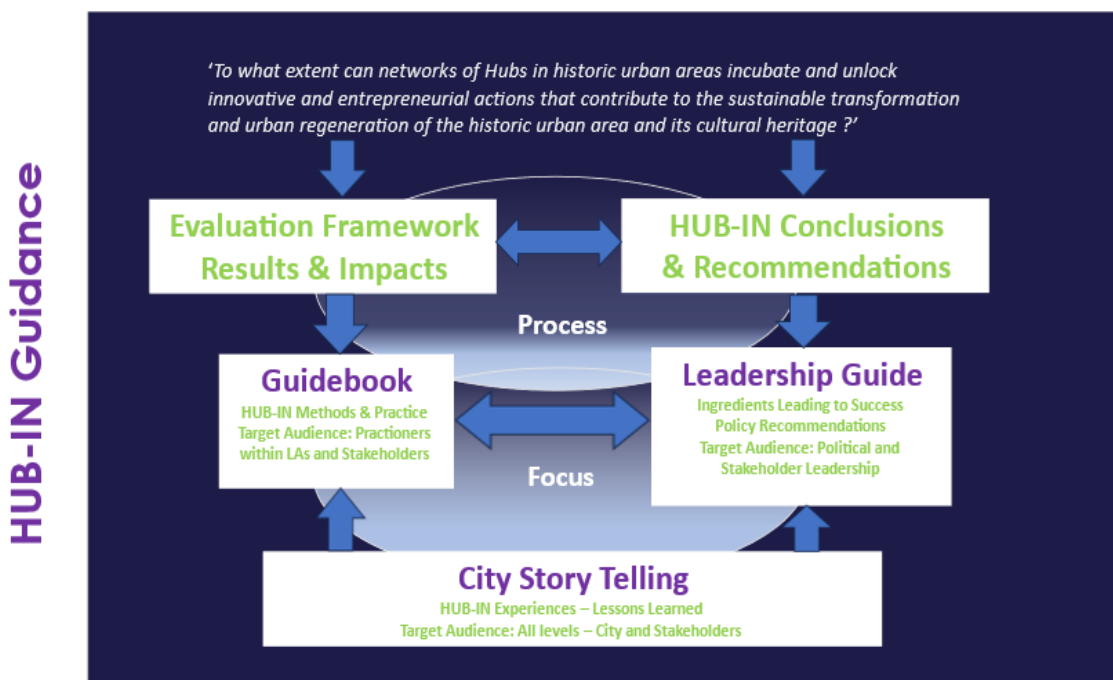


Figure 3 Relationship of this document to other deliverables

### 2.4.2. Methodology

The findings in this report are based upon:

- City Action Planning Process (D4.2)
- Sessions with cities and consortium experts at three consortium meetings in 2024
  - City “Top Tips and Tricks” session (Utrecht)
  - Cities panels (Grand Angoulême)
  - Policy session (Braşov)
- Cities implementation progress monitoring sessions (WP4)
- The pilot cities’ Evaluation Reports (D5.3)
- The Final Economic, Social and Environmental Appraisal (D5.4)

The report uses the above datapoints (and most importantly the insights from the cities sessions and the rich empirical evidence in the monitoring reports), to zoom-in on selected individual Actions across cities, looking for starting points, engagements, challenges and opportunities and key turning points that shaped implementation on the ground. This does not always mean choosing the most successful Actions, rather it recognises that some of the best insights come from Actions that faced challenges and had to be redefined.

At the end of each section, the report zooms out, taking a view across the various Actions and Hubs to provide tactical recommendations for follower cities. The latter are linked to Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Ingredients (see Section 4.1), to help follower cities understand how these recommendations are not only for discrete Actions at a particular moment in time, but how they can help develop and enhance their entrepreneurial ecosystems over time.

### 2.4.3. Document structure

Following this introductory chapter, **Chapter 3 provides tactical insights from the range of Actions that were delivered by HUB-IN pilot cities.** Drawing upon D4.2 Cities’ Action Plans ‘matrix’ (Figure 4, p.15-16), the chapter is organised thematically along the eight **intended outcomes** that the HUB-IN pilot cities’ Actions most relate to. Insights specific to case-studies are supplemented by insights across Actions from all eight cities.

**Chapter 4 provides an overview of key frameworks** that shaped the methodology and implementation approach, including general recommendations and insights where relevant, i.e., insights apply to all Actions, across all outcomes relating to the HUB-IN project. This includes the **Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Ingredients, EU Innovation Scorecard, Financial Sustainability, HUB-IN approach to ethics, and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.**

**Chapter 5 is for reference only, providing an overview of the many HUB-IN resources<sup>1</sup>** and provides a Glossary of terms.

References to relevant HUB-IN resources are provided throughout the document. These can be found on the HUB-IN Library at [www.hubin-project.eu/library](http://www.hubin-project.eu/library). A full list of resources referenced in this report is available in Section 5.1.

Practitioners are encouraged to browse through the outcome descriptions, derive inspiration from Actions and insights within the outcome sections most of interest, and refer to the other documents to gain a deeper understanding of how the desired outcomes may be achieved. In addition, practitioners should consider what else they may do to tailor Action(s) to their context.

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<sup>1</sup> Resources developed in the HUB-IN project are numerous (from the “Atlas” of European regeneration case studies, to the roadmaps for the eight pilot cities, to guides on innovative business model and finance models, HUB-IN Academy, and more) and the overview provides brief descriptions and links to the most relevant resources for follower cities, rather than trying to summarise them all.

## 2.5. LIMITATIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is not comprehensive of all the Actions shaped by cities, nor all the projects and activities implemented as part of each Action. Rather it provides an indication of what types of Actions cities can look to implement under each outcome, what steps may be taken to realize them, and what tools may be used along the way. Importantly, this document provides insights into how Actions may be realized in a way that helps cities replicate a HUB-IN place that integrates innovation and entrepreneurship with creativity and heritage.

The Actions developed and implemented by HUB-IN pilot cities were part of wider journey. Each Action sat alongside a suite of Actions under each city's **Action Plan** which, as described above, was informed by detailed understanding of their **Current Landscapes** and **stakeholder mapping**, developing tailored **Roadmaps**, **Monitoring Methodologies**, and exploration of possible **Business, Finance and Governance models**. Follower cities should look to the [HUB-IN Library](#) for the resources available to them to create their Hubs. This document references resources available online as and where relevant.

Actions differ in the context in which they are applied, and it is important that cities are mindful of their own context. As the sections within this Guidebook will show, engagement and co-creation with local stakeholders are key to ensure successful implementation.

HUB-IN pilot cities benefited from their **peer-to-peer network and learning**, and expert input. Follower cities are advised to learn from other cities in the process of developing Hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship to revitalize historic urban areas. The **HUB-IN Alliance** [\[link\]](#) of cities offers a valuable resource to aid peer learning, and the **HUB-IN Academy** [\[link\]](#) provides access to learning resources.

As identified in the final Monitoring and Evaluation reports, many benefits arising from the Actions are long term and the full impact of Actions may not be measurable until after the HUB-IN project ends in February 2025 (for example, Actions targeting the reversal of long-term trends such as gentrification and desertification). See D5.4 "Final Economic, Social and Environmental Appraisal" for detailed findings from the pilot cities on their emerging impacts and progress towards their longer-term ambitions.

# 3. INSIGHTS FROM HUB-IN PILOT CITIES

## 3.1. TACTICAL INSIGHTS BASED ON INTENDED OUTCOMES

### 3.1.1. *Pilot cities' action plans, implementation insights, and entrepreneurial ecosystems*

This chapter provides tactical insights from the range of Actions that were delivered by HUB-IN pilot cities. It draws upon the Cities' Action Plans 'matrix' (Figure 4), which maps Actions against the eight **intended outcomes** that the HUB-IN pilot cities' Hubs most relate to.

Each of the eight "outcome" sections provides a brief overview of Actions that relate to that Outcome, with two "zoomed-in" case studies from relevant Actions that provide selected insights on challenges, opportunities and turning points in the Action implementation. These tactical "on the ground" insights are presented as lessons learnt for follower cities<sup>2</sup>. At the end of each section, a "zoomed-out" view across the various Actions and Hubs provides tactical recommendations for follower cities. The latter are categorised by the "entrepreneurial ecosystem" elements that constitute the "ingredients of a HUB-IN place" (see below), as per the project's [Framework](#), as a means to provide follower cities with clarity on how these recommendations relate not only for discrete Actions at a particular moment in time, but how they can also help develop and enhance their entrepreneurial ecosystems over time, and may therefore link to their own city strategies and programmes. Each section also contains relevant HUB-IN resources available to follower cities to shape their Hub.

### 3.1.2. *On entrepreneurial ecosystems...*

Enhancing entrepreneurial ecosystems is central to creating a HUB-IN place. The entrepreneurial ecosystem of the HUB-IN place sets out eight ingredients and four institutional/cultural arrangements that, combined, can foster cultural heritage-led regeneration, encourage regenerative development and support innovative and entrepreneurial behaviour.

The eight ingredients refer to the presence and strength of: **heritage** (tangible assets and intangible values); **physical and digital infrastructure** (that facilitates interaction between stakeholders); **marketplace/demand** (a clear need for entrepreneurial activity); **support organisations** (such as research institutes or incubators etc); **human resources** (the experience, skills and talents within the area); **knowledge** (accessible resources that partners can build upon); **finance** (access to innovative financial models, finance and funding); **leadership** (individuals or groups to guide and direct collective action);

The four institutional/cultural arrangements refer to: **urban culture** (the sense of place, meanings and ambience in the HUA); **entrepreneurial culture** (general attitudes towards risk and creative processes); **networks** (formal / informal connections); and **formal institutions** (the presence and priorities of rules and regulations).

More details on the entrepreneurial ecosystem elements that compose a HUB-IN place can be found in Section 4.2

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<sup>2</sup> Taking a lessons learnt approach complements the Storytelling Booklets (documenting cities stories and experiences) and the Final Appraisal (which reports on impacts)

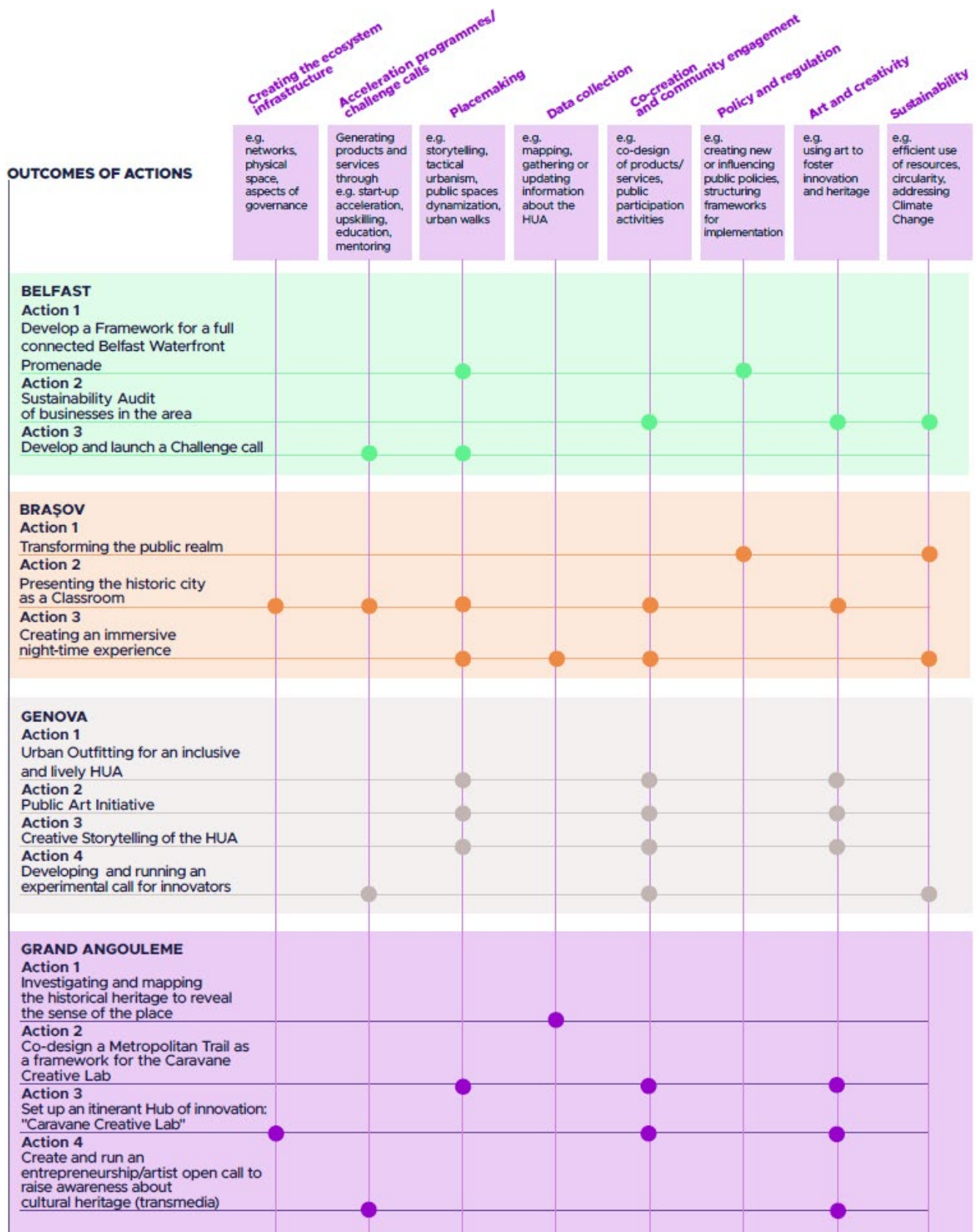


Figure 4: The Action 'matrix' showing key outcomes for each of the cities Actions.



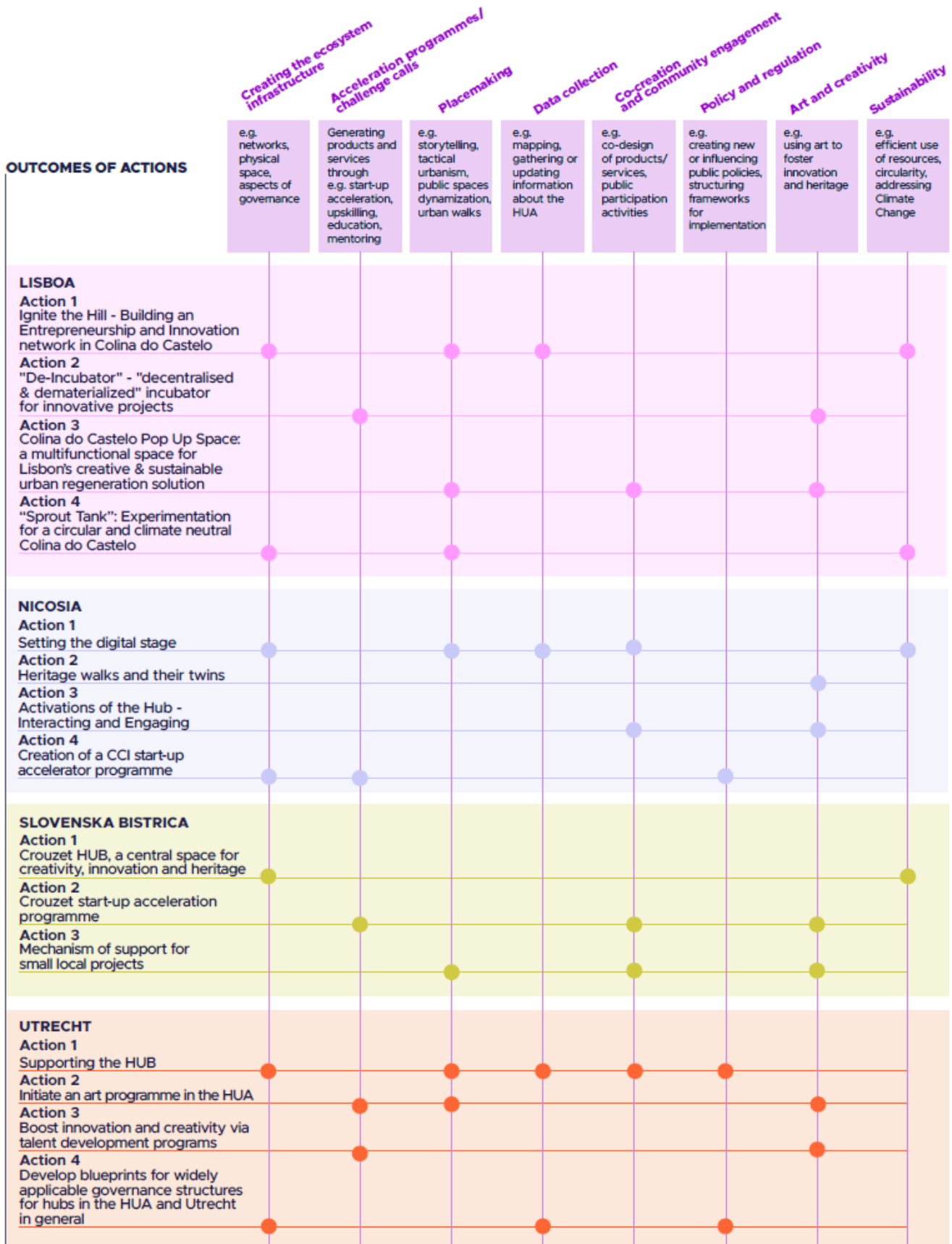


Figure 4 (Continued from previous page)

## 3.2. OUTCOME: CREATING THE ECOSYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Historic Urban Areas, as developed by HUB-IN pilot cities, can be physical or virtual and can take many forms in terms of the challenges they address and the Actions they prioritize.

In this context, Creating the ecosystem infrastructure relates to developing the networks, physical and digital space(s), and aspects of governance of the hub. It forms the basis of **developing the entrepreneurial ecosystem** that will revitalize and create the conditions for the success of the Hub.

By encouraging collaboration and synergy between different stakeholders, a well-developed ecosystem infrastructure enables cities to develop innovative solutions to complex urban challenges that no single entity could achieve alone, in turn fostering economic growth and sustainability.

In line with their local HUB-IN objectives, each of the pilot cities took different routes to developing (and enhancing) their ecosystem infrastructure, with an emphasis on bringing together stakeholders and creating the entrepreneurial networks and governance, supported by innovative physical infrastructure (through reuse of heritage assets and spaces in the HUA) and digital infrastructure (creation of web apps and platforms).

The pilot cities' Actions that align to this outcome include:

- **Braşov** City as a Classroom: engaged students to prototype and build innovative urban furniture for the HUA
- **Grand Angoulême** Caravane Creative Lab: set up an itinerant Hub of innovation for local creatives
- **Lisboa** "Ignite the Hill": built a digital database and entrepreneurship and innovation Network in Colina do Castelo
- **Lisboa** Sprout Tank: promoted creative and heritage-based solutions for climate neutrality and circular economy
- **Nicosia** Setting the Digital Stage: developed a platform to raise engage visitors with the HUA's history and heritage
- **Slovenska Bistrica** Crouzet Hub: created a co-working space for local creative start-ups and entrepreneurs
- **Utrecht** Professionalising BKC: enhanced the capacity of the volunteer-run organisation to develop it into a Hub

### 3.2.1. Case study: Grand Angoulême “Caravane Creative Lab”

Grand Angoulême’s Action 2 “Caravane Creative Lab” brought together a network of local actors to collectively build and share a culture of the territory through Caravanes (scouting walks).

*Through participation in the scouting of several trails in the region, this Action consolidated an informal network of partners from the fields of image, art, culture and education, originally part of separate networks, creating an itinerant Hub that stimulates new partnerships and collaborations.*

#### Tactical recommendations:

- **Embrace the UNESCO Historic Landscapes approach:** Working across 38 communes (authorities), the Hub team had to define their Historic Urban Area to provide benefits across the region. The Historic Urban Landscape approach provides a holistic view to help address the policy, governance and management concerns involving a variety of stakeholders, including local, national, regional, international, public and private actors in the urban development process.
- **Provide space for building ideas:** In the initial stages, allow a safe exploratory space for generating ideas where all stakeholders can express their views in an open manner and different views are respected (even if those views are against the project). This allows new ideas to emerge before the Hub team selects which ones to take forward, e.g., what form should the network take, what do the stakeholders want to join up on?
- **Allow time to build the network:** A personal approach is essential to building relationships and mobilising at scale; the Hub team had to meet the collectives and associations one by one to build a relationship of trust (with one or two key persons in the Hub team) and activate a word of mouth. Word of mouth required time and patience but generated a “snowball effect”, **developing lateral (wide) networks that rely on the collective ambitions of stakeholders**. It was also the only way to reach the wider artist network, which could not be reached by emailing and social media as it is much more dispersed and volatile, and artists generally have a very full work schedule.
- **Aim to create something useful that responds to local needs:** The Hub team took time to investigate the needs and collective ambitions expressed by stakeholders and communities. Not wanting to limit the project to delivering measurable modest outcomes (such as size of network), they collaborated with stakeholders to understand what could be realized that can meet the overall ambitions of the project, even if it seemed difficult to measure (such as potential collaborations). **Ask the big questions – how do we want to live tomorrow? How does this Action help achieve that?**
- **Branding and communication should follow objectives:** Branding and communication should be very flexible to avoid alienating stakeholders in the early stages. After investigating their needs, the hub team **co-created the objectives of the Hub** with stakeholders, asking for example, “what does HUB-IN mean in our context?”. They then co-created the branding and communication to suit the agreed objectives.
- **Allow the network to evolve:** The mix of participants and ownership evolved during the process: initially, the associations were very present (curious and aware that a new space was opening up, and that they needed to be present), then the associations started to step back and the artists took the lead, once relationships and trust had been established. Trust has to be earned over time.

- **Trust the strength of the network:** The Caravane was initially linked to the Metropolitan Open Calls (Action 3) – but once established, the network has attracted interest even without an upcoming announcement of the Open Call. Strengthened networks and relationships have also led to **unexpected connections and new ventures**, for example, the art school now includes the trail in its summer programme; and in 2024, ENJMIN (video game school) and ÉESI (fine arts school) organised a joint workshop on the Metropolitan Trail.
- **Establish different levels of governance:** Grand Angoulême’s governance structure relies on maintaining the network created through the HUB and maintaining a mix of stakeholders working across different scales, from organisations and local communities, to city and region. **The technical committee** brings together diverse partners including image schools, hiking federation, heritage departments, etc. The Culture Tourism working group brings together the elected representatives of the 38 communes. There are **other informal arms-length networks** that are linked to varying degrees to the Municipality. Finally, a community has grown around the monthly Caravane walks, with a few regulars who act as **ambassadors**.

**Key references:**

D4.2 – [Grand Angoulême Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

Webpage: [Le sentier métropolitain de GrandAngoulême](#)



*Mapping the trail on a Caravane walk*

### 3.2.2. Case study: Utrecht Professionalising BKC

Utrecht's Action 1 "Professionalising BKC" enabled a volunteer-run local collective – Bedrijvenkring Cartesiusweg (BKC) – to enhance its capacity to attract creative entrepreneurs and, in collaboration with the municipality, turn it into a sustainable Hub that can bring jobs to the area and preserve affordable workspaces.

The initial investment and support from the Municipality has enabled the BKC in engaging with the local creative entrepreneurial community to shape a network carrying out area-wide projects.

#### Tactical recommendations:

- **Get local buy-in:** In 2023, the Municipality contacted a number of important owners with the request to join together in a collective and contribute ideas about the development of the area.
- **Connect to wishes of local stakeholders to create a mutual vision for the area:** It is important to identify stakeholders early and develop a mutual vision in order to make sure that everybody has a shared understanding of the direction, and is willing to contribute their part to it. **For follower cities, it is important to map all stakeholders beforehand**, to make sure that no stakeholders are left out which might cause feelings of rejection. In that regard, public tendering for parties interested in executing Actions that are part of the Action Plans might be a useful solution as well.
- **Spend time on a good gameplan:** invest upfront in clear boundaries, expectations, division of responsibilities, planning, different steps, right budget, to avoid unpleasant surprises in the implementation process.
- **Encourage a diversity of creative entrepreneurs:** It is important not only to retain creative makers and the creative profile in the area but also to create consensus that there are different types of creatives, all of whom have different values, and that some are not financially strong but still bring a lot of value, so we want to give all these types a place in the area.
- **Establish working groups to mobilise interventions:** The BKC facilitates a working group for the Open Call and Talent Development programmes which is key to its success and helps improve BKC's visibility to entrepreneurs.
- **Generate public awareness:** The Werkspoorkwartier website has been revised. Entrepreneurs can have themselves placed on the area map, public places are explained and important updates and developments are mentioned.
- **Get commitment to funding:** The collective has made a commitment to make a €50,000 financial contribution annually for the next three years to attract a project leader who can realize the themes (to be determined jointly) in the implementation agenda for the coming years.
- **Be careful with overburdening your stakeholders:** Stakeholders have often been active in the area for years. Asking them to contribute can lead to stakeholder fatigue, because they might have already told their story multiple times. It is therefore very important to communicate the value added by this project, stakeholders need to know "What is in it for me/ my community?".

- **Work on long term financial sustainability:** At the same time, if you expect lasting effects after the project it is also important to make sure proper financing is in place after the project (for example by focusing time on finding additional financial resources) to avoid having to ask stakeholders to put in future efforts without adequate reimbursement.

**Key references:**

D3.6 [Business Finance and Governance Models](#)

D4.2 – [Utrecht Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

[HUB-IN Match & Ignite](#)



*Co-creation session with BKC Hub entrepreneurs*

### 3.2.3. *Transferability and knowledge exchange*

The following insights can be gathered from Actions implemented under this outcome, and recommendations made. As noted in Section 3.1, these have been categorised by the “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements that constitute the “ingredients of a HUB-IN place”, as per the project’s Framework. In reality, some recommendations will align to more than one ingredient (for example, a recommendation about techniques to engage hard-to-reach communities may relate also to the ingredients Networks, Knowledge, and Urban Culture); for simplicity, they are listed here under one main ingredient, with recognition that some may also align to others. It can be a useful Hub exercise to consider each under the discussion question: how would this apply to *our* Hub? What local opportunities (or barriers) in other “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements could this benefit?

#### *Networks*

- **Understand who needs to be involved:** Stakeholder mapping can provide insight into the different stakeholders who may be important to realizing the ambitions of the Hub, as well as those who are impacted by it. Hub teams mapped stakeholders across the Quadruple Helix (i.e., Public sector, Private, Academia and Voluntary/Community sector) to understand who they need to engage with. The **Stakeholder Map** should be an evolving document that considers the needs and ambitions of other stakeholders as they enter the process. Consider creating more than one stakeholder map for different HUB-IN Actions, or themes across Actions.
- **Find the best way to reach stakeholders:** Hub teams engaged stakeholders through direct invitations, surveys, workshops and forums, as well as in-person events. Using surveys and forums allows communities and organisations to voice concerns, share ideas, and be part of the conversation from the start. Conversely, **word of mouth created a “snowball effect” that enabled Hub teams to reach hard-to-reach groups, such as local artists**, though relying on word of mouth required patience and sustained focus.
- **Foster inclusivity and diversity:** Take steps to make the network diverse and inclusive, with representation from all relevant sectors of the community. In particular, Hub teams should review whether any key stakeholders have been left out – particularly marginalized communities, youth and disabled groups – and develop more targeted ways of engaging them.

#### *Heritage*

- **Embrace the UNESCO Historic Landscapes approach:** The Historic Urban Landscape approach provides a holistic view to help address the policy, governance and management concerns involving a variety of stakeholders, including local, national, regional, international, public and private actors in the urban development process. This was an important resource for all cities, including those working with discrete heritage assets (Slovenska Bistrica, and Utrecht in the early stages) and those working across neighbourhoods (Genova, Nicosia, Braşov, Lisbon), as well as those working with post-industrial areas (Belfast, Utrecht, Grand Angoulême). For Grand Angoulême, working across 38 communes (authorities), the Historic Landscapes approach was also provided an important means to define their Historic Urban Area to provide benefits to the across the region.

## Leadership

- **Create collaborative spaces:** Collaborative spaces (such as working groups and advisory boards) enable stakeholders to contribute to developing the Hub in a focused manner. Hub teams should prioritise who needs to be involved, in what capacity, at what point of the Hub's journey (planning, preparing, setting up or continued development of the Hub), as well as what time and resources they are willing to commit. Workshops, working groups, and partnerships provide spaces for stakeholders to actively shape the Hub, while advisory councils and steering committees can help guide decisions to align with more strategic policies and ambitions.
- **Establish clear roles and responsibilities,** so that the remit of each collaborative space is defined, and each stakeholder understands their role and how their input will be used. This also helps establish the basis for defining the Hub governance in later stages.
- **Have a clear 'stakeholder outreach and engagement plan' to help build trust:** Regular updates and communication, transparency in decision-making, and **following through on commitments** to stakeholders helps build trust. Create channels of communication to provide updates (regular newsletter, website updates, bulletin boards or in-person meetings) to keep stakeholders informed and connected.
- **Foster inclusivity and diversity:** Take steps to make the network diverse and inclusive, with representation from all relevant sectors of the community. In particular, Hub teams should review whether any key stakeholders have been left out – particularly marginalized communities, youth and disabled groups – and develop more targeted ways of engaging them.
- **Co-create a strategic and actionable way forward:** Co-create the objectives of your hub with stakeholders, with clearly defined goals and mission-oriented activities with the major steps for getting there in a **Roadmap**, then detail specific Actions in an **Action Plan**, with a detailed plan for Hub implementation and governance.
- **Reserve in your project planning enough time for governmental procedures:** Governmental procedures are always longer than expected and can contain 'unknown unknowns', therefore additional time needs to be reserved in schedules. For example, for public art installations, it could mean scoping out what permits are required while innovators are developing their concepts and applying for them as soon as prototype designs are ready. Alternatively, it may be possible to engage in dialogue with relevant teams (such as public space team) while designs are being developed.

## Entrepreneurial culture

- **Develop and test ideas early:** Early trials keep stakeholders engaged, while helping Hub teams learn lessons and gain insights into what the network requires to develop and sustain itself. Early testing by HUB-IN cities included development of prototypes (Braşov), co-design and launch of a first working space (Slovenska Bistrica) and trail (Grand Angoulême), and initial data mapping on a digital tool (Lisbon); each of these allowed Hub teams to develop their ideas for the next stages. For some Hub teams, such as Belfast, Genova and Utrecht, early implementation also allowed them to realize additional Actions that complemented earlier ones.



- **Encourage network engagement and feedback:** Keep stakeholders involved by continuing to shape ideas for the future with them. As the network expands, Hub teams should provide space for the network to evolve and redefine itself.

#### *Physical (and digital) infrastructure*

- **Harness technology:** Utilize data, dashboards, apps and collaborative platforms to track progress can streamline communication and decision-making processes. Several HUB-IN teams mapped data on the interactive **HUB-IN Geotool**, while others used existing platforms that already had a wide reach to their stakeholders.

#### *Finance*

- **In future projects**, it is worthwhile to make the commitment in funding conditional on other important stakeholders stepping in as well, i.e. **Match and Ignite**. This way you have leverage that can be used to persuade other stakeholders in the programme.

#### *Urban culture*

- **Find innovative ways of convening stakeholders around heritage and culture early on:** Mapping tangible and intangible heritage, collecting stories, walks, treasure hunts and art and creativity can provide innovative means of convening stakeholders around heritage and culture, particularly where physical heritage assets are not available to use or accessible to stakeholders.

Further detailed insights are available in the pilot cities' Evaluation Report (D5.3).

#### **Key HUB-IN resources:**

[Stakeholder Mapping - HUB-IN](#)

[Outreach & engagement plan - HUB-IN](#)

A fuller list of HUB-IN resources is provided in Section 5.1.

### 3.3. OUTCOME: ACCELERATION PROGRAMMES & CHALLENGE CALLS

Acceleration programmes and challenge calls allow cities to generate products and services through start-up acceleration, upskilling, education, mentoring.

Acceleration programmes are designed to support and speed up the growth of early-stage companies and creative entrepreneurs. These programs offer a range of benefits to both the entrepreneurs and the cities themselves. Challenge calls are initiatives designed to attract innovative ideas from local innovators, artists and entrepreneurs, to respond to a local issue or challenge defined by the city.

Actions under this outcome included: incubation and acceleration programs, supporting tools, experimentation processes and the use of physical spaces with heritage value, as well as testing services and programs that can be replicated and improved in the mid-term. Drawing upon broad skills and approaches, these Actions allowed HUB-IN pilot cities to experiment with new ideas and test new approaches to regenerate their heritage areas while solving local issues, improving collaboration and providing opportunities to grow skills and talent through coaching in key technical, entrepreneurial, personal and career skills.

The pilot cities' Actions that align to this outcome include:

- **Belfast** Maritime Mile Challenge Fund: developed prototypes to support the preservation and enhancement of the HUA
- **Braşov** City as a Classroom: engaged students to prototype and build innovative urban furniture for the HUA
- **Genova** Experimental Call: supported three projects promoting collaboration and innovation in the historic centre
- **Grand Angoulême** Metropolitan Open Call: generated 30 new artistic viewpoints on the HUA and its heritage
- **Lisboa** De-incubator: supported new businesses to develop innovative, creative and sustainable solutions to challenges
- **Nicosia** Accelerator: promotes innovation in the cultural and creative industries to revitalize the city's HUA
- **Slovenska Bistrica** Crouzator: supported local creatives to develop products and services celebrating cultural heritage
- **Utrecht** Art Programme: supported local talents in developing artistic products for the Werkspoorkwartier
- **Utrecht** Talent Development: supported three talent developments for local creative entrepreneurs in three hubs

### 3.3.1. Case study: Genova Experimental call

Genova's Action 4 "Experimental Call" supported three innovative projects in the HUA, aligned to the three main pillars of the call: cultural heritage, social conviviality, and development of economic activities.

*The three awarded projects, collectively helped promote socially inclusive artistic and cultural entertainment in the HUA, enhancing the commercial offer of the area, and showcasing artisans and small businesses as well as providing training to help build their skills.*

Tactical recommendations:

- **Work in synergy with local and regional policy and stakeholders:** The Genova HUB-IN project works in close synergy with the Caruggi Urban Regeneration Plan, as well as with the UNESCO Management Plan and the territorial associations (e.g. Cooperation Pacts).
- **Emphasize complementarity and the human aspect of physical regeneration:** Importantly, Genova's Actions were designed to be the missing cultural counterpart to the broader physical regeneration programmes (Caruggi), i.e., they focused on how the success of the Hub could maximise the human impact of the longer-term regeneration programmes. Here, HUB-IN's ethical approach to engaging communities and stakeholders as partners is an important differentiator. Through this process, further synergies have also been activated with trade associations (such as Confcommercio and Confesercenti) as well as with the local Shopkeepers associations (as part of the Experimental Call). A long-term collaboration with the Academy of Fine Arts was started as a positive result of the HUB-IN Actions for future artistic and cultural joint initiatives.
- **Socially minded proposals can help connect with the territory and innovation:** The call for innovations received 19 proposals, most of which came from local associations and cooperatives (rather than startups). This made the projects well connected with the local territory, with many focusing on social inclusion. The three awarded projects were not only innovative, but they also covered the three main pillars of the call (cultural heritage, social inclusion and business innovation). These were:
  - **"Da Bancchi a Prè" created a programme of entertainment,** experimentation and unconventional shopping experience to restore confidence and vitality to local residents and traders who have long experienced a sense of abandonment, inviting other businesses to the area to create a hybridized shopping experience.
  - **"Fair to share" created a temporary shop in the HUA** for artisans and small businesses, and also to set up a Training Academy to build their skills; holding its open days in an otherwise inaccessible private historic building, it has enabled citizens to rediscover and connect with their area's heritage.
  - The **"Passaggi di luce"** project, managed by a social cooperative, used arts (lights, music, images and words) to revitalise the HUA's famous Via Del Campo with the goal of promoting social inclusion and relationships with and between local community, increase footfall and contribute to feelings of safety and liveability.

*(Detail on the projects can be found in the Genova's City Monitoring Report pp 27-30)*
- **Encourage partners to proactively develop synergies to amplify their presence:** For the street party events, the different implementers (Cooperativa Il Cesto-Forevergreen, Academy of Fine Arts, Blu) cooperated to organise a synergistic event to maximise the impact of all the separate Actions taking place in the same weekend. This created more visibility than the different events at different times. Encourage partners to think of ways to proactively develop synergies, such as through aligning their own event schedules, partners, or even new collaborations.

- **'Urban acupuncture' can help involve citizens and businesses who feel left out:** Urban acupuncture refers to organising small and spread-out events where implementers involved citizens and shopkeepers by building with them their Actions on the ground. Notwithstanding the extensive co-creation process that included association of citizens, associations of shopkeepers, trade associations, chamber of commerce and others, some inhabitants and shopkeepers felt less involved than they desired in the co-creation and implementation process. This was mitigated by the use urban acupuncture methods by some implementers, which allowed citizens to participate and feel engaged in the Hub.
- **Ensure sufficient time for authorisations:** Approvals can take a long time, especially when working in a heritage site protected by UNESCO, so make sure to start well in advance to get all the necessary authorisations from the local Cultural Heritage Office; also, be prepared to change and adapt plans to fit authorities' prescriptions multiple times.
- **YET... embrace barriers as a "call-to-innovation":** In cases in which authorisations is denied, alternative solutions will have to be found (Plan B). For The "Passaggi di Luce" project, it became necessary to change the original plan because the authorizations from the Local Authority for Cultural Heritage didn't arrive on time. The Genova Hub team spoke to the local shopkeepers who offered to host the projections from inside their shop windows. This workaround, of installing movable projectors, has proven to be a more flexible solution for a possible legacy and replication of the project. The insight from this is that there is a need for also **'being entrepreneurial as a Hub' which means taking unexpected barriers as an opportunity to find better solutions.**
- **Digital presence is not enough if potential visitors cannot find it:** Physical signage can be especially important for older areas with an organic urban form, where simple directions to the events on the main streets can help enhance wayfinding, increase footfall and provide a better visitor experience. Cities can leverage goodwill with local shopkeepers to showcase posters in the shops and point their customers to the events – they will be eager to help if the events bring footfall to their business area.
- **Celebrate tangible and intangible successes:** One of the implemented projects has set up as a start-up (Fair to Share). They are planning to hire two people and capitalise the network built during the project to open several pop-up stores each time in a different place, some in the HUA. The Action has also demonstrated that **cultural and creative businesses can act as drivers for other programmes** of the Municipality, both those aiming for overall regeneration of the historic centre (e.g., the Caruggi Plan), and the various initiatives aiming to promote the establishment of start-ups and innovative businesses in the historic centre.

**Key references:**

[Genova's HUB-IN: innovating with tradition - HUB-IN](#)

D4.2 – [Genova's Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

### 3.3.2. Case study: Slovenska Bistrica's Crouzator

Slovenska Bistrica's Action 2 "Crouzator" challenge call enhanced the skills and visibility of local artists and creative entrepreneurs from various sectors, and contributed to the activation and development of the local area.

*The program has supported the four entrepreneurs to launch new ideas, develop skills, and produce prototypes of products or services that show, preserve, strengthen, develop and valorize local heritage in innovative ways.*

#### Tactical recommendations:

- **Bring in expertise through partnerships:** recognising that the Municipality did not have the expertise in-house, the Hub team cooperated with the Centre for Creativity/MAO to design an open call for participation in the 'Crouzator' accelerator programme. Having a contracted external coordinator for the Accelerator programme proved to be an invaluable, as they were an experienced partner throughout the process, and brought a pool of mentors to guide the successful participants.
- **Extend the call to surrounding areas:** Being a small town with limited entrepreneurs, the call was open to artists and creative entrepreneurs from Slovenska Bistrica and its surrounding Municipalities. A total of 12 applications were received, a large number for the small region. Participants in the program received a financial incentive of €3,000, access to four thematic modules, and 10 individual mentoring hours with selected mentors from the Center for Creativity.
- **Embed valorization of tangible and intangible heritage:** The four successful applicants – two artisans and two architects – implemented their projects from December 2023 to April 2024. Their projects comprised: jewellery made from recycled aluminium based on traditional metalworking techniques; clay tea-light holders replicas of the facades of Slovenska Bistrica's most significant historical houses; artworks celebrating local cultural identity and heritage linked to built environment; and the development of a 3D model for a prefabricated scrap aluminium pavilion to raise public awareness of shared urban space in smaller towns.
- **Design for sustainability and circularity:** One innovator had an element of sustainability in their project, through recycled aluminium jewellery workshops, based on traditional metalworking techniques and with materials coming from a local aluminium factory (2kg/year). Though small, this creates awareness and dialogue for others to follow.
- **Organise a demo day to create visibility and impact:** A Demo Day was held at the conclusion of the Accelerator with the entrepreneurs exhibiting their innovated products and services, with one innovator running jewellery making workshops. Following the demo day, two entrepreneurs have their creations displayed in local shops, and another has secured a one-year contract for their services at Centrum ROG in Ljubljana.
- **Invest time in awareness raising and inspiration for the community:** judging from the number of proposals that didn't make it through the selection criteria for the first Accelerator and Crouzet Hub events programme call, it is important to invest time and effort into familiarising the stakeholders and the public of the novel initiatives and their particularities through more intensive processes of awareness raising, capacity building and inspiration.

- **Programme co-designing sessions:** the turning point for the Accelerator was the meeting and programme co-designing sessions with Centre for Creativity, when it finally started to feel that a local Accelerator that centred on creativity as well as heritage promotion, development and(re)valorisation had started to take shape.
- **Link with other Actions to establish the foundations for the future Hub:** The innovative products and services developed by participants in Crouzator 1.0 demonstrate increased levels of innovation in the Hub. With a few but very successful examples from the Crouzet 1.0, the good practice base is now established to inspire the next generation. Similarly, the proposals generated as part of the Pestro Mestro (small local projects) call are providing a good base of local examples for the next stage of Hub's activities.

**Key references:**

[Slovenska Bistrica's HUB-IN: Crouzator 2.0 call - HUB-IN](#)

D4.2 – [Slovenska Bistrica Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

Open call webpage: <https://czk.si/priloznosti/pospesevalnik-crouzator/>



Demo day at the Crouzet Hub (above) and objects produced by creatives (below)



### 3.3.3. *Transferability and knowledge exchange*

The following insights can be gathered from Actions implemented under this outcome, and recommendations made. As noted in Section 3.1, these have been categorised by the “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements that constitute the “ingredients of a HUB-IN place”, as per the project’s [Framework](#). In reality, some recommendations will align to more than one ingredient (for example, a recommendation about techniques to engage hard-to-reach communities may relate also to the ingredients Networks, Knowledge, and Urban Culture); for simplicity, they are listed here under one main ingredient, with recognition that some may also align to others. It can be a useful Hub exercise to consider each under the discussion question: how would this apply to *our* Hub? What local opportunities (or barriers) in other “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements could this benefit?

#### *Support organisations*

- **Establish strong synergies with other ongoing initiatives, policies and programmes in the area:** Alignment is crucial to ensure the successful delivery of HUB-IN and maximise the impact of its Actions. The Genova HUB-IN project worked in close synergy with the Caruggi Urban Regeneration Plan, focusing on how the success of the Hub could maximise the human impact of the longer-term regeneration programmes. Belfast Water Promenade Framework aligned with the ambitions of multiple stakeholder plans and strategies, focusing on adding value by aligning efforts to achieve a joined up waterfront. Utrecht aligned with Municipal ambition for affordable workspace and new jobs in the Werkspoorkwartier, focusing on strengthening the operational capability of local creative organisations. This also implies that it is important to **communicate the value added by the success of the local Hub in achieving the aims of the initiatives.**

#### *Urban culture*

- **Embrace barriers as a “call-to-innovation” and moments to engage local stakeholders to find solutions:** Governmental procedures can present challenges, particularly where authorisations and permits are required to execute an Action, or where an empty heritage space has to be used. Hub teams had to allow extra time, and when needed **‘being entrepreneurial as a Hub’** to find alternative ways to implement the Actions.
- (on the previous point) **Have dedicated time and resources to establish synergies and develop goodwill with local groups** (trade associations, artists, communities) – this is very important as local partners who are engaged will also be keen to help find solutions. Notably, early co-creative sessions with different stakeholders (aimed at gathering diverse views for the project) also helped promote good working relationships and partnerships that are critical to the success of the Hub.
- **Recognise the power of learning and continual improvements:** The first time realising an acceleration call required a lot of time understanding how to solve problems and overcome constraints (such as procedural constraints). Many Hub teams said that the second iteration is likely to be more powerful than the first. Monitoring methods are useful for this, building evidence, reviewing lessons, keeping an eye on what worked well and what could be improved.

#### *Entrepreneurial culture*

- **Target entrepreneurs who are willing to calibrate, as well as grow, their skills:** In applying to an accelerator programme, entrepreneurs are likely to be competing against unknown others for a place, which can cause them to be overly optimistic about their skills and

expertise on the pre-surveys (this was the case across several accelerators in pilot cities) . Others may (erroneously) believe that they have more skills and knowledge than they actually do. This presents a challenge for accelerator programmes in having to decide between the seemingly 'best' candidates (i.e., those who have ranked themselves highest), and the candidates with identified areas of improvement who will really benefit from the programme. To overcome this, follower cities may design accelerator programmes to have specific questions inviting candidates to "test blindspots" in their skills and knowledge, and prioritise their identified gaps and areas of improvement (i.e., what would they like to develop as part of the accelerator programme). Such 'self-calibration of knowledge and skills' may provide a healthier entry point whereby applicants are more self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and their mentors can help them work on their specific areas of improvement. This "test your blindspots" aspect could be part of any Accelerator marketing / invitations to apply, as well as the more obvious calls to "grow your skills".

- **Include modules or mentoring on financing and budgeting):** Generalising across the accelerators and accelerator-type programmes delivered by the pilot cities, entrepreneurs and students in accelerator-type Actions seemed to progress least in finance-related skillsets. This may be due to lack of experience as they were often fresh innovators, but is a core part of entrepreneurs becoming successful (and also using public funding efficiently), so is worth investigating in the design phase as to what kind of support or coaching is optimal.
- **Cities with limited innovation capacity or areas with an immature innovation ecosystem** may also want to refer to recommendations in Section 4.2: EU Innovation Scorecard.

#### *Formal institutions*

- **Minimise admin in any processes, to free entrepreneurs' time for innovation:** as one Hub put it "bureaucracy kills innovation", and this was a common experience as Actions needed co-created and approved at various different levels and stages. Some entrepreneurs reported feeling daunted by the requirements placed on them, saying "the paperwork is new to me, and I'm really scared of it. It's a learning process.". Given the short time and budget constraints also raised in a few places, relieving the time and focus from entrepreneurs may free up some of those resources for the innovation and entrepreneurship activities. How this is done depends on each Hub, whether through coaching modules or mentorship or a buddy system to navigate admin requirements etc.

#### *Networks*

- **Factor in networking early, by requiring partnerships at application stage:** if Accelerators, Challenge Funds, Open Calls and other co-creation activities involve innovators applying for funding, the Hub has the option of making partnerships a requirement - the application can feature specific questions on who they are partnering with for the activity, and why. Further directions can be set - for example whether partnerships should be between small and large organisations (skills transfer), between commercial organisations and academic bodies (commercialising research), between organisations and communities (social value), between organisations and public bodies (matched funding), or any other combination. Some programmes even feature international partnerships where two countries (or cities) "twin" on an innovation programme.
- **Language barriers can present a challenge:** One of the challenges experienced by the Lisbon acceleration programme was that not all participants spoke Portuguese. As the programme was very open, accepting applications from people of all nationalities, there was a need for the programme to be made bi-lingual. Similarly, access needs can present



barriers (Lisbon's accelerator had entrepreneurs catering to vision and mobility limited users), and cities should **aim to design a programme to be inclusive to diverse needs**.

#### *Physical (and digital) infrastructure*

- **Offer low-rent co-working spaces to consolidate accelerator success:** In general, innovators do not see the need to locate their business to the HUA in order to develop their experiments and prototypes there. As well as networks and other resources, both the Crouzator and Werkspoorkwartier have a commitment to affordable rates for occupants. Municipal-owned buildings may be able to repurpose un- or under-used spaces as co-working spaces and offer incentives such as low rent (or other) to attract occupants, thereby encouraging an Accelerator's networks and knowledge gains to embed more deeply in the HUA.

#### *Leadership*

- **Play an active role in brokering relationships and bridging networking gaps:** part of the Accelerator's value can also be through brokering matches where there are gaps or challenges for the applicants - for example hosting early-stage pre-Application networking events or leveraging partnerships the municipality has with local universities etc. For example, in advance of launching the Maritime Mile Challenge Fund, Belfast provided numerous opportunities for innovators to connect to potential partners – this included engaging with local communities and stakeholders to partner with innovators, developing a Hub of Innovation co-design directory to help innovators connect to potential partners and, finally, a co-design workshop to soft-launch the fund and providing an opportunity for 40 innovators and potential partners to meet and discuss Challenge Fund Ideas.
- **Monitor entrepreneurs annually, not just during programme timelines:** start-ups are fraught with risk and uncertainty, and so forecasting economic benefits from a few months of support is inherently subject to large uncertainties. Any findings can only be indicative at best. It is therefore valuable to repeat the post-support surveys at annual intervals, in order to track changes over time. This could be followed up with interviews in cases that need deeper exploration.

#### *Human resources*

- **Have a highly motivated and tight-knit local Hub team** to ensure the overall governance, alignment and smooth implementation of the multiple individual Actions of the Action Plan.
- **Bring in expertise through partnerships and collaborations:** Bringing in experts can help bridge gaps in expertise, knowledge, or access to networks. Lisbon and Nicosia both looked to Municipal departments with the right expertise to help with their Actions (on Pop-ups and walks but also digital platforms), while Braşov and Slovenska Bistrica partnered with private and voluntary organisations on their Actions ("City as a classroom" and Crouzator accelerator respectively).
- **Dedicate sufficient time and resources to running an open call:** Compared to invited tenders, running an open call requires some additional time and resources, i.e., to create and disseminate the call, receive and evaluate proposals, before awarding the commission. Yet, **an open call creates room for diverse and unexpected new ideas and perspectives**, raising the bar of what is possible. To attract interest and ensure high-quality proposals, follower cities should **set clear challenge areas in the open call, which are co-created with diverse stakeholders and communities**.

## Knowledge

- **Communicate tangible and intangible successes:** Clearly communicating successes and benefits to local communities and partners will make them more willing to engage next time. Communicating how the Hub achieves the aims of other plans and programmes of the Municipality will secure buy-in and potential help secure funding.
- **Gain insight into the entrepreneurial ecosystem:** Experience/data from acceleration programmes can help also cities identify gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, such as a lack of mentorship, access to capital, or support for scaling businesses.
- **Use HUB-IN tools and methodologies:** Hub teams recommend mapping the stakeholders with a clear methodology to help understand who to engage with and how; co-creation with different stakeholders to allow gathering points of view that may otherwise be missed; the Roadmap allowed teams to grasp the concept of the HUA and set goals; the Action Plan resources helped detail the Actions to guide teams in their subsequent implementation; while Monitoring and Evaluation allow cities to showcase success and lessons learnt. Also refer to Chapter 4 on EU Innovation scorecard and HUB-IN, and HUB-IN Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Ingredients.

Further detailed insights are available in the pilot cities' Evaluation Report (D5.3).

### Key HUB-IN resources:

[HUB-IN Academy](#)

[HUB-IN Match & Ignite](#)

Also see section 4.2 of this report

A fuller list of HUB-IN resources is provided in Section 5.1.

## 3.4. OUTCOME: PLACEMAKING

Innovative approaches to placemaking, including **tactical urbanism, storytelling, animations and meanwhile uses in the public space**, offer innovative ways to engage residents and stakeholders to revitalize, their local heritage. Creating a sense of place involves engaging with both the physical and narrative aspects of an area.

**Tactical urbanism** can activate underused or neglected spaces while respecting the historical context. For example, temporary art installations, pop-up parks, or pedestrian-only zones can highlight an area's unique history and architecture. These interventions often attract people who might not normally engage with the heritage aspects, fostering a greater sense of community pride and appreciation for the area's history.

**Storytelling** can humanize a heritage site by connecting the community with its history. By sharing the stories, histories, and narratives of a heritage area – whether through oral histories, guided tours, or digital storytelling – communities can bring the past to life and make it relevant to today's audiences.

**Animations and meanwhile uses** can revitalize empty buildings or neglected spaces within heritage sites by introducing activities like pop-up markets, art exhibitions, performance spaces, or community events. These uses help draw people back into the area, fostering a sense of vibrancy and activity. They also make heritage areas more accessible and inclusive, allowing for new uses that complement the historical setting.

Because of the breadth of this outcome, many of the pilot cities' Actions align to this outcome; including:

- **Belfast** Waterfront Promenade Framework: sets out a vision for development to align efforts by different stakeholders
- **Braşov** Transforming the Public Realm: tactical urbanism and design principles to reclaim public realm in the HUA
- **Braşov** City as a Classroom: engaged students to prototype and build innovative urban furniture for the HUA
- **Braşov** Night-time Experience: immersive "light walks" and detailed guidelines to enliven the HUA at night
- **Genova** Futura Street art project: transformed 60 shutters to create thematic artistic pathways through the HUA
- **Genova** "La via delle storie": public artworks to generate a dialogue between contemporary art and the HUA
- **Genova** Creative Storytelling: promotional campaign inviting discovery of the HUA from new perspectives
- **Grand Angoulême** Co-design a Trail: realised a 120km regional walking trail adopted by the regional authorities Lisbon Castle Hill Network
- **Lisbon** Heritage Pop-ups: celebrated the important ceramic tradition that characterises Lisbon's HUA
- **Lisbon** Sprout Tank: promoted creative and heritage-based solutions for climate neutrality and circular economy
- **Nicosia** Heritage Walks and their Twins: highlighted the different cultural and creative elements of the HUA's heritage
- **Slovenska Bistrica** Small Local Projects: community-led revitalisation of historical and cultural heritage of the Crouzet
- **Utrecht** Art Programme: supported local talents in developing artistic products for the Werkspoorkwartier

### 3.4.1. Case study: Lisbon Heritage Pop-Ups in Colina do Castelo

Lisbon's Action 3 "Heritage Pop-Ups" celebrated the diversity and quality of the ceramics from Colina do Castelo (Castle Hill), stimulating visitors to get involved with Ceramics and learn about the HUA's unique artisanal heritage.

*Over two days, the Pop-Up attracted over 250 visitors to enjoy a variety of activities, from lectures covering the history of local ceramics to practical workshops, where they could get their hands dirty and create their own works of art, guided by local master ceramicists.*

#### Tactical recommendations:

- **Create Actions to build off one another:** Based on the comprehensive mapping of businesses and projects in the Castle Hill area (Action 1), which highlighted the prominence of ceramic arts in Castle Hill (30 out of 186 creatives mapped were ceramicists), there seemed to be likely support for a dedicated Pop-Up event to strengthen the network and visibility of ceramic CCIs within and beyond Castle Hill, and increase participation in the Hub's events and activities... However, realizing this Action demonstrated that **agility is an important factor for success**, and that **redesigning Actions can help them become more mutually supportive**.
- **Engage key entities in co-creation activities from an early stage:** The HUB team recommends involving the entities as early as possible in the co-creation activities, even if the process is not clearly formulated and the outcome is unknown. In this case, the Action was developed in collaboration with Mouraria Creative Hub, who had previously hosted Pop-Up type events and worked with creatives in the area; the Mouraria Creative Hub became an important enabler to attract the local community to the activities on offer and host the Action (see below).
- **Historic empty buildings in HUAs may not be available for use:** The original plans for the Pop-Up depended on agreements and the granting of spaces in an empty historic building in the HUA by the Municipality of Lisboa – however, due to delay in a transfer of ownership, it became impossible to secure it for the Pop-Up. In light of this, **the Action was transformed into multiple temporary Pop-Ups distributed throughout the territory, and anchored at the Mouraria Creative Hub**. The various shops, studios, galleries and workshops dedicated to ceramics (mapped in Action 1) became other sites of the Pop-Up offer, indicated on the Pop-Up flyer.
- **Mobilising artisans' interest requires demonstrating a clear value proposition:** Despite perceived synergies, the Castle Hill ceramicists were reluctant to commit their time to the Pop-Up as they did not perceive it as valuable to them. The ceramicists participation was secured only when program was redesigned with specialist input (see below) – and importantly with a sales area for artists and visibility of their products. This suggests that **while there can be benefits from strengthening the network of CCIs to help artists with future new collaborations, sales and visibility are important incentives to attract busy artisans**.
- **A new partnership can bring in the specialist knowledge needed to design a targeted programme:** Given the challenges securing the interest of the Castle Hill ceramicists, the Hub team established a partnership with the Archaeological Centre of Lisboa (a municipal institution) to redesign the program, working with a specialist with existing strong relationships with the Castle Hill artists and deep knowledge of the sector. The revised program included: invited **lectures from various experts** on the existence of ceramic activity from ancient times, through the Roman period to the Portuguese Discoveries; **four practical workshops** on ceramic art (two historic, two modern); an **exhibition of modern ceramics** from Colina do Castelo, showcasing a diversity of styles, techniques, and artistic expressions from ceramicists, with **'market stalls' in the courtyard** where 20 artists participated in a two-day sale. In addition, to tackle potential issues with the Pop-Up being spread across several sites (which risked lack of critical mass), a **"Peddy Paper" walking trail** was created for visitors to discover the various ceramic shops and workshops around Castle Hill – this activity culminated in the construction

of a ceramic piece using the parts visitors had collected, whilst answering various questions on the subject, and was very well received. It can be debated if an isolated event in a historic building could have been as successful.

- **Continue the good work through coordinated objectives:** The common objectives defined by the Hub team include: continue to promote the Castle Hill Ceramics brand with the digital hub and production of written information and promotion in the tourism sector; improve the networking of ceramicists, entrepreneurs and promote meetings and events according to their needs and requests; more Pop-Up events with hands-on activities (the team later planned the circular economy Pop-Up event); effective communication and dissemination of the Pop-Up events.
- **Leverage social networks and “word of mouth” to attract visitors:** In this case, formal marketing was less effective, and posters or internet sites accounted for only 13% of the visitors. This sheds light on the value and reach of social marketing, and recommendations from family, friends and local networks. **If done effectively, this could alleviate budget from marketing strategies that include posters and internet advertising (but not social media).** Local signposting is also important for serendipitous discovery, accounting for almost a third of visitors who came to the events “because I was passing by”.
- **Consider participants as advocates for the HUA and knowledge dissemination:** There was a strong indication that the Pop-Up demonstrated the diversity and quality of the ceramics (64% of visitors) and that it stimulated participants to get in touch with ceramics (60%). Surveys showed that about two out of every three visitor respondents (69%) would tell friends and family about their experience. This presents a strong case for considering the role of participants as advocates – **cities can amplify “word of mouth” by providing visitors with resources to facilitate dissemination and knowledge transfer**, such as pre-prepared social media hashtags, QR codes, take-home materials to share with others, postcards showcasing the event and artists, early invites to the next event, etc. Such materials can also enable knowledge sharing that extends outside the HUA to potential visitors from other areas who learn about the HUA’s unique artisan heritage.

**Key references:**

D4.2 – [Lisbon’s Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

Webpage: [Let’s discover the Portuguese ceramic tradition - Hub-In](#)



**SATURDAY 13th**

**EXHIBITION AND SALE OF DESIGNER CERAMICS**  
10h00-18h00

**WORKSHOPS**  
Prehistoric ceramics workshop organised by AROA  
10h00-11h30  
Lucernas ceramics workshop organised by CAL  
14h30-15h45

**CULTURAL PEDDY PAPER**  
10h00-17h00

**TALKS ON THE HISTORY OF CERAMICS AND POTTERY ON COLINA DO CASTELO**  
11h45-13h00  
Theme 1: "Ceramic materials" - Professor Elsa Figueiredo  
Theme 2: "Pottery production in Mouraria (Largo das Olarias)" - Dr Anabela Novais de Castro

**16h00-17h15**  
Theme 1: "The production of amphorae in the Tagus Valley" - Dr Victor Filipe  
Theme 2: "Lisbon earthenware: from the local to the global (16th-18th centuries)" - Professor Tânia Manuel Casimiro

### 3.4.2. Case study: Slovenska Bistrica “Pestro Mestro” Small Local Projects

Slovenska Bistrica’s Action 3 “Pestro Mestro” or Small Local Projects engaged the community in the revitalisation of historical and cultural heritage of the Crouzet, using participatory revitalisation approaches to create inclusive spaces in the HUA where people can meet and develop new ties.

*Through community involvement, the area now serves as a lively gathering spot for relaxation and socializing, enhancing the overall appeal of the historic Crouzet complex.*

#### Tactical recommendations:

- **Use collaborative placemaking to encourage community engagement with heritage:** By combining HUA revitalisation with civic participation and co-creation, the Hub team aimed to actively engage residents in placemaking Actions, showing them that they had an important role in experimenting with interesting new ideas for the town and view community development as a shared and collaborative process.
- **Balance flexibility with simplicity:** To attract a broad audience, the first “Pedro Mestro” call was very open in terms of what people could do and where. However, this openness made it difficult to motivate participants without adequate support and guidance. The Hub team had better success after reviewing the wide range of potential locations and then narrowing the focus to the Crouzet. This experience also suggests that greater openness necessitates more support.
- **Promote ideation:** A “map of wishes” was co-produced with the local community produced for the refurbishment / development of the heritage Crouzet space and its role promoting / enabling interactions with the community. With 29 participants, a wide range of ideas were generated, which were then refined to four clear and feasible ideas comprehensively addressing the space's activation and functionality.
- **Clear and compelling messaging about the Action's importance can significantly enhance community engagement and participation:** The Hub team had to clearly set out the Action’s purpose and goals before they were able to communicate the reasons for public involvement. They noted that it is imperative social innovation initiatives have clear value-added messages (“what is in it for me / for my community”).
- **Communicate the value-add to other municipal departments:** Clear communication on the value of such activities to other municipal departments can help avoid barriers that may arise, for example, if departments are excluded from planning and on-going conversations about initiatives that may overlap with their remit (such as the public spaces work team).
- **Have a well-planned and resourced communications strategy:** Limited communication capacities were a significant barrier to promoting events and opportunities. The Hub team found fewer active and functional social media channels than anticipated, and therefore had to **prioritize and invest in traditional methods like word-of-mouth, posters, and leaflets in high-traffic areas.** Effective communication is critical and requires substantial time, effort, and resources. This experience underscores the importance of a well-planned communication strategy that accounts for local capacities and available channels.

- **Following the Action, the hub team set up a suggestion board in Crouzet** to gather ideas from the local community about what they would like to see in the inner and outer courtyards of the Crouzet Hub. Ideas received are aligned to improvements in the physical (and digital) infrastructure of the hub (seating, stages, maintained courtyards) and urban culture (events, fairs, café, etc).
- **Joint internal and external reflection session for the small-scale Actions – the turning point** was the joint reflection session between the Hub team and external support. The learnings were identified and have been taken on-board **for the “Pestro Mesto 2.0”**: it is focused on Crouzet courtyards; it is more targeted (to youth and local schools); the team has identified a couple of local champions to help drive the initiative; it is better promoted, foremost through direct communication channels etc; and the city department is included in planning.

**Key references:**

D4.2 – [Slovenska Bistrica Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

Webpage: [Slovenska Bistrica - HUB-IN](#)



*Courtyard of the Crouzet*

### 3.4.3. *Transferability and knowledge exchange*

The following insights can be gathered from Actions implemented under this outcome, and recommendations made. As noted in Section 3.1, these have been categorised by the “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements that constitute the “ingredients of a HUB-IN place”, as per the project’s [Framework](#). In reality, some recommendations will align to more than one ingredient (for example, a recommendation about techniques to engage hard-to-reach communities may relate also to the ingredients Networks, Knowledge, and Urban Culture); for simplicity, they are listed here under one main ingredient, with recognition that some may also align to others. It can be a useful Hub exercise to consider each under the discussion question: how would this apply to *our* Hub? What local opportunities (or barriers) in other “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements could this benefit?

#### *Urban Culture*

- **Social inclusion - Collaborate with local associations to connect with isolated local communities:** Genova and Lisbon’s HUA comprised diverse neighbourhoods with multiple communities from different cultural backgrounds. In such places, there can be a lack of participation from isolated local communities, and especially marginalised and vulnerable communities. This can be especially true in areas where previous projects and programmes have left communities disenfranchised (stakeholder fatigue). Local associations who have long-term programmes of work with marginalised and vulnerable communities form strong relationships with them and can be a key partner in engaging them and finding out their needs and wishes for the HUA.

#### *Marketplace / demand*

- **Actions are dynamic and must be able to adapt:** Hub teams strongly emphasised that the Action Plan must be a dynamic document with the flexibility to adapt. Although the objectives and expected impact are defined during the design phase of the Action Plan, it is essential to be able to adapt the initially planned approach and outputs to respond to the difficulties (and opportunities) encountered during the implementation phase. This relates also to “being entrepreneurial as a Hub”.
- **Sales and visibility are attractive incentives for busy artisans:** Artists and creatives have busy schedules and are not keen to give up their time unless they see real value in participating. Mobilising their interest requires demonstrating a clear value proposition, ideally with strong potential to generate sales and visibility to potential clients who may be interested in their work. Hub teams should note that they **clearly state the value added when contacting artists**, noting that ‘strengthening networks’ or ‘future collaborations’ may not be enough to attract them.

#### *Support organisations*

- **Tailor your stakeholder engagement to each stakeholder group (residents, departments, businesses, academics etc):** Social innovation initiatives need to have clear value-added messages (“what is in it for me / for my community”) and also **clear communication on the value of each activity** to various municipal departments that are needed to facilitate its implementation and may present barriers if left out (such as the public spaces work team, whether or not they are formally partnering with the initiative). Communicating value allowed Hub teams to engage relevant stakeholders and assure quality.



### *Human resources*

- **Have a well-resourced communications strategy:** Effective communication is critical and requires substantial time, effort, and resources. Limited communication capacities can be a significant barrier to promoting events and opportunities. In addition to targeted email lists and social media channels (which may or may not be effective), Hub teams often had to prioritize and invest in traditional methods like word-of-mouth, posters, and leaflets in high-traffic areas. Their experiences underscore the importance of a well-planned communication strategy that accounts for local capacities and available channels.
- **Consider participants as advocates for the HUA and knowledge dissemination:** Across pilot cities, surveys showed that a high proportion of respondents would tell friends and family about an event or workshop they've attended. Cities can **amplify this “word of mouth” by providing visitors with resources to facilitate dissemination and knowledge transfer**, such as pre-prepared social media hashtags, QR codes, take-home materials to share with others, postcards showcasing the event and artists, and early invites to the next event. Such materials can also enable knowledge sharing that extends outside the HUA to potential visitors from other areas who learn about the HUA's unique artisan heritage.
- **Dedicated resources for transformation:** Cities that had a dedicated project manager tasked with steering the process progressed better in their transformation. However, success requires decision-making authority. If a project manager lacks control this compromises the effectiveness of the initiative in addressing underlying issues.

### *Knowledge*

- **Leverage local resident knowledge when needing to identify private landowners:** Local residents can be a repository of historical knowledge. Genova leveraged resident knowledge for its Action 1 "Urban Outfitting" when it faced significant challenges in identifying private owners to obtain their written authorisation to paint their shutters, and this proved crucial to realising the Action with 60 shutters in the HUA painted by local artists.
- **Bring in expertise through partnerships:** Hub teams recommend developing partnerships or bringing in experts to bridge gaps in expertise, provide specialist sector knowledge, or access networks. Lisbon and Nicosia both looked to Municipal departments with the right expertise to help with their Actions (on Pop-ups and walks but also digital platforms), while Braşov and Slovenska Bistrica partnered with private and voluntary organisations on their Actions ("City as a classroom" and Crouzator accelerator respectively).

### *Leadership*

- **Think of synergies between Actions to build buy-in in other ways:** Lisbon entrepreneurs' low engagement with the idea of a "Hub of Creativity" stamp for businesses triggered a redefinition of that activity towards a web app to facilitate networking and finding 'what's on', providing a user-friendly interface with the HUB-IN Geotool.
- **Ensure rules for the safety and security of younger participants:** Braşov recognised the necessity of presenting rules for the safety and security of the pupils and students acting in the "City as a Classroom" working group, as their exploratory sessions take place on the streets of the HUA, as well as the practice they will perform when building wooden urban furniture. As well, working with minor pupils raises the risks and more care and attention are needed from the mentors. Similarly, Belfast recognised the need for parents'

permission to issue surveys to event participants aged under 18 (user testing, dissemination events etc).

- **Schedule outdoor activities outside known annual weather extremes:** For both Grand Angoulême and Nicosia, weather conditions resulted in low attendance (autumn rain and extreme heat respectively). To maximise attendance, schedule outdoor events and co-creation activities outside the known annual weather extremes.

#### *Finance*

- **Include contingency budget in case of vandalism by disaffected citizens:** Disruption to installations in public space and vandalism are unfortunately very common. While developing the Actions and installations co-creatively can minimise this, it cannot entirely be avoided, and having a contingency for unexpected costs can help mitigate impact. From the pilot cities, Braşov saw some vandalism to the street furniture that it deployed in the public squares, and faced costs associated with repairing damaged objects. In earlier phases, the benches had been moved around by public actors and needed to be moved around, requiring some agility from the team.
- **Account for operational costs and maintenance of public innovations (and beware of political unknowns):** Hub teams should think of what happens to the public space intervention once the project is over. Is it possible for the Municipality to adopt and maintain it? Will it be useful to another organisation? Should it be renewed annually as part of a program of events? If so, who does that? Actively seek out a plan to guarantee the proper care and management of the urban artefacts.

Further detailed insights are available in the pilot cities' Evaluation Report (D5.3).

Key HUB-IN resources:

[Outreach & engagement plan](#)

[Business Finance and Governance Models](#)

A fuller list of HUB-IN resources is provided in Section 5.1.

## 3.5. OUTCOME: DATA COLLECTION AND VISUALIZATION

Mapping, gathering, or updating information about the HUA and its stakeholders formed the basis of various Actions implemented in the pilot cities' hubs, enabling cities to better know their heritage, businesses and creative opportunities.

**Gathering and analysing data** from diverse sources (e.g., site studies, stakeholder surveys, social media, customer feedback, or industry reports) helps identify emerging trends, behaviours, or issues within a defined area or community, which can be an important basis for collaborative discussions.

**Visualizing data** through maps (such as geographic maps, flowcharts, annotations, or mind maps) can highlight areas of opportunity or underserved communities or areas. Mapping can be co-creative: for example, mapping of heritage assets with the community can help identify alternative tangible and intangible heritage that standard surveys would be unable to capture. **Digital Twins** map and visualise data in real time, drawing upon information from the ecosystem to provide up-to-date information to aid decision making.

Data collection and mapping can inform targeted interventions and facilitate collaboration and co-creation with communities, allowing Actions to be embedded within the local innovation ecosystem. It can also pave the way for future Actions and activities.

In some cases, some form of data or digital asset formed an important 'enabling' Action in its own right, providing pilot cities with the basis to understand the territory, communicate with stakeholders, and co-create the way forward. The pilot cities' Actions that align to this outcome include:

- **Belfast** Sustainability Audit: conducted surveys and gathered data to align stakeholders on ways to progress the sustainability agenda on the Maritime Mile
- **Braşov** Transforming the Public Realm: mapped encroachments to make the case for tactical urbanism and design guidelines to reclaim public realm in the HUA
- **Braşov** Night-time Experience: organised immersive "light walks" and gathered people's reactions to lighting, to get buy-in for detailed guidelines to enliven the HUA at night
- **Grand Angoulême** Co-design a Trail: mapped heritage assets in the region to help realise a 120km regional walking trail adopted by the regional authorities
- **Lisboa** "Ignite the Hill": mapped businesses and projects related to the HUB-IN clusters to build a digital database and entrepreneurship and innovation Network in Colina do Castelo
- **Nicosia** Setting the Digital Stage: developed a platform to engage visitors with the HUA's history and heritage
- **Nicosia** Heritage Walks and their Twins: showcased the different cultural and creative elements of the HUA's heritage, supported by events and a digital twin to guide visitors
- **Utrecht** Professionalising BKC: enhanced the capacity of the volunteer-run organisation to develop it into a Hub
- **Utrecht** Governance Models: recommendations to guide the Municipality in developing future Hubs in Utrecht

### 3.5.1. Case study: Nicosia Heritage Walks and their Twins

Nicosia's Actions 2 "Heritage Walks" invited visitors to engage with the cultural and creative elements of the Walled City's history and heritage in a sustainable way. Anchored within Action 1 "Setting the Digital Stage" the digital platform provides visitors a resource to replicate the walks and book future Heritage Walks.

*Ten co-designed Heritage Walks in Nicosia introduced over 1,000 walkers (tracked by registrations) – and the walks were then included on the digital twin for others to walk after.*

#### Tactical recommendations:

##### *Digital Twin*

- **Have a clear 'use case' for digital twin development...:** The Heritage walks provided a clear use case for the development of the public facing digital platform, as a successor to the themed geographical mapping of CCI and addition of heritage walks (notably, many digital twins are not for public use). A pre-focus group questionnaire identified the content to be enriched. This resulted in a user-friendly website, featuring interactive maps, business listings, event scheduling, and networking tools, and allowing people to (remotely) walk through the city. Follower cities may look to engage their residents and businesses to **consider the user-friendly, public facing potential of digital assets**, e.g., integrating heritage, local stories, walk trails, etc.
- **And... Leverage synergies with existing initiatives, strategies and departmental remits to gain buy-in and resources:** The mapping of Heritage Walks is closely linked with the "Cultural and Creative Industries District" project, spearheaded by the municipality through its Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Strategy. Though the mapping of CCIs and Heritage Walks are relatively small use cases, they boost the internal potential of the digital twin, for example, the thematic geographic representation of CCI can be used by the Municipality of Nicosia to make informed decisions on cultural initiatives and events, programming, land use, permits, etc. Leveraging synergies can enable cities to **communicate the value of the Action to other departments** and gain buy-in and resources.
- **Bring in specialist knowledge through partnerships:** working closely with the iNicosia team has been a crucial factor in the project's success. Their expertise and support have facilitated seamless integration of various elements, ensuring the platform is both functional and innovative.
- **Consider focused outreach to get representation from the stakeholders you want to involve:** Following stakeholder engagement, over 100 CCI's were included in the platform. During the co-creation process, established businesses were observed as over-represented, while emerging artists and startups were under-represented. Outreach activities are considered to resolve this gap. Challenges were also noted in reaching certain demographics, which will be addressed through more focused outreach and support initiatives in future iterations. The Hub team also plan to provide targeted training and support to groups who may be excluded from digital offerings.

##### *Heritage Walks*

- **Include a mix of stakeholders designing the activity:** In the co-design of Nicosia's Heritage Walks activity, those designing the innovative trails included a historian and a cultural heritage expert (also members of the group "People of Cyprus"), two professional tour guides (members of the Cyprus Tourist Guide Association), a peace educator, an architect, a civil servant, and some members of the non-governmental organisation

“Friends of Nicosia”. **Recognise the benefits for co-design participants**, most of the stakeholders reported that they had built connections and inspirations to replicate what they had learned from the co-design (though not all may use such opportunities).

- **The potential guides of the Heritage Walks were recruited through a targeted invitation process**, instead of an open call. That was primarily done to meet deadlines in receiving and evaluating the proposed Walks, also to cover specific areas of the HUA’s tangible and intangible heritage. To ensure diverse backgrounds, the team extended invitations to professional tour guides as well as those knowledgeable of the HUA and its heritage. Of 15 local professionals, experts, and old Nicosia-lovers invited, six submitted ten proposals in total. This also signals the need to **dedicate sufficient time and resource to run open calls** to invite a wider range of new and unexpected ideas.
- **Use pre-walk questionnaires to validate insights and identify areas of improvement:** Pre-walk questionnaires to all registered walkers validated local perceptions of insufficient knowledge about Nicosia’s history and culture (~60%), only sporadic visitations to the HUA (~60% visit the area a few times per year) and barriers to HUA discovery due to obstacles (~40% walk in the HUA a few times per year largely because of constraints such as narrow pavements and heatwaves). Most participants also returned a post-walk survey, providing feedback and further information.
- **Use participants to activate ‘word of mouth’ for future events:** More than 1,000 people registered for the various Heritage Walks, with residents from the wider city of Nicosia with a range of ages and locations, and included creative entrepreneurs, local businesses, schools, institutions, managers of cultural venues, etc. Most participants stated that walks had raised their awareness of local heritage and 3 out of 4 would “tell family and friends about it”, which indicates the value of providing materials to enable participants to share the event with others, such as QR codes, hashtags, takeaways etc.
- **The public sector has an important leadership role in developing entrepreneurial culture:** These tours were unique in that they were run by the Municipality, empowering stakeholders to be engaged from the process to the final events. That the heritage walks (and the workshops) had generally good uptake demonstrates the role of the public sector in trialling activities that are ‘outside the norm’ for a city. Through leading on such initiatives, public authorities can in turn help change local behaviours and promote entrepreneurship and engagement with cultural heritage.

#### Key references:

Nicosia Heritage Walks Digital Twin: <https://nicosiahubin.cyens.org.cy/>

D4.2 – [Nicosia’s Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

Webpage: [Nicosia HUB-IN’s Heritage Walks - Hub-In](#)



*Nicosia’s heritage walks and the digital twin of one of the routes.*

### 3.5.2. Case study: Utrecht Governance Models

Utrecht's Action 4 "Blueprints for Hub Governance" for the Municipality to learn from hubs implemented in Utrecht to understand their context and challenges and develop knowledge about sustainable governance structures for cultural incubators for setting up future hubs.

*The shared lessons provided the Municipality with best practice guidance for governance arrangements and setting up future hubs in Utrecht, enabled the hiring of dedicated project manager in the BKC, and activated changes in other Hubs. Findings have also been shared with the HUB-IN cities (linked below).*

#### Tactical recommendations:

##### *Process:*

- **Hire experts that can help open dialogue:** The Municipality hired a consultant to study the governance of hubs in Utrecht, to provide relevant context for governance models of growing Hubs. During this period, the blueprints for widely applicable governance structures for Hubs have been shared with four Hubs in the HUA. The study resulted in a report on the lessons learned that can be implemented throughout Hubs in Utrecht. The report has been discussed with the stakeholders that participated in the project in the form of a focus group. Based on this qualitative focus group, the lessons learned were widely supported, but there remained a difference in opinion on the way the lessons should be implemented in specific contexts.
- **Follow up on Actions:** Based on the focus groups, the Municipality further discussed specific issues with Hub stakeholders in follow-up meetings. The Municipality also made a promise to measure (qualitatively) the perceptions on quality of governance in the various hubs as a result of the lessons learnt in regard to inclusivity and effectiveness.
- **Show tangible outputs:** Due to the shared lessons, the BKC has taken steps to hire a project manager who will take a central role in steering the process of the further development of the HUB.

##### *Findings:*

- **Collaborations require transparency and trust, nurtured by good governance:** Collaboration means pursuing a common goal through the deployment of people and resources by the parties involved. This requires **trust** in the other person. Opportunistic action or lack thereof transparency can damage this trust. Organising such cooperation therefore requires pure governance with the right checks and balances. In addition, it is very important that the goals and resources are well aligned and that mutual expectations correspond. Overall, the suggested lessons learned and approach for the hub were perceived as effective in this regard.
- **For governance to be effective, setting the right boundaries and goals from the beginning** is important. It is essential that as soon as it appears that frameworks do not comply, this is immediately reported to the stakeholders. This requires making the bottlenecks transparent and transparent to communicate. Only then can other parties take appropriate measures. To be able to do this, it is important to start with a feasibility study. Such a study must show whether the framework for the assignment has been sufficiently completed. Such an investigation must also involve external parties, including the parties that will carry out the assignment. It is their responsibility to carefully consider whether it is possible to carry out the assignment within the framework. This should lead to a good basis from which to start, and as such increase the effectiveness.

- **Recognise and embrace the changing role of public sector organisations:** In the contemporary landscape, municipalities serve as coordinators, actively participating in collaborative policymaking with both internal and external stakeholders. The effectiveness of this approach hinges on the **engagement of robust, knowledgeable external partners attuned to the nature and scope of the task at hand**. Failing to meet this criterion may result in opportunistic or risk-averse behaviour, posing a threat to collective interests.
- **Dedicated resources for transformation:** Initiating transformative endeavours requires appointing a project manager tasked with steering the process. However, success requires decision-making authority. If a project manager lacks control this compromises the effectiveness of the initiative in addressing underlying issues.
- **Effective governance:** Governance encompasses structures and processes for managing responsibilities within an organisation. Designing an appropriate governance structure aligned with goals, collaboration, and organisation is crucial. A lack thereof can lead to conflicts of interest and neglect of responsibilities, diminishing organisational effectiveness. Adherence to the Code of Governance Culture supports cultural organisations in establishing effective governance.
- **Collaboration involves pursuing a common goal:** All involved parties should approach complex collaborations with patience and meticulousness. Hasty decisions can lead to issues surfacing later in the process. Collaboration involves pursuing a common goal through resource deployment by involved parties. Trust, a clear governance structure, and aligned goals and expectations are fundamental for successful collaboration.
- **Establishing a solid foundation through a feasibility study is vital** to ensure that task frameworks are adequately defined. The absence of such a study led to an organisational impasse due to insufficient resources. Transparent communication and a well-organised administrative structure are prerequisites for successfully executing complex tasks.

**Key references:**

D4.2 – [Utrecht Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

Governance Recommendations paper: [HUB-IN Utrecht-Governance-in-cultural-hubs-DOs-and-DONTs SHARE.pdf](#)



*Hubs in the Werkspoorkwartier in Utrecht*

### 3.5.3. *Transferability and knowledge exchange*

The following insights can be gathered from Actions implemented under this outcome, and recommendations made. As noted in Section 3.1, these have been categorised by the “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements that constitute the “ingredients of a HUB-IN place”, as per the project’s [Framework](#). In reality, some recommendations will align to more than one ingredient (for example, a recommendation about techniques to engage hard-to-reach communities may relate also to the ingredients Networks, Knowledge, and Urban Culture); for simplicity, they are listed here under one main ingredient, with recognition that some may also align to others. It can be a useful Hub exercise to consider each under the discussion question: how would this apply to *our* Hub? What local opportunities (or barriers) in other “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements could this benefit?

#### *Physical (and digital) infrastructure*

- **Consider data as an important ‘enabling’ Action in its own right:** Dedicated Actions on ‘data’ provided pilot cities with a deep understanding of the territory, helping communicate with stakeholders to co-create the way forward. **Specifically for follower cities:**
  - **Mapping and visualising CCI locations can help you understand your HUA and stakeholders:** For Lisbon and Nicosia (and to some extent Utrecht Action 1), mapping the CCI industry was an essential part of understanding the cultural and creative heritage in the HUA, and identifying specific crafts and arts and their locations, crafts, and size. For Grand Angoulême, **mapping the stories in the territory** provided the basis of scouting walking trails, leading to newer levels of understanding and discovery.
  - **Robust evidence can help make the case for change.** For example, Belfast and Brasov both conducted surveys (the former to understand sustainability initiatives in businesses, the latter to map encroachments in public space) to evidence what was happening in the HUA. This helped **build buy in with stakeholders** to do something about it and **define common objectives** to which all could commit.
  - **Data can help learning for the future:** In the case of Utrecht’s Action 4, a study of governance arrangements in four of the city’s Hubs identified where the Municipality could support or intervene, as well as providing lessons for the Municipality on improving Hub set-up and governance.
- **Have a clear ‘use case’<sup>3</sup> for development of data assets:** A data/digital asset that has a clear purpose and audience, is one that has a reason to be maintained. In Nicosia and Grand Angoulême, this purpose came from the heritage walks and the creation of the trail. Sometimes an analogue/offline analysis may be more relevant, such as collaborative mapping with students in Brasov to understand which parts of the HUA were used by them (“City as a Classroom” Action) and collaborative analysis of Hub set-up and governance arrangements in Utrecht. In each case, the purpose of the data gathered or visualised should be clear. This will also help **avoid stakeholder fatigue**.
- **Innovate with existing datasets to enable new use cases:** In other cases, cities may not have a use case, but may have the data and can drive innovation for new use cases! This was the case with Lisbon’s use of the Geo-tool data to develop a webapp. Where datasets are unknown, the approach here can be to focus on surfacing what data are available, what they include, who owns them – this is similar to an index that can be shared openly to users who can then propose a use case or request access. This approach could be another route to creating a demand, while helping minimise stakeholder fatigue due to requesting the same data multiple times.

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<sup>3</sup> A use case is a specific situation in which a product or service could potentially be used  
D5.5 HUB-IN Guidebook for Cities - February 2025



- **Consider the user-friendly, public facing potential of data assets:** Digital assets don't have to sit in the back office. Cities should look to **engage residents and businesses to understand user needs, and co-create the purpose, functionality and look of the digital asset**, e.g., integrating heritage, local stories, walk trails, etc. As an example, Lisbon realised that the Geo-tool, while valuable, was not very accessible to end users; the Hub team worked with end users and the Municipality GIS department to develop a **web app interface to meet specific user needs**, and feed updated data to the Geo-tool.
- **Leverage the capabilities of existing assets and their stakeholder reach**, and where appropriate, draw upon these to achieve the Action's purpose. For example, Belfast deployed its survey and engagement tool on multiple Actions, accessing a database of already engaged stakeholders; and Lisbon developed a user interface to the (already developed) HUB-IN Geo-tool to meet a user-defined need. This can be a win-win as it can help overcome issues with stakeholder reach and help long-term viability of the existing asset. Most cities also have existing digital assets which can be harnessed to develop a specific use case that links to it, for example, Nicosia's digital twin, Belfast Municipality's citizen survey and engagement tool, GIS databases maintained by municipalities, etc.
- **Leverage synergies with existing initiatives, and departmental remits to help gain buy-in and resources:** Many cities also have strategies on digital and smart cities – such as to inform cultural initiatives, urban planning and land use. Linking the data Action to leverage these synergies can enable cities to **communicate the value of the Action to other departments** to gain buy-in, support, and resources.
- **Anticipate data points resulting from other Actions:** Stakeholder surveys, applications to an open call, and participant feedback and surveys (such as pre- and post-event) all provide important data points that can support the use case defined for the digital asset. Anticipating these in advance can help the Hub team connect these data to the digital asset in advance of the data being gathered, or help gather the data in a format that can be easily fed in post-development.
- **Use the digital asset developed to assist other Actions and initiatives** for mutual benefits for both Actions/initiatives. As an example, Lisbon's web app is the evolution of three activities carried out as part of its Action 1 ("Ignite the Hill") and the integration of two successful projects accelerated by Action 2 ("De-Incubator") and the results of the Action 3 Pop Up event that showed the importance of ceramics in Castle Hill. This required **shaping the Action to be agile and 'being entrepreneurial as a Hub'**, notably recognising that the Geo-Tool in its full format could not meet user needs, and relying on goodwill with the Municipalities GIS team to develop a web app. The development of the fully mobile-optimised website was co-created to ensure accessibility and convenience for all users. The digital hub allows both locals and tourists can discover, appreciate, and engage with Colina do Castelo's rich heritage offer, acting as a gateway for anyone interested in exploring and promoting the Hub.



*Mural of the Colina do Castelo web app (Lisbon, as part of Action 1)*

- **Provide targeted training and support programmes to groups excluded from digital offerings:** Pilot cities found that small businesses and other stakeholders were uncomfortable with a move to digital offerings in the historic urban area. In line with the HUB-IN ethics approach, it is important that all stakeholders are supported (and none are disadvantaged) by the introduction of new technologies. potential training and support programs to assist these businesses in leveraging the platform effectively.

#### *Urban Culture*

- **Social inclusion - Collaborate with local associations to connect with isolated local communities:** Genova and Lisbon's HUA comprised diverse neighbourhoods with multiple communities from different cultural backgrounds. In such places, there can be a lack of participation from isolated local communities, and especially marginalised and vulnerable communities. This can be especially true in areas where previous projects and programmes have left communities disenfranchised (stakeholder fatigue). Local associations who have long-term programmes of work with marginalised and vulnerable communities form strong relationships with them and can be a key partner in engaging them and finding out their needs and wishes for the HUA.

#### *Networks*

- **Consider focused outreach to get representation from CCI stakeholders you want to involve:** Pilot cities consistently found that reaching out to established businesses and organisations in the CCI sector was easier than reaching out to artists and creative entrepreneurs and startups. A targeted outreach and engagement plan can help ease access to these groups, who are more dispersed and volatile and less likely to be reached by emailing and social media. In addition to reaching known artist groups personally, cities may have to rely on "word of mouth" to reach critical mass. Grand Angoulême found that word of mouth requires time and patience but can generate a **"snowball effect", developing lateral (wide) networks that rely on the collective ambitions of stakeholders.**

#### *Marketplace / demand*

- **Sales and visibility are attractive incentives for busy artisans:** Artists and creatives have busy schedules and are not keen to give up their time unless they see real value in participating. Mobilising their interest requires demonstrating a clear value proposition, ideally with strong potential to generate sales and visibility to potential clients who may be interested in their work. Hub teams should note that they **clearly state the value added when contacting artists**, noting that 'strengthening networks' or 'future collaborations' may not be enough to attract them.

#### *Human resources*

- **Dedicate sufficient time and resources to running an open call:** Compared to invited tenders, running an open call requires some additional time and resources, i.e., to create and disseminate the call, receive and evaluate proposals, before awarding the commission. Yet, **an open call creates room for diverse and unexpected new ideas and perspectives**, raising the bar of what is possible. To attract interest and ensure high-quality proposals, follower cities should **set clear challenge areas in the open call, which are co-created with diverse stakeholders and communities.**

### *Leadership*

- **Consider participants as advocates for the HUA and knowledge dissemination:** Across pilot cities, surveys showed that a high proportion of respondents would tell friends and family about an event or workshop they've attended. Cities can **amplify this “word of mouth” by providing visitors with resources to facilitate dissemination and knowledge transfer**, such as pre-prepared social media hashtags, QR codes, take-home materials to share with others, postcards showcasing the event and artists, and early invites to the next event. Such materials can also enable knowledge sharing that extends outside the HUA to potential visitors from other areas who learn about the HUA's unique artisan heritage.

### *Formal institutions*

- **The public sector has an important leadership role in developing entrepreneurial culture... but may require assistance from external stakeholders:** Public sector bodies have a formal regulatory role as well as a leadership role in 'softer' approaches to urban regeneration, empowering stakeholders engaged in urban experimentation, and initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and engagement with cultural heritage. However, given the power held by formal institutions, it is **important to address any distrust between Municipality and communities/ local businesses and other stakeholders**. In Brasov, the external agencies leadership of the HUB-IN Actions and citizen workshops led to successful collaborations with multiple stakeholders (businesses, academia and voluntary). Utrecht too saw the role of the Municipality more as a coordinator and 'enabler' of Actions undertaken by other organisations (such as BKC). In all cities, **open dialogue is an important tool** in getting stakeholders onboard. While open dialogue alone may not overcome embedded feelings of distrust, it can **create sufficient consensus to deliver successful Actions in the short term, and create a basis for building trust in the long term**.

Further detailed insights are available in the pilot cities' Evaluation Report (D5.3).

Key HUB-IN resources:

[Outreach & engagement plan](#)

[HUB-IN Geotool](#)

[HUB-IN Academy](#)

A fuller list of HUB-IN resources is provided in Section 5.1.

## 3.6. OUTCOME: CO-CREATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Co-creation and community engagement relates to co-design of products, services, interventions, strategies and regulations together with relevant stakeholders across the quadruple helix. Co-creation relies on solving problems by sharing ideas, knowledge, and expertise from an early stage in the process, and refining it with various stakeholders, rather than relying solely on one organisation or person (like a company or designer) to create something alone before consulting with stakeholders.

By drawing on diverse perspectives and expertise, co-creation can lead to more innovative ideas and solutions that might not emerge from a single point of view. Since key stakeholders (ranging from decision-makers to end users) are part of the process, co-created interventions are often better aligned with their needs and preferences.

When done well, co-creative processes can also enable stakeholders to share their ambitions and doubts in the early stages, allowing collective ambitions to be defined that can shape more robust outcomes. Consolidating stakeholders behind a collective ambition also results in stronger relationships and faster problem solving in the longer-term.

Co-creation was a central tenet of the HUB-IN project. As a result, many pilot cities' Actions align to this outcome, notably:

- **Belfast** Waterfront Promenade Framework: set out a vision for development to align efforts by different stakeholders
- **Belfast** Sustainability Audit: aligned stakeholders to progress the sustainability agenda on the Maritime Mile
- **Braşov** City as a Classroom: engaged students to prototype and build innovative urban furniture for the HUA
- **Braşov** Night-time Experience: immersive "light walks" and detailed guidelines to enliven the HUA at night
- **Genova** Futura Street Art Project: transformed 60 shutters to create thematic artistic pathways through the HUA
- **Genova** "La via delle storie": public artworks to generate a dialogue between contemporary art and the HUA
- **Genova** Experimental Call: supported three projects promoting collaboration and innovation in the historic centre
- **Grand Angoulême** Co-design a Trail: realised a 120km regional walking trail adopted by the regional authorities
- **Grand Angoulême** Caravane Creative Lab: set up an itinerant Hub of innovation for local creatives
- **Lisboa** Heritage Pop-ups: celebrated the important ceramic tradition that characterises Lisbon's HUA
- **Lisboa** Sprout Tank: promoted creative and heritage-based solutions for climate neutrality and circular economy
- **Nicosia** Activations of the HUA: a series of free creative workshops to engage people with local arts and craftsmanship
- **Slovenska Bistrica** Small Local Projects: community-led revitalisation of historical and cultural heritage of the Crouzet
- **Utrecht** Professionalising BKC: enhanced the capacity of the volunteer-run organisation to develop it into a Hub

### 3.6.1. Case study: Braşov City as a Classroom

Braşov's Action 2 "City as a Classroom" raised awareness and generated involvement amongst the users of the Historical Centre of Braşov with interventions in the HUA's public space.

*The "City as a Classroom" program tested ideas for revitalizing under-used public spaces, whilst providing a practical platform for education, mentoring and upskilling of high school and university students.*

Tactical recommendations:

- **Identify hidden opportunities:** The HUB-IN team's preliminary study "Toward a balanced use of the public space in the Historical Urban Area" revealed that over 5,000 students of all ages visit Braşov's Historic Urban Area daily, a number that exceeds the population of residents. However, due to the lack of public space infrastructure and other factors, the students' use of the HUA for leisure and teaching/learning was severely limited.
- **Develop the Action with key stakeholders:** In collaboration with the municipality, local architects and schools, the first edition of the "City as a Classroom" program was developed and launched in 2023. The program is based on an **innovative co-creation methodology** that allows participants to **build and test prototypes to revitalize under-used public spaces**. These "pretext objects" in turn balance the way locals, tourists and traders interact with the public space, whilst providing a practical platform for education, mentoring and upskilling of high school and university students.
- **To enhance their mentoring capacity, the Hub team extended their search nationally,** particularly in Bucharest. This allowed the program to benefit from the experience of 9 mentors specialized in urbanism, architecture, object design, urban design, public strategies and policies, pedagogy and urban planning theory. The interaction with these mentors has added a valuable dimension to the learning process. Furthermore, making the best use of the Jury's feedback was pivotal. This feedback was valuable for the young innovators, especially regarding the originality of solutions and the potential to develop definitive objects from prototypes.
- **Agile management is essential to stimulate team flexibility and adaptability.** This approach was crucial in developing and leading innovation projects, allowing swift responses to changes and challenges. For example, the arrangement of benches in the tactical urbanism phase was disrupted by the start of the terraces season and the occupation of public space by restaurant terraces in the area. To adapt, benches on Michael Weiss Street were entirely moved to make room for terraces and the number of benches on Republicii Street was decreased.
- **By targeting the innovators effectively,** the Hub team maintained a low dropout rate from the program, ensuring sustained engagement. The programme involved 41 students, who explored the citadel area, collected data and identified 4 potential locations for interventions in Braşov's HUA. At least 20 prototypes of urban installations were developed and tested in urban squares.
- **Engage end-users:** The direct involvement of at least 120 people from among users of the Historical Centre of Braşov brought diversity and relevance to the project, ensuring that the proposed solutions were adapted to and well-integrated with the needs and expectations of the local community.

- **Establishing a clear process is fundamental** to generating exceptional ideas, particularly to developing the prototypes into "pretext objects". This clarity helped streamline efforts and focus creativity. Additionally, **mixing and matching mentors**, professionals, local decision-makers, and relevant urban actors provided support for innovators, transforming their ideas from the accelerator phase into permanent installations.
- **Allow time for unexpected governmental procedures:** A significant challenge in Romania still is formalizing informal structures, which can be a time-consuming process.
- **Create the conditions for continuity:** Creating the innovative and educational program with schools supports its replication with future students (the school replicated this in 2024 and the Hub team hopes to continue this). The Hub team also produced the City as a Classroom Manual, allowing the program to be replicated by other places.
- **Use digital technology:** The Hub team installed QR codes on each object to raise awareness and capture feedback. Responses were limited (15) but gave insights into the way the furniture is used and its ability to foster spontaneous social interactions.
- **Include contingency budget in case of vandalism by disaffected citizens:** Disruption to installations in public space and vandalism are unfortunately very common. Braşov's Hub team faced some high costs with having to repair damaged street furniture deployed in the public squares and recommend that follower Hub teams allow contingency for this.
- **Account for operational costs and maintenance of public innovations (and beware of political unknowns):** Despite their best efforts, the Hub team encountered challenges in donating the "pretext objects" to the Municipality. The administrative challenges add up with the upcoming change in leadership following the current mayor's loss in the election. As a result, they are actively seeking out alternative solutions to guarantee the proper care and management of the urban furniture.

**Key references:**

[Braşov-HUB-IN The-City-as-a-Classroom Manual.pdf](#)

D4.2 - [Braşov Action Plan](#)

D5.3 - [City monitoring report](#)



*Braşov HUB-IN team and students pulling a pre-text object kit in Braşov's HUA*

### 3.6.2. Case study: Nicosia Activations of the HUA (Creative Workshops)

Nicosia's Action 3 "Activations of the HUA" offered a series of free creative workshops to provide opportunities for residents to interact and (re)connect with traditional and contemporary practices, old and new skills and knowledge, and connect socially around an activity.

*Five workshops were organised, including two kids workshops ("Drawing myself in Cypriot traditional costumes" and "Traditional patterns - stamped bandanas") and three adult workshops ("Engraving workshop for adults", "Laser-cut assembly lamps - from design to fabrication", and "Sounds of Nicosia - an interaction between music and visual arts"), of which four were run in July 2024. Open to the public, all were organised and hosted within the Walled City, in collaboration with cultural and creative institutions of the area and artists who live and/or work in metropolitan Nicosia.*

#### Tactical recommendations:

- **Leverage the heritage and values of your HUB-IN place to generate awareness:** The Hub team used the elements of the tangible and intangible cultural fabric of the Walled city, an area of historic craftsmanship and modern creativity. This blend of modern and traditional carried into the workshops, for example, one of the kids' workshops introduced the art of making Cypriot head and waist scarves of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a modern twist of making bandanas stamped with traditional patterns. Another workshop, on the design and production of lamps through digital fabrication using laser-cutting, raised awareness about the dying traditional crafts of Cyprus and revived textile patterns in a radical way through a modern product.
- **Co-create the Action with a diverse mix of stakeholders:** Key stakeholders for this Action included the CYENS MakerSpace of the CYENS Center of Excellence, and the Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre, who hosted the workshops, and seven artists who live and / or work in the wider city of Nicosia. This provided a mix between modern and traditional that flowed into the design of the workshops.
- **Public institutions *can* play an important role in shaping the market:** Given the scarcity of such activities in the city, the Hub team championed the delivery of these workshops by the Municipality; this meant the workshops were delivered free of cost to participants and provided visibility to local artists. In this instance, Municipal leadership of the workshops was important in delivering something the market otherwise wouldn't. **However, this can be highly context specific** (e.g., for cities where residents may have historic trust issues with the public sector), and follower cities should consider which institutions are best placed to champion market leading initiatives in their city. In addition, to reduce the burden on public institutions, follower cities may also consider how such initiatives could be used to **set an example for other institutions to follow the lead.**
- **Modify the artist selection process to work within timeline and resource restrictions:** The artists and craftspeople were recruited through a targeted invitation process, as there was not enough time or resources to create and launch an open call, receive and evaluate proposals, and award contracts. This indicates the pros and cons of each approach: **direct selection provided greater certainty of covering specific topics** on the HUA's tangible and intangible heritage, but can limit creative input; **an open call creates room for diverse and unexpected new ideas and perspectives** but may miss core areas of the scope. To make open calls more robust, follower cities should **set clear challenge areas in the Open Call, which are defined and co-created with diverse stakeholders.** It is worth noting that running an open call requires both time and resources (to create and disseminate the call, receive and evaluate proposals, and award the commission).

- **Aim for community interactions to be a springboard for a bigger journey:** In terms of skills and attracting people to the creative sector, one-off community events have limited skills gain. However, some participants expressed *interest* in upskilling, such as asking about how to get the materials and practice at home, presumably to keep developing after the workshop. This suggests that **workshops can be a good opportunity to provide information, such as on future events or workshops, or creative skills courses.** This can also **create opportunities for the creative artists** (such as to run further workshops) and **improve opportunities for upskilling in the cultural and creative arts**, helping preserve the cultural and creative heritage of the HUA.
- **Position workshops to match the top motivations for people attending:** The Nicosia team struggled with low attendance and no-shows, with the fifth workshop in September 2024 cancelled due to lack of interest. Most people who attended the workshops stated their key motivation as “familiarity with local arts/ traditions” and “personal relaxation / entertainment”. Such insight into participants’ motivations can support Hub teams with designing and disseminating future events to get interest from the right audiences, to help minimise cancellations and no-shows. Cities can also engage with communities through focus groups or surveys to gain insights in advance of designing the event.
- **Consider the downstream behaviours you are looking to change, and incorporate these in the workshop design and communication:** Over half of the Creative Workshops participants stated that they planned to join cultural groups following the workshop. Sparking interest is the first step to genuine change, as it opens the doors to more civic participation in cultural heritage, creativity, arts etc. Cities should bring these considerations in the workshop design and communication, and support people with materials and resources to allow them to further engage in culture/ arts/ heritage/ other. This is a key measure of success – do the workshops lead to genuine change in the target groups.

**Key references:**

D4.2 – [Nicosia’s Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

Webpage: [Rediscovering Nicosia’s arts and culture - Hub-In](#)



*Participants with their creations from the “Traditional patterns - stamped bandanas” workshop*



### 3.6.3. *Transferability and knowledge exchange*

The following insights can be gathered from Actions implemented under this outcome, and recommendations made. As noted in Section 3.1, these have been categorised by the “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements that constitute the “ingredients of a HUB-IN place”, as per the project’s [Framework](#). In reality, some recommendations will align to more than one ingredient (for example, a recommendation about techniques to engage hard-to-reach communities may relate also to the ingredients Networks, Knowledge, and Urban Culture); for simplicity, they are listed here under one main ingredient, with recognition that some may also align to others. It can be a useful Hub exercise to consider each under the discussion question: how would this apply to *our* Hub? What local opportunities (or barriers) in other “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements could this benefit?

#### *Urban Culture*

- **Participatory revitalisation approaches**, such as those used by Brasov and Slovenska Bistrica, can help create inclusive spaces where people can meet and develop new ties with each other and with their heritage. It can also help overcome prejudices against an area, for example, reducing fear of crime along the Via Prè in Genova.

#### *Entrepreneurial Culture*

- **Nuture interest from children and youth for long term sustainability**: Engage the next generation who want to learn about their culture, as they may go on to develop skills in traditional crafts or cultural heritage. Cities should nurture children’s engagement with arts and heritage for longer term sustainability.

#### *Heritage*

- **Generate pride and sense of belonging**: When pride and sense of belonging are high, participants were themselves keen to replicate the Actions or find other ways of contributing to the HUA.
- **Embed valorization of tangible and intangible heritage**: Intertwining modern techniques with traditional arts and craftsmanship can enable the community to re-engage with their tangible and intangible heritage.

#### *Human resources*

- **Dedicate sufficient time and resources to running an open call**: Compared to invited tenders, running an open call requires some additional time and resources, i.e., to create and disseminate the call, receive and evaluate proposals, before awarding the commission. Yet, **an open call creates room for diverse and unexpected new ideas and perspectives**, raising the bar of what is possible. To attract interest and ensure high-quality proposals, follower cities should **set clear challenge areas in the open call, which are co-created with diverse stakeholders and communities**.

#### *Leadership*

- **Position the workshops and events to match the top motivations for people attending**: The Nicosia team struggled with low attendance and no-shows, with the fifth workshop in September 2024 cancelled due to lack of interest. Most people who attended the workshops stated their key motivation as “familiarity with local arts/ traditions” and “personal relaxation / entertainment”. Such insight into participants’ motivations can support Hub teams with designing and disseminating future events to get interest from the right audiences, to help minimise cancellations and no-shows. Cities can also engage with

communities through focus groups or surveys to gain insights in advance of designing the event.

- **Aim for community interactions to be a springboard for a bigger journey:** In terms of skills and attracting people to the creative sector, one-off community events have limited skills gain. However, some participants expressed *interest* in upskilling, such as asking about how to get the materials and practice at home, presumably to keep developing after the workshop. This suggests that **workshops can be a good opportunity to provide information, such as on future events or workshops, or creative skills courses.** This can also **create opportunities for the creative artists** (such as to run further workshops) and **improve opportunities for upskilling in the cultural and creative arts**, helping preserve the cultural and creative heritage of the HUA.

Further detailed insights are available in the pilot cities' Evaluation Report (D5.3).

Key HUB-IN resources:

[City Moodboard](#)

[Outreach & engagement plan](#)

[Roadmap co-creation](#)

[Action Planning](#)

A fuller list of HUB-IN resources is provided in Section 5.1.

## 3.7. OUTCOME: POLICY & REGULATION

This relates to developing new policies, or influencing existing public policies and regulation, and formulating principles, guidance and frameworks to support the implementation of Hubs of Innovation in Historic Urban Areas.

Actions relating to policy and regulation can play a crucial role in creating an environment conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship within cities. By finding and consolidating common ground between different stakeholder interests and providing certainty, thoughtful policy Actions help cities attract talent, foster business growth, and encourage creative problem-solving.

Actions in this area may be developed to have different remits and enforceability, generally dictated by the type of output:

- **Urban Policy:** Urban policies provide the overall vision for a city's growth, inclusivity, and quality of life, and set out high-level goals and strategic direction for sustainable, equitable, and efficient urban development (such as a city's climate action policy). They are generally not legally binding.
- **Urban Plan:** Urban Plans provide a detailed, spatial roadmap for land and infrastructure development, with detailed land use, zoning, and infrastructure plans. Once approved, they are legally binding.
- **Frameworks:** Frameworks provide a structured set of principles, strategies and processes to implement urban policy, often with flexibility in how specific projects are executed (e.g., a smart city framework, or framework for urban mobility).
- **Regulations:** These are legally binding rules and standards that govern specific aspects of urban development (e.g., regulations around zoning and land use). They are put in place by local, regional, or national authorities to ensure compliance with legal and societal standards.
- **Guidance:** Provides advice, recommendations, and best practices for the implementation of policies, frameworks, or regulations (e.g., guidance on creating pedestrian-friendly streets). They are not legally binding.
- **Finance and governance models:** These can influence policies and plans by creating favourable conditions for certain types of projects and/or partnerships.

The pilot cities' Actions that align to this outcome include:

- **Belfast** Waterfront Promenade Framework: set out a vision for development to align efforts by different stakeholders.
- **Braşov** Transforming the Public Realm: provides design principles for terraces and placement of furniture in the public realm
- **Grand Angoulême** Co-designing a Trail: approval for the 120km walking trail to be adopted by the regional authorities.
- **Utrecht** Governance Models: recommendations to guide the Municipality in developing future Hubs.

It is worth noting that several other Actions interacted with policy and regulations (such as when Hub teams sought to place artefacts in heritage buildings or public spaces), but without directly resulting in policy, guidance, or recommendations that would shape policy.

### 3.7.1. Case study: Belfast Waterfront Promenade Framework

Belfast's Action 1 "Waterfront Promenade Framework" sets out a vision for development in line with heritage, social and environmental values, which aligns efforts by provide stakeholders such as developers, creatives, landowners and local communities.

*The envisioned waterfront promenade will offer safe and green public spaces to socialize, infrastructure for active travel and exercise, improved connectivity and easier access to jobs and services, underpinned by the unique maritime historic sites.*

#### Tactical recommendations:

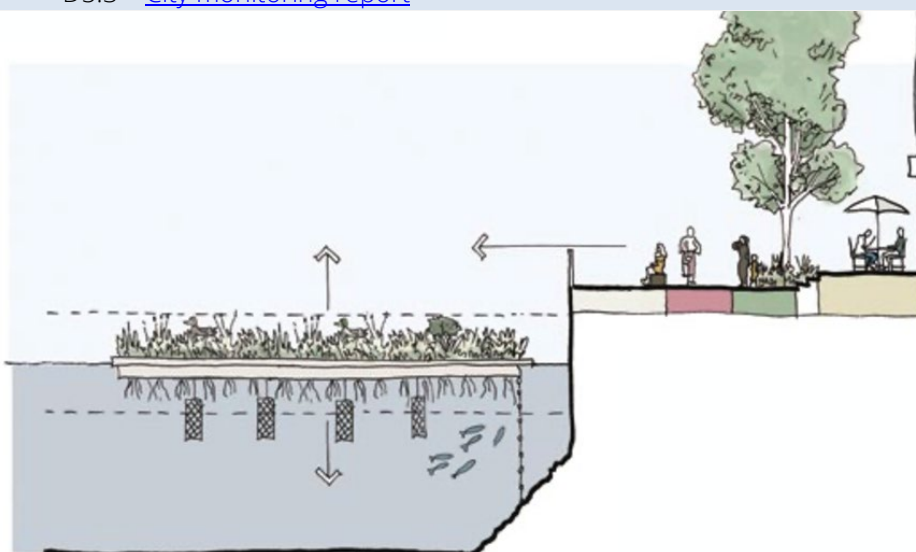
- **Align policy Actions to existing policies and strategies:** The Belfast Waterfront Promenade Framework aligns with the broader Belfast's "Bolder Vision" document.
- **Undertake open-ended engagement with local stakeholders early in the process to identify their needs:** Maritime Belfast carried out online community surveys and held multiple in-person workshops, focus groups and events, asking hundreds of local people about what they liked or wanted to see on the waterfront. The local co-creation activities undertaken by Maritime Belfast identified five areas of improvement: more places to eat; more green areas; more public toilets; walking and cycling trails; and more quality events.
- **Bring key stakeholders together to scope the Action: A Belfast Waterfront Task Group** was established to scope how the waterfront can fully realise its potential as a connected, vibrant corridor linking to and with key destinations, neighbourhood communities and city centre. A key requirement was an agreed place-making Framework for the city's waterfront promenade that would help align interventions across multiple stakeholders, working to different masterplans and timescales. Ecosystem engagement succeeded with a breadth of landowners, interested parties and other stakeholders including: Maritime Belfast Trust; Belfast Harbour; Belfast City Council; Innovation Belfast; Titanic Quarter Limited; Department for Communities; Department for Infrastructure; Department for Economy; Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; Tourism NI; and others. **Aligning fragmented interests has unlocked priority projects** for landowner collaboration, including several targeting protection, celebration and future valorisation of the HUA's heritage.
- **Bring the right expertise on board:** Maritime Belfast appointed a multidisciplinary team of civil engineers, urban designers and socio-economists to develop a strategic framework to ensure that future regeneration of the city's waterfront (one of the largest in Europe) follows an agreed set of design principles, and encourage usage by local residents and visitors to engender vibrancy and vitality.
- **Embed sustainability:** The Framework forms the starting point for solutions across 12 "toolkit interventions", including for example: onsite renewable energy generation (solar, wind, tidal); waste management programmes; sustainable drainage systems that mimic natural processes; cycling infrastructure to encourage modal shift away from petrol vehicles etc. A key principle is to maintain a "living shoreline": environmental engineered shorelines create access to the water, fostering a sense of connection and responsibility whilst also supporting the harbour's ecosystem services.
- **Design the policy action to enable other Actions:** The Water Promenade Framework creates multiplier effects enabling and enhancing the Belfast Hub's sister Actions; for example, helping applicants to Action 3 "Challenge Fund" place their innovations in the context of tangible and intangible heritage and future developments planned for the

area; and enabling local organisations in Action 2 “Sustainability Audit” to see a visible future for the waterfront and align behind it.

- **Keep communities engaged throughout:** Local communities were involved throughout the development of the framework. This included contributing to a roundtable event in March 2023 (with key stakeholders including Waterfront Task Group representatives), contributing through the Waterfront Neighbourhood Network as well as taking part in HUB- community surveys through Belfast City Council’s Your Say Platform. The framework’s **co-created design specifically recognises the value of local needs and talent** through its objectives centred around social value for local communities, such as improving employment opportunities for deprived communities (Sailortown, Short Strand, etc) to flourish and preserving maritime heritage for future generations.
- **Develop detailed Action Plans to progress projects:** The Waterfront Task Group has identified 5 priorities and meets on a regular basis to progress these. Since the launch of the Framework, a detailed Action Plan has been developed and adopted by the Waterfront Task Group, and **a subgroup has been established** to drive the Action Plan forward.
- **Build cross-sector partnerships to attract investment:** The Waterfront Task Group, the Maritime Mile Destination Forum and Innovation City Belfast comprise stakeholders across the quadruple helix – these key groups work together to realise Actions on the Maritime Mile. **Partners** to commit to approximately €70,000 of matched funding (£50,000) from public, private and voluntary organisations, towards the Framework. **Other projects** that are local to the HUA and aligned with HUB-IN to be successful in attracting funding, with approximately €70,000 identified as partially due to the HUB-IN Actions building evidence and momentum, which may enable next stages of funding.

#### Key references:

- The Water Promenade Framework Summary document, launched in December 2023, can be accessed here:  
<https://www.maritimebelfast.com/app/uploads/2023/12/Framework-Summary-Document.pdf>
- D4.2 – [Belfast Action Plan](#)
- D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)



*Framework illustration of ways to embed ecosystem services in the HUA*

### 3.7.2. Case study: Braşov Transforming the Public Realm

Braşov's Action 1 "Transforming the Public Realm" developed a set of guidelines to help reclaim public space from commercial uses and make it available for the enjoyment of residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

*Between 2021 and 2023, detailed recommendations on terrace layout and furniture placement for 11 street segments in the Historic Urban Area, reclaimed illegally occupied public space for public use, setting a precedent for a revised use of the public realm that encourages residents and visitors to reconnect with their Historic Center.*

#### Tactical recommendations:

- **Analyze the context and understand the challenges in the early stages:** the Hub team conducted 58 analyses for the HUA's first digital database, including 24 moving map surveys, 4 analyses of pedestrian movement and 24 interviews with locals.
- **Gather robust data to support the case:** The observations discovered a discrepancy of 1,816 square meters between the recorded and actual use of public space by terraces, enabling action to be taken.
- **Use your city's peer network to search for innovative ideas and learn:** The Hub team reached out to their peer network to ask them about their innovation funding and obtain ideas. A simple question can result in an expansion of possibilities, "so what did you do?"
- **Identify and engage your stakeholders early:** In light of resistance from HoReCa businesses who protested against reducing their terraces, the Hub team had to find a balance between community needs, the needs of business owners, and the Municipality. By listening to all the stakeholders (including the community, city departments and the HoReCa businesses), the Hub team was able to create guidelines that met the different needs, while also helping them **align interests and build goodwill**.
- **Collaborate with experts:** The development of the guide required constant collaboration with experts and municipal officers. This allowed the team to draw on best practice while also ensuring a good fit with the operational, legal and financial framework of the Municipality.
- **Actively involve the community in the decision-making process:** Public consultation played a vital role in developing the guidelines and having them accepted. **Creating a strong connection to the community** and embedding solutions to their problems in the process of developing the guidelines was key to its success.
- **Experiment with "tactical urbanism" for iterative improvements:** Tactical urbanism (short-term experimental changes in public space) involved relocating the benches currently owned by the administration, as well as increasing the number of benches through relocation from other areas of the city where there is a surplus. Testing locations according to the new principles in 2023 (prior to the publication of the Guide for placing furniture) enabled the administration to **evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed changes and make certain amendments to the Guide**. In March 2024, based on the Guide and the findings from the earlier tactical urbanism stage, the administrator implemented **further tactical urbanism measures** across several streets in the HUA, establishing a diagonal route through the HUA and providing resting areas for visitors. Going forward, the Guide and tactical urbanism also provide a basis for the public administrator to improve the specifications in the tender documents for acquiring new public furniture specific to the central area in the future.

- **Support implementation with physical measures:** During the implementation year, streets where the terrace boundaries were marked on the pavement (under the guidance of the guide's authors and city officials) fully followed the terrace recommendations, encouraging operators on selected adjacent streets to voluntarily adopt the Guide's recommendations in the layout of their terraces. Some even invested in new furniture and white umbrellas to adhere to the guidelines, and some communicated their adoption of the guide on social media and publicly supported it. (Operators on other adjacent streets ignored the layout recommendations entirely.)
- **Translate guidelines into regulations and/or enforcement capacity:** Braşov guidelines were introduced for a one-year trial using "soft power" (guidelines and goodwill with local businesses). This enabled all illegally occupied public space (1,816m<sup>2</sup>) to be reclaimed for public use between 2021 and 2023, setting a strong precedent for how tourist-facing businesses (hotels, restaurants, cafés) interact with and use public space in the squares and streets, and help maintain a consistent image in the HUA. However, without being adopted into regulation (through a Mayor's decision or a Local Council Decision), the Guidelines were not legally binding and implementation ceased after the trial year, i.e., the municipality no longer marked the boundaries of the terraces on the ground and the public administrator did not conduct on-site inspections. Without these measures, many commercial agents have since illegally expanded their terraces to reoccupy public space, leading to about a third more public space being occupied (878m<sup>2</sup>) than is officially allowed.

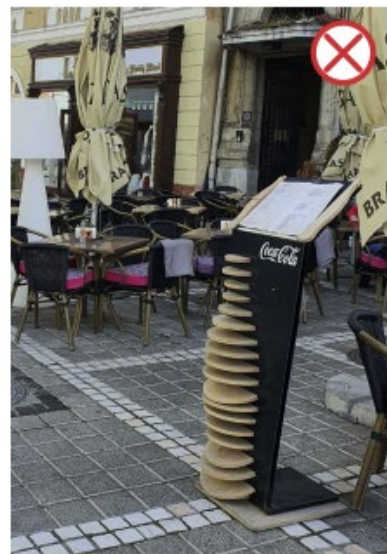
**Key references:**

*The "Guide for Placing Seasonal Terraces in the Historic Center of Braşov"* (2023) can be consulted at: [https://abmee.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Ghid-Terese-Publicat-PMBV\\_final.pdf](https://abmee.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Ghid-Terese-Publicat-PMBV_final.pdf)

*Development of guidelines/ norms for public furniture specific to the HUA* (2023)  
The Guide for placing public furniture in the Historic Center of Braşov can be consulted at: [https://abmee.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023.11.28\\_Ghid-de-amplasarea-a-mobilierului-public\\_final.pdf](https://abmee.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023.11.28_Ghid-de-amplasarea-a-mobilierului-public_final.pdf)

D4.2 – Braşov Action Plan

D5.3 – Braşov [City monitoring report](#)



Snapshot from Braşov's Guidelines

### 3.7.3. *Transferability and knowledge exchange*

The following insights can be gathered from Actions implemented under this outcome, and recommendations made. As noted in Section 3.1, these have been categorised by the “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements that constitute the “ingredients of a HUB-IN place”, as per the project’s [Framework](#). In reality, some recommendations will align to more than one ingredient (for example, a recommendation about techniques to engage hard-to-reach communities may relate also to the ingredients Networks, Knowledge, and Urban Culture); for simplicity, they are listed here under one main ingredient, with recognition that some may also align to others. It can be a useful Hub exercise to consider each under the discussion question: how would this apply to *our* Hub? What local opportunities (or barriers) in other “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements could this benefit?

#### *Leadership*

- **Create a balance between community needs and municipality ways of doing:** The Hub teams sought to create policies, programs and infrastructure that are both responsive to the community’s dynamic needs and realistic within the operational, legal and financial framework of the municipality, while meeting the programme goal of stimulating creativity and entrepreneurship. This collaborative, adaptable approach fosters sustainable urban development that benefits residents, business owners and local authorities. It is also in line with the **entrepreneurial approach** in heritage areas (see D2.7 pp13-14).

#### *Networks*

- **Engage communities throughout the process:** Hub teams engaged communities through surveys, public meetings, as well as formal public consultation processes. Early engagement helped gather insights about what the community values, needs and desires in terms of public spaces, amenities and services. Taking an inclusive approach helped identify diverse community needs such as accessibility for people with disabilities, spaces for social interaction and safe areas for children and elderly residents, and address them through the process.
- **New ways of partnership working:** New ways of partnership working (working across government, municipalities and other partners) are critical to developing innovative approaches and getting buy-in for longer-term programmes on that drive innovation and regeneration in historic urban areas.

#### *Heritage*

- **Think bigger:** Align ambition on innovation in and around heritage assets with plans and strategies to promote active travel, preserve biodiversity, and lower carbon footprint for maximum impact.

#### *Formal institutions*

- **Iterative Improvement:** Working with public authorities, Hub teams piloted smaller-scale projects based on community input and assessed their success before fully implementing larger-scale changes. This adaptive approach helped fine-tune solutions, balancing the evolving needs of the community with the municipality’s capacity to implement them, and created ownership by both communities and public authorities.
- **Extend and replicate:** Hub teams worked with stakeholders to extend and replicate Actions in other areas, such as applying findings from selected Hubs to generate learnings for the future (Utrecht) and developing detailed plans to progress projects within the Water Promenade Framework (Belfast).



- **Balance “soft power” and guidelines with enforceable regulations:** While large gains can be made through guidelines and frameworks in reusing or repurposing open public land, they do not come with any legal obligation to comply. Competing commercial and political factors may prevail, and stakeholders’ interests will drift unless they see continuous engagement and value from collective action. **Formal enshrinement (and enforcement) of guidance in Regulations or Mayoral Decisions** may be required to prevent progress being quickly undone once the high energy mobilisation phases finish. This may also require “striking while the iron is hot” to capitalise on political will: elections and departmental shuffles create an uncertainty and instability that may place an ongoing pause (or veto) on formalisation. Alternatively, **creating the ecosystem infrastructure to support the guideline or framework put in place** – such as through the setting up of governance arrangements, task-and-finish groups, and funding agreements – can provide the basis to maintain momentum and progress, and keep stakeholders on board.

### *Knowledge*

- **Promote and disseminate the Hub’s achievements:** Communication with stakeholders on what has already been achieved is key.
- **Evaluate results, continue the loop after implementation, maintain the connection:** Pre- and post-implementation surveys can provide valuable insights on how key measures in the historic area have changed perception and usage in the area, and provide the basis for improvements and new ideas. Depending on the questions asked, surveys may be general or target residents, visitors, businesses or other stakeholders. The response rate can vary greatly: one city received 400 responses from local residents for pre- and post- community surveys, while another received 19 for a post-implementation survey on its public benches. Timing, incentives, stakeholder fatigue (and more) can all play a role in response rates.

### *Urban Culture*

- **Drive social inclusion policies to slow, rather than reverse, gentrification:** Gentrification is a medium-long term process, and it is worth for cities to monitor gentrification over time, to consider how gentrification and displacement can be mitigated to some extent through social inclusion and policy. For example, the Belfast’s Waterfront Promenade Framework objectives, centred around social value for local communities and improving employment opportunities for deprived communities, help enhance local livelihoods in the short-medium term. Similarly, Utrecht’s aim to keep housing out of the Werkspoorkwartier for as long as possible (using larger-scale urban policy), strives to ensure that the benefits of Hub creation can accrue to the communities and stakeholders already in the area.
- **The HUB-IN Leadership Guide** has the following recommendations for leaders in the public sector, community and entrepreneurial sectors:
  - **Introduce policies and programmes to facilitate the creation of Hubs of Innovation** to trigger long term heritage-led sustainable regeneration capable of delivering economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. It further recommends that city leaders
  - **Commit to a long-term delivery programme that values cultural heritage**, not only in terms of its protection, but as a strategic asset. This is central to the identity and well-being of the place and its citizens, and will provide historic urban areas with a competitive advantage in the growing creative industries and makers’ economy.

Central to this are the types of Actions realised by the HUB-IN pilot cities, through building and nurturing multi-stakeholder partnerships and inclusive co-design processes to inspire and sustain community engagement. Further detail can be found in the Leadership Guide (Section 5.4).

Further detailed insights are available in the pilot cities' Evaluation Reports (D5.3).

Key HUB-IN resources:

[Outreach & engagement plan](#)

[Roadmap co-creation](#)

[Action Planning](#)

[Business Finance and Governance Models](#)

[Historic Urban Areas Leadership Guide](#) (Section 5.4 – recommendations for city/regions)

A fuller list of HUB-IN resources is provided in Section 5.1.

## 3.8. OUTCOME: ART AND CREATIVITY

This outcome relates to using art and creativity to foster innovation around heritage. Using art and creativity provides important opportunities to engage residents, businesses and artists with local heritage (tangible and intangible heritage), while nurturing innovation and creating opportunities for entrepreneurs and innovators. Importantly, art and creative approaches can encourage visitors to engage with different interpretations of history, encouraging dialogue with diverse perspectives on cultural, tangible and intangible heritage.

Some approaches explored by pilot cities include:

**Public art installations** such as murals, sculptures, or interactive exhibits can bring attention and visitorship to historical landmarks, breathing new life into abandoned heritage spaces.

**Digital and virtual heritage:** Digital platforms, and Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality technologies (VR/AR) can help bring back vanished heritage and lost stories. By merging the past with the present, these can allow visitors to explore heritage in immersive and innovative ways.

**Community-led Heritage Projects:** Encouraging local artists or residents to design public art or spaces around heritage sites fosters a sense of ownership. These creative projects can revitalize Historic Urban Areas while preserving their historical identity.

**Creative workshops and collaborations** Local artists and craftspeople can engage the community with local heritage, traditional crafts and culture, while nurturing art and creativity in the community.

**Performance and theatre:** Heritage sites can be a backdrop for various forms of performance art and theatrical performances, with actors, artists, and storytellers guiding the audience through the known and unknown heritage and stories of the place.

**Heritage festivals, events and open calls** can provide unique opportunities to bring together different artistic and creative Actions combining traditional arts with modern creative expressions, into a celebration of local art and heritage.

The pilot cities' Actions that align to this outcome include:

- **Braşov** "City as a Classroom": engaged students to prototype and build innovative urban furniture for the HUA
- **Genova** Futura Street art project: transformed 60 shutters to create thematic artistic pathways through the HUA
- **Genova** "La via delle storie": public artworks to generate a dialogue between contemporary art and the HUA
- **Utrecht** Art Programme: supported local artists in developing artistic products for the HUA
- **Lisboa** Heritage Pop-ups: celebrated the important ceramic tradition that characterises Lisbon's HUA
- **Nicosia** Activations of the HUA: a series of free creative workshops to engage people with local arts and craftsmanship

... and some open calls were also centred on art and creativity:

- **Belfast** Maritime Mile Challenge Fund: developed prototypes to support the preservation and enhancement of the HUA
- **Grand Angoulême** Metropolitan Open Call: generated 30 new artistic viewpoints on the HUA and its heritage
- **Slovenska Bistrica** "Crouzator": supported local creatives to develop products and services celebrating cultural heritage
- **Utrecht** Art Programme: supported local talents in developing artistic products for the Werkspoorkwartier

### 3.8.1. Case study: Genova Public Art project “La via delle storie”

Genova's Action 2 “La via delle storie” (the way of stories) uses public art as a mechanism to draw footfall into the narrow streets of the HUA to combat resident perceptions of feeling unsafe.

*Professors from the Academy of Fine Arts engaged students from different departments to create moments of close cooperation with local residents and businesses through art: including gathering inhabitants' micro-stories, painting floor art, decorating seats, and creating digitized paintings of sacred niches.*

Tactical recommendations:

- **Work closely with stakeholders to develop Actions:** The “Accademia Ligustica” of Fine Arts were involved from the earliest stages of the Genova HUB-IN project and contributed to identifying Public Art as a means of addressing the Hub's vision and mission. In 2023, this co-creation process led to the development of the “La via delle storie” (the way of stories) project, also involving stakeholders such as the local Cultural Heritage office. Starting from 2024, the artworks began to take shape and be set up in the pilot area.
- **Aim for positive engagement experiences to generate buy-in for replication and scaling:** Professors from the Academy of Fine Arts carried out a relevant co-creation activity with their students from different departments, heavily involving them both in the co-design and in the implementation phases. In total, 45 students were involved. The creation of the various works of art involved moments of close cooperation with local residents and associations. During the micro-story collection days, more than 150 people participated. Individuals of different ages and backgrounds sat on decorated seats, each sharing a story connected in some way to the HUA. The experience was so positive for the Academy's professors and students, as well as for the local residents' association (Comitato per Prè), that it will be repeated in the future.
- **Develop synergies between stakeholders and events to amplify presence:** For the street party events, the different implementers (Cooperativa Il Cesto-Forevergreen, Academy of Fine Arts, Blu) cooperated to organise a synergistic event to maximise the impact of all the separate Actions taking place in the same weekend. This created more visibility than the different events at different times.
- **Creating footfall can help combat chronic challenges such as fear of crime:** Each of the Genova Hub's Actions aimed to create pathways to draw footfall through the narrow streets of the HUA (through public art displays, holding street parties, light projects, artisan pop-ups, artistic shutters, etc.) to combat resident perceptions of feeling unsafe. This encourages more frequent visits (willingness to walk the HUA), helps breakdown local prejudices about the area and, eventually, stimulates opportunities. This implies that the public art installations, events and art tours, and installations act as “anchors” to draw footfall and connect the area to the main thoroughfares, thereby addressing feelings of social isolation and crime.
- **Set expectations that change will be slow; and aim for steady progress:** It is important to set expectations, especially when dealing with communities who may be disillusioned from years of crime and broken promises from other regeneration programmes, that one successful local initiative (or a few months' programme of events) will not entirely turn around an area or solve decades-long problems (crime, lighting, etc). Yet, Hubs should not be put off undertaking Actions in such areas, as slow and steady progress can bring about important long-term changes. Create projects that **contribute to creating a new way of doing things and to imagining a new life and future for the HUA**. Create something which

can be done well and engages residents and local stakeholders, generates a positive experience for everyone involved, then mobilise the goodwill and resources attracted by those successes to keep the momentum going.

- **Consider how digital solutions can overcome heritage and infrastructural challenges:** Students from the painting and lighting courses digitized 16 paintings of sacred niches in the HUA that are no longer visible due to deterioration, displayed on a screen in a public area of the Municipality. Such innovative approaches to preserve the heritage of the HUA can help overcome common infrastructural challenges to restoration and make heritage more widely accessible. Indeed, community surveys showed an **appetite for digital solutions**, including to digitise heritage paintings and artists works, discover the narrative behind the works, and connect artists' works to buyers.
- **Not everybody will like every artistic work:** Some people did not like the presence of the artworks, and the floor paintings were negatively politicized by one journalist on social media. Yet, the majority of responses to the social media survey were positive, with respondents asking for the Action to be repeated regularly, or replicated at other times and in other areas. Having boldly implemented the art installations, the Hub team can use the experience to learn and do it even better next time.
- **The implementation of this Action formed an important collaboration:** the Municipality and the local Academy of Fine Arts signed a framework agreement that, besides allowing for this specific Action's implementation, could be the starting point for further future cooperation.

**Key references:**

D4.2 – [Genova's Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

D5.4 – Final Economic, Social and Environmental Appraisal



*Genova's HUA*

### 3.8.2. Case study: Grand Angoulême Metropolitan Open Call

Grand Angoulême's Action 3 "Metropolitan Open Call" had local artists from different disciplines investigating the future Grand Angoulême trail as a playfield for their artistic expression

The 30 projects realised embed aspects of the local, cultural, built and natural heritage within the post-industrial landscape of the HUA, generating awareness and appreciation of different interpretations, and many residents and artists walking the trail discover new places and stories about the territory.

#### Tactical recommendations:

- **Define Actions to build off one another:** The Metropolitan Open Call relied on networks and organisational goodwill developed as part of the "Caravane Creative Lab" (Action 2) and the co-design of the walking trails (Action 1). This logical connection meant that the Hub team had mentors to support the Open Call participants.
- **Design the call to communicate to multiple stakeholders, and beyond those you already know:** Though the CCL network provided access to artists to disseminate the call to, and the call provided purpose to the CCL and the scouting of the trail, the Hub team opened the communication of the Open Call to wider public networks to reach artists from different disciplines. This worked out well: the Hub team were expecting a lot of responses from comics artists but had many more applications from artists working with other media. This was positive and demonstrates the important of being open to ideas from a wider audience (beyond the identified stakeholders).
- **Multiple smaller projects provide multiple views:** Selecting multiple smaller projects - rather than four or five larger projects within the same budget - provided a multiplication of points of view. This resulted in the creation of extensive local archives on the territory which have never before been explored on this scale. This provides new perspectives on the region and its heritage, many residents and artists walking the trail discover new places and stories about the territory. Importantly, by including both mainstream and alternative approaches across different artistic disciplines, the artworks can engage different audiences.
- **Have multiple open calls to allow ideas to be refined and generate momentum:** Choosing to issue three calls for projects, each about 6 months apart, gave artists who had been rejected by the first jury the opportunity to make another proposal or improve on the first. In this way, the open calls allow artists to develop in their approach and research. Multiple open calls also helped consolidate the Hub's identity by fuelling the Caravane's momentum.
- **Number of responses can be unpredictable:** It is hard to have an indication of how many applications an Open Call will receive and from what artistic communities. The first call received 45 applications (of which 14 selected), expressed through photography, comics/illustration, literature, sculpture, performance, sound (radio, podcasts), video and other. The second and third calls received 19 and 21 applications respectively (15 selected). The reduced number could be due to a multitude of factors including repeat submissions from first cohort, less interest in republication of call, or shorter period for application submission and award.
- **Artistic installations do not have to be mainstream (or liked) to be effective:** The outputs produced by the Open Call artists are intended to increase the attraction and cultural relevance of the trail once it launches fully in 2025. In 2024, some had already been

experienced by local community audiences at public events; and whilst perceptions of individual art pieces varied from positive to negative, unfavourable perceptions were found to still generate curiosity and pride and initiate dialogue. This indicates the importance of being bold with the commissioned art works.

- **Do not underestimate the complexity of the tasks:** Organising a complex event across multiple venues with multiple installations of different kinds, and in collaboration with multiple partners, is a highly involved process (the November 2023 event was across 5 different venues, 14 works of different kinds to be exhibited). Editing the brochure required a lot of to-and-fro communication, as did coordination. Creating the website also required significant editorial time. Local partners were easy to involve but organisation requires dedicated people with enough time.
- **Increase skills and visibility for artists and creative entrepreneurs and their talent:** For many artists, the call was reported to be a life changing experience. Many had the opportunity to learn new skills, present their projects to the public, and strengthen their networks, while others discovered the value of local heritage and the trail to identify and set up new projects.

Key references:

D4.2 – [Grand Angoulême Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)

Webpage: [Projets - Le sentier métropolitain de GrandAngoulême](#)



*Some of the projects awarded in the first Metropolitan Open call*

### 3.8.3. Transferability and knowledge exchange

The following insights can be gathered from Actions implemented under this outcome, and recommendations made. As noted in Section 3.1, these have been categorised by the “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements that constitute the “ingredients of a HUB-IN place”, as per the project’s [Framework](#). In reality, some recommendations will align to more than one ingredient (for example, a recommendation about techniques to engage hard-to-reach communities may relate also to the ingredients Networks, Knowledge, and Urban Culture); for simplicity, they are listed here under one main ingredient, with recognition that some may also align to others. It can be a useful Hub exercise to consider each under the discussion question: how would this apply to *our* Hub? What local opportunities (or barriers) in other “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements could this benefit?

#### Urban culture

- **Be bold with the commissioned art works:** Art does not have a universal flavour and people do not have a universal taste in art; this means that no individual art project can appeal to everyone. Yet, art that is unpopular can still generate curiosity and pride and initiate meaningful dialogue. Some criticism may not be in good faith (e.g., if politically motivated). Yet, cities aiming to replicate artistic projects should feel free to be bold with the commissioned art works, taking any feedback as learning for the next project and how to bring people on board.

#### Knowledge

- **Create “knowledge triangles” that link stakeholders and activities in education, innovation and business creation:** The sharing of knowledge between public, private, academic and community sectors was instrumental in the co-created solutions. For knowledge transfer and “knowledge triangles”, academic involvement is important as practical pilots or developments can feed back into research agendas and student training. Academics and teachers who participated in open calls found new approaches to pedagogical engagement for their students, opening up new ways of seeing and interacting with heritage and the local community, and opening new possibilities for learning and research. Given this, **cities should consider not only what art academies and schools can feed in, but also what academics can take back to their pedagogical practice to allow future generations** to have new ways for learning and discovery, and enabling them to engage in dialogue with local heritage and culture: *for example, Braşov’s created the “City as a Classroom” manual; Genova’s Action secured an agreement between the Municipality and the Academy of Fine Arts to replicate the student project in future years; in Grand Angoulême the art school now includes the trail in its summer program; and Lisbon created a precedent for involving students in competitions launched in partnership with C40.*

By working in partnership also with private organisations (businesses and mentors) to support students in their innovation journey, these programmes create **“knowledge triangles”** that link stakeholders and activities in education, innovation and business creation (developing the skills for artistic and creative entrepreneurship), and create conditions where the generation, diffusion and application of multidisciplinary knowledge can help fuel innovation and growth in knowledge-based economies.

#### Leadership

- **Facilitate the “flywheel effect”:** Art and creativity projects can lead to strengthened networks and possibilities for unexpected connections and ventures. For example, in Genova, the Municipality and the local Academy of Fine Arts signed a framework agreement that, besides allowing for this specific Action’s repetition, could be the starting point for further future cooperation. Importantly, the “flywheel effect” can **overcome “un-investability” challenges faced by places and organisations.**



- **Set expectations:** Art and creativity can contribute to imagining a new life and future for the HUA and raising hopes. Yet, change in areas subjected to historical decline will be slow but can lead to longer-term benefits if consistent progress is made. Similarly, Grand Angoulême had to explain that the trail, though it constitutes an important relay for the project within the communes of the territory and open to everyone to use, will not directly affect the 38 communes.
- **Create positive experiences for all and build goodwill:** Create a project that can be done well, engages residents and local stakeholders, and generates a positive experience for everyone involved. Then mobilise the goodwill and resources attracted by those successes to keep the momentum going in future years.

#### *Formal institutions*

- **Engage municipal departments early:** Art projects involve many partners and departments (tourism, heritage, culture, communication, environment, public space, transport, etc). Hub teams noted that this can present delays due to long procedures for permits or unforeseen standards needing to be met, or due to resistance to installing the artistic interventions in public space. Engaging other departments within the municipality earlier in the process can help derisk delays to timelines. Installing anything in public space requires lots of time! Allow for approvals!
- **Be prepared with a Plan B:** Some delays can derail Plan A. Embrace barriers as a call-to-innovation, and think about other ways the objective can be achieved. For example, Genova’s experimental call projectors could not be installed on heritage buildings, so the Hub team got agreement from shopkeepers to display them in their shops instead. This also relates to ‘being innovative as a Hub’.

Further detailed insights are available in the pilot cities’ Evaluation Report (D5.3).

#### Key HUB-IN resources:

D 2.7 – [Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in Historic Urban Areas](#)

D5.1 – [Common Impact Assessment Framework](#)

A fuller list of HUB-IN resources is provided in Section 5.1.

## 3.9. OUTCOME: SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability in HUB-IN Actions relates to preserving and celebrating cultural, historical, and environmental values while adapting to contemporary needs and future challenges. It involves creating solutions that respect heritage and culture, but also ensure their continued relevance, viability, and positive impact on communities and the environment.

Some approaches explored by pilot cities include:

**Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings**, including repurposing of old assets (Lisbon, Slovenska Bistrica) and encouraging circular economy principles for revitalisation and adaptive reuse of spaces in the HUA (Genova, Utrecht).

**Integrating sustainable technologies in heritage areas**: exploring ways to retrofit or install sustainable technologies in heritage areas to preserve their character while reducing energy and water use, mitigating urban heat, or improving air quality, i.e., solar panels (Lisbon), LED lighting (Brasov), greywater reuse, rainwater harvesting, green roofs, digital monitoring of heritage assets.

**Revitalization of green and blue spaces in local heritage areas**, to promote recreation and relaxation while also mitigating urban heat island and promoting biodiversity. (Slovenska Bistrica Small Local Projects; Utrecht BKC Hub, Grand Angoulême)

**Community-led sustainability projects**: for example that support local reuse, recycling and waste reduction in heritage areas (including through community sharing programmes), or community awareness and education programmes on sustainability and heritage; enabling low waste ways of living.

**Sustainable business models**: supporting locally grown and sustainably produced food (Utrecht), upcycling and reuse in local crafts (such as recycled aluminium jewellery in Slovenska Bistrica), and other Actions which support the local economy while reducing the carbon footprints associated with transportation.

**Sustainability accreditation or stamps**: green certification for business and communities (Belfast), or local 'stamp' for businesses that adopt sustainable practices and locally sourced products (Lisbon)

**Sustainable tourism**: encouraging sustainable travel to and within the HUA; minimizing the environmental impact of visitors while maximizing the cultural experience (Nicosia walking tours).

**Climate resilience** – protecting heritage assets and sites from climate change, including urban shading, rainwater/ stormwater management, digital monitoring, etc.

Many pilot cities Actions, or one of the projects supported within the Actions, address aspects of sustainability. The Actions that most align to this outcome include:

- **Belfast** Sustainability Audit: aligned stakeholders to progress the sustainability agenda on the Maritime Mile
- **Braşov** Night-time Experience: immersive "light walks" and detailed guidelines to enliven the HUA at night through sustainable lighting
- **Grand Angoulême** Co-design a Trail: realised a 120km regional walking trail adopted by the regional authorities
- **Lisboa** Sprout Tank: promoted creative and heritage-based solutions for climate neutrality and circular economy
- **Nicosia** Heritage Walks and their Twins: showcased the different cultural and creative elements of the HUA's heritage, to be discovered on foot
- **Utrecht** Professionalising BKC: enhanced the capacity of the volunteer-run organisation, and adopting sustainable and circular economy principles, to develop it into a Hub
- **Slovenska Bistrica** Crouzet Hub: created co-working space for local creative start-ups and entrepreneurs using circular business models for refurbishment

### 3.9.1. Case study: Belfast Sustainability Audit

Belfast's Action 3 Sustainability Audit progressed the sustainability agenda across the Maritime Mile by gaining insights from business stakeholders and developing recommendations on the opportunities for collaborative sustainability projects towards a Green Tourism Accreditation.

*In 2024, the Maritime Belfast Trust applied for the internationally recognised Green Tourism Standard, and received a Gold award for its commitment to sustainability. This was a post-programme objective that was achieved within the timeline of the HUB-IN programme.*

#### Tactical recommendations:

- **Align Actions to existing policies and strategies:** The Belfast Waterfront Promenade Framework (Action 1) formed a robust starting point for sustainability interventions. The Hub's Action 2 "Sustainability Audit" linked in with this aspiration by delivering a comprehensive sustainability audit to understand the current sustainability agenda on the Maritime Mile. The Hub team ensured that the audit was delivered to complement the work being undertaken by Belfast Harbour on a sustainable port and the Innovation District's carbon neutral ambitions.
- **Get the right experts on board:** Maritime Belfast Trust and Belfast City Council widely circulated their tender to encourage applications from green tourism and sustainability organisations. They selected sustainability experts EarthCheck and Triterra to deliver a comprehensive sustainability audit that aimed to engage directly with stakeholders to better understand the level of work currently undertaken, or planned, on the sustainability agenda on the Maritime Mile.
- **Conduct a diagnostic, in collaboration with stakeholders:** The survey and interviews provided an early-stage diagnostic of the green status of HUA organisations, specifically relating to existence of shareable sustainability policies, ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) reports, procurement policies, and aspirations towards UN Sustainable Development Goals. Scoping local strategies and initiatives also helped inform the development of the sustainability audit. The audit was shared with 37 Maritime Mile stakeholders between March and April 2024. This **pre-engagement with stakeholders was essential and helped secure buy in for the sustainability workshop.**
- **Co-design strategies and policies leveraging the environmental concerns of the co-creators:** Following the survey, a stakeholder engagement workshop presented survey insights and explored the opportunities for collaborative working that could help progress the sustainability agenda across the Maritime Mile. Academic, community, private, public and voluntary sectors were all represented across the 37 participants, and collaborative projects identified, to **enable immediate action in key areas and assist the medium-term objective of Green Accreditation** (see below).
- **Join the "what" with the "how":** Further insights were gathered through a range of interviews with other key stakeholders to support the development of recommendations on how sustainability opportunities that could lead to Green Destination Accreditation. In June 2024, a draft report was developed by EarthCheck and Triterra outlining the key initiatives that are already taking place across Belfast and on the Maritime Mile as well as recommendations on the opportunities for collaborative sustainability projects which could support the achieve of Green Destination Accreditation on the Maritime Mile.
- **Under-promise and over-deliver:** While the Hub team noted green destination accreditation as the *likely* route for the Maritime Mile at Action Planning stage, it was

important to fully engage businesses and communities to better understand the level of work currently undertaken, or planned, on the sustainability agenda on the Maritime Mile, **test the appetite for certification** and, if applicable, select a certification framework that aligned with local opportunities. The stakeholder buy-in and momentum created through this approach allowed Maritime Belfast to expedite the post-programme objective of accreditation; they applied for the internationally recognised Green Tourism Standard in 2024, and were awarded a Gold award for its commitment to sustainability.

Based on insights from the Maritime Mile, follower cities may explore the following opportunities for collaborative sustainability projects:

- ***Boost leadership on sustainability issues*** Opportunities include establishing a joint, green subcommittee or working group that would be responsible for overseeing the general direction and progression of the sustainability agenda across the destination.
- ***Establish joint funding, procurement, and information and resource sharing opportunities*** These would help facilitate, manage, and maximise cost efficiencies for stakeholders across the destination. This might include opportunities to jointly procure waste management services, carbon foot printing expertise, and other key services and utilities. There was strong support for this initiative from the workshop held during this project.
- ***Take a coordinated approach to building sustainability credentials at the destination level*** for the Maritime Mile, and for individual businesses, to be credible and recognised by visitors and stakeholders. The report identified certification as the recommended route to achieve this. With the Green Claims Directive coming into force, informal credentials are unlikely to meet its requirements.
- ***Establish a formal sustainability framework to work towards***: For the Maritime Mile, joint progression towards an official sustainability certification for the Maritime Mile destination provided a sustainability framework for the group to work towards; this would ultimately deliver a **recognised destination accreditation** that would prove beneficial to the destination in terms of investment, visitation, and marketing opportunities. All the leading destination programmes are based on a similar set of criteria originating from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). Cities not following the certification route may choose to co-create a framework that works for their area.

#### Key references:

- D4.2 – [Belfast Action Plan](#)
- D5.3 – [City monitoring report](#)
- D 5.4 – [Final Final Economic, Social and Environmental Appraisal](#)



### 3.9.2. Case study: Lisbon Sprout Tank – Mocathon

Lisbon's Action 4 "Sprout Tank" 'germinated' multiple ideas for creative and heritage-based solutions for climate neutrality and circular economy in Colina do Castelo, while simultaneously creating conditions to facilitate new interactions and climate action projects.

*This Action realised multiple "experiments for a Circular and Climate Neutral Colina do Castelo", including: a Mocathon inviting students and their academic mentors to co-create solutions to temporarily repurpose a derelict and roofless municipal washhouse over only 3 days; an international student competition to reimagine two neighbourhoods in the HUA (in partnership with C40 Students Reinventing Cities); a reed masterclass for residents; a Net Zero workshop, and other activities.*

#### Tactical recommendations:

- **Co-create Actions with a diversity of stakeholders, networks and initiatives:** The Hub team mobilised numerous networks and stakeholders with a focus on heritage, innovation and sustainability, from local to international. Partnering for co-creation brought unexpected ideations, including from international participants.
- **Be flexible with where the Action will be realised:** The Mocathon was reliant on the granting of a space by the Santa Maria Maior civil parish council; this did not materialise, and the action had to be moved to a vacant public space of heritage value (Patio do Moca – a derelict and roofless municipal wash house) in the adjacent civil parish of Arroios. The change of venue, together with insufficient action by the parish officials, presented challenges in reaching out to nearby residents.
- **Create cross-disciplinary academic networks early on:** Most students and mentors participating in the Mocathon were from architecture/ design disciplines; the lack of engineering/ technical and ecology undermined the proposals involving renewable energy and green wall to reach self-sufficiency. Prioritise early relationship building with universities and colleges to get a wide range of academic disciplines on board.
- **Provide opportunities for knowledge enrichment among participants:** Students, mentors and organisers highly regarded their participation in co-creation activities, and networking and learning about new techniques at FABLAB. This generated interest from students to participate in future similar events.
- **Recognise the power of transferring knowledge to communities:** the Mocathon proposals frequently referenced local environmental challenges such as heat island effect, water consumption, biodiversity loss and food production. Community participants who experienced the transformed space expressed an increased awareness of sustainable solutions for heritage (though they themselves had not been involved in the co-creation or transformation). This shows the value of getting participants to learn experientially, and not just bringing in experts to do it for them.
- *(linking from the above)* **Collect evidence to make the case for opening and maintenance of historic public buildings:** Unfortunately after the end of Mocathon the space was closed again to the public due to safety reasons and lack of personnel for its maintenance. Gathering evidence on the benefits of opening historic assets to communities can help make the case for revitalising and reopening disused historic spaces. This could be through visitor counts, surveys, participant and visitor testimonials. Adopting a **standardized method for surveying participants** can result in more reliable data. Data collected across a wide demographic range will offer a more complete picture of the project's impacts.

- **Disseminate results to investors and partners:** the Mocathon results were presented to a group of six potential investors and future partners in a workshop discussing “New uses for old spaces” on replicating this model in other vacant spaces in the city.
- **Collaborate with local associations to connect with isolated local communities:** Given the lack of engagement of local stakeholders (entrepreneurs, creatives and residents in the HUA), HUB-IN Lisboa currently participates in a community group in Mouraria, with around 30 local organisations, which meets regularly to work on problems in the area, known as Fellows of Colina do Castelo. With this and other groups, HUB-IN Lisboa is also working on a community action plan to guarantee the safety and sense of security of Mouraria neighbourhood. Though not effective for this Action, these partnerships set the foundation for better long-term engagements with the local community and building trust for their participation in future programmes.
- **Plan Stage 2 in order to keep stakeholders engaged:** Another Sprout Tank initiative was planned with Mouraria Creative Hub (in 2024), to showcase sustainable solutions for the historic urban area of Mouraria, including handcrafted shading devices, evaporative cooling devices for small plazas and art installations made of bio based materials. Continued engagement with stakeholders enhances the potential for Actions to be replicated (in the same or a different area) and new Actions to be created.
- **Develop tailored stakeholder engagement strategies for different socio-professional, age and social groups:** Ensure that the type of activities developed to attract stakeholders are carefully designed to ensure maximum impact and buy-in from local agents.

**Key references:**

D4.2 – [Lisbon Action Plan](#)

D5.3 – Lisbon [City monitoring report](#)

Webpage: [Students' talent brings old venues to life - Hub-In](#)



### 3.9.3. *Transferability and knowledge exchange*

The following insights can be gathered from Actions implemented under this outcome, and recommendations made. As noted in Section 3.1, these have been categorised by the “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements that constitute the “ingredients of a HUB-IN place”, as per the project’s [Framework](#). In reality, some recommendations will align to more than one ingredient (for example, a recommendation about techniques to engage hard-to-reach communities may relate also to the ingredients Networks, Knowledge, and Urban Culture); for simplicity, they are listed here under one main ingredient, with recognition that some may also align to others. It can be a useful Hub exercise to consider each under the discussion question: how would this apply to *our* Hub? What local opportunities (or barriers) in other “entrepreneurial ecosystem” elements could this benefit?

#### *Urban Culture*

- **Harness the power of transferring knowledge to communities:** Involvement in innovative sustainability Actions provides participants (and visitors) the opportunity to learn about environmental challenges and technologies. Increased awareness is the first step to entrepreneurship.
- **Gather evidence on benefits of adaptive reuse of historic urban assets:** Through HUB-IN Actions, entrepreneurs, creatives and residents (young and old) had the chance to visit built heritage that they would normally be inaccessible or closed off to them. Adaptive reuse of historic assets has multiple benefits for environment, entrepreneurship and community. Gathering evidence on the benefits of using historic assets to communities can help make the case for revitalising and reopening disused historic spaces. This could be through visitor counts, surveys, participant and visitor testimonials. Adopting a **standardized method for surveying participants** can result in more reliable data. Data collected across a wide demographic range will offer a more complete picture of the project's impacts.
- **Encourage experimentations with sustainability and circularity, no matter how small:** One innovator in Slovenska Bistrica had an element of sustainability in their project, through recycled aluminium jewellery workshops, based on traditional metalworking techniques and with materials coming from a local aluminium factory (2kg/year). Though small, this creates awareness and dialogue for others to follow.
- **Inspire innovation in sustainability:** If HUAs are to truly become climate resilient, and/or circular economies, they will need to support or create green jobs that enable that. Participants in sustainability actions were seen to develop an appreciation of environmental challenges and want to take action. This creates dialogue, which can influence regulation. For example, Braşov’s lighting masterplan action, the overwhelming majority of participants believed that lighting in the HUA must consume as little energy as possible and be sustainable. The Municipality of Braşov is considering a new regulation for advertising, publicity and display activities within the city, which emphasises minimising light pollution and adhering to sustainability principles.

#### *Entrepreneurial Culture*

- **Nuture interest from children and youth for long term sustainability:** Engage the next generation who want to learn about their culture, as they may go on to develop skills in traditional crafts or cultural heritage. Cities should nurture children’s engagement with arts and heritage for longer term sustainability.

### *Marketplace / demand*

- **Use co-design to leverage the increasing topicality of environmental sustainability:** environmental sustainability is increasingly topical amongst communities and likely will be increasingly so. Co-creating ensures these voices are heard - but whilst communities supply the “why”, this may need balanced with experts who can supply the practical “how”. Municipalities and business might need to work together on “who pays”: Actions have shown that businesses are also open to environmental sustainability and even committing to starting Working Groups for their area, but the reality of commercial pressures means this is greatly assisted if benefits can be shown in order to make it an addition (not a sacrifice) for their bottom line. This may include the ways in which various green accreditations can benefit investment, visitation and marketing opportunities etc, or other aspects of the green market.
- **Encourage experimentations with sustainability and circularity, no matter how small:** One innovator in Slovenska Bistrica had an element of sustainability in their project, through recycled aluminium jewellery workshops, based on traditional metalworking techniques and with materials coming from a local aluminium factory (2kg/year). Though small, this creates awareness and dialogue for others to follow. Similarly, the Hub’s Crouzator refurbishment with recycled and upcycled materials saved 384kg CO2e of carbon.
- **‘Be entrepreneurial as a Hub’** – Test lots of innovation opportunities to realise a few very good ones.

### *Human resources*

- **Dedicate resources for transformation:** Cities that had a dedicated project manager tasked with steering the process progressed better in their transformation. However, success requires decision-making authority, or working as part of a cooperative team that has decision-making authority. An empowered project manager can work with different stakeholders to understand their needs and shape the initiative to address underlying issues in an effective and timely manner. This in turn results in stronger partnerships and collaborations.
- **Allocate clear ownership of (and accountability for) the Action:** (In lieu of a dedicated project manager) Some cities had senior members of different departments championing different Actions, working in collaboration with each other as an informal ‘steering group’ (e.g., Genova and Lisbon). This worked well as it provided accountability for progress of the overall Action, and agility and control over the activities delivered.
- **Have a well-resourced communications strategy:** Effective communication is critical and requires substantial time, effort, and resources. Limited communication capacities can be a significant barrier to promoting events and opportunities. In addition to targeted email lists and social media channels (which may or may not be effective), Hub teams often had to prioritize and invest in traditional methods like word-of-mouth, posters, and leaflets in high-traffic areas Their experiences underscore the importance of a well-planned communication strategy that accounts for local capacities and available channels.
- **Amplify “word of mouth” by providing participants with resources to facilitate dissemination and knowledge transfer about the HUA:** such as pre-prepared social media hashtags, QR codes, take-home materials to share with others, postcards showcasing the event and artists, and early invites to the next event. Such materials can also enable knowledge sharing that extends outside the HUA to potential visitors from other areas who learn about the HUA’s unique artisan heritage.



## Leadership

- **Actions are dynamic and must be able to adapt:** Hub teams strongly emphasised that the Action Plan must be a dynamic document with the flexibility to adapt. Although the objectives and expected impact are defined during the design phase of the Action Plan, it is essential to be able to adapt the initially planned approach and outputs to respond to the difficulties (and opportunities) encountered during the implementation phase. This relates also to “being entrepreneurial as a Hub”.
- **Get the right experts on board:** Maritime Belfast Trust and Belfast City Council widely circulated their tender to encourage applications from green tourism and sustainability organisations. They selected sustainability experts EarthCheck and Triterra to deliver a comprehensive sustainability audit that aimed to engage directly with stakeholders to better understand the level of work currently undertaken, or planned, on the sustainability agenda on the Maritime Mile.
- **Develop tailored stakeholder engagement strategies for different socio-professional, age and social groups:** Clear and compelling messaging about the Action's importance can significantly enhance community engagement and participation. It is imperative social innovation initiatives have clear value-added messages (“what is in it for me / for my community”).
- **Organically develop a governance model to collectively progress sustainability ambitions:** Most pilot cities developed their governance models in an informal and organic way; as the stakeholder engagement started to converge on specific Actions, means of progressing and steering these were set up (through working groups, steering groups and advisory committees). Other cities have built a part of their governance infrastructure **to incorporate existing formal and informal organisations**. Hence, their governance structure relies on maintaining the network created through the HUB and maintaining a mix of existing stakeholder groups working across different scales (from organisations and local communities, to city and region). For example, Belfast established the Waterfront Task Group to progress specific sustainability aims, in addition to existing organisations leading improvement of the Maritime Mile.
- **Implement sustainability interventions in the HUA to enhance stakeholder confidence in the HUA:** Entrepreneurs and businesses in Utrecht's Werkspoorkwartier felt that clear initiatives have been taken to achieve improved organisation. Steps are being taken for greening and much more attention has been paid to (traffic) safety in the area in order to significantly improve the overall experience for businesses and their visitors and customers. Specifically, plans include planting extra trees and shrubs (this will cause a few parking spaces to disappear) and creating green strips / wadis on Gietijzerstraat and Walserijstraat to collect rainwater.
- **Collaborate with local organisations to engage with isolated / disengaged communities:** It can be extremely difficult to engage with local communities and residents, particularly true in areas where previous projects and programmes have left communities disenfranchised (stakeholder fatigue). Collaboration with local associations already in contact with these communities is essential to mitigate problems of community involvement and participation.
- **Social inclusion is a two way street – make it a relationship of give and take:** Lisbon has formed a long-term partnership within the Mouraria neighbourhood, developing projects for the benefit of the community. Though not helpful for engaging the community for this Action, such “give and take” partnerships set the foundation for better long-term

engagements with the local community and build trust for their participation in future programmes.

- **Recognise that securing local needs in tourist hotspots can be a complex longer-term activity:** Some cities mobilised neighbourhood-level interventions that aimed to balance resident and tourist needs and saw preliminary positive indications. **Belfast** approached sustainable tourism from an environmental perspective, setting future aspirations in its "Waterfront Promenade Framework" and "Sustainability Audit" for sustainability certification and destination accreditation in accordance with Global Sustainable Tourism Council criteria (see "Increased inclusion of environmental sustainability principles into HUA redevelopment" below). Thus, a score of "partial" results. Nicosia walkable inner city/ sustainable tourism

Further detailed insights are available in the pilot cities' Evaluation Report (D5.3).

**Key HUB-IN resources:**

D3.2 – [HUB-IN Framework](#)

D 2.7 – [Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in Historic Urban Areas](#)

D 3.9 – [HUB-IN Toolkit](#)

A fuller list of HUB-IN resources is provided in Section 5.1.

## 4. OTHER INSIGHTS FROM HUB-IN

This Chapter **provides an overview of key frameworks** that shaped the methodology and implementation approach, including general recommendations and insights where relevant, i.e., insights apply to all Actions, across all outcomes relating to the HUB-IN project.

The following sections cover:

- Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Ingredients
- EU Innovation Scorecard and HUB-IN\*
- Financial Sustainability of the HUB\*
- HUB-IN Ethics\*
- Monitoring & Evaluation\*

\*Relevant insights from pilot cities are included in these sections.

## 4.1. ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM INGREDIENTS

### Overview

Central to the HUB-IN project is the question of how innovation and entrepreneurship can ignite and contribute to heritage-led regeneration in Historic Urban Areas. A self-sustaining urban heritage-based ecosystem takes time to grow; it is a complex web of stakeholders, resources and collaboration that forms, interacts and evolves over prolonged periods of time, with individual stakeholders and initiatives all making their distinct contribution to the overall ecosystem.

To support pilot cities in identifying, developing and leveraging their entrepreneurial ecosystems, a framework for heritage-led entrepreneurial ecosystems in Historic Urban Areas was developed as part of the HUB-IN Framework (see [HUB-IN Framework](#)). The entrepreneurial ecosystem framework sets out a range of ingredients (the orange elements in Figure 5) and arrangements (the purple elements in Figure 5) that help to foster and maintain innovation and entrepreneurship in Historic Urban Areas.

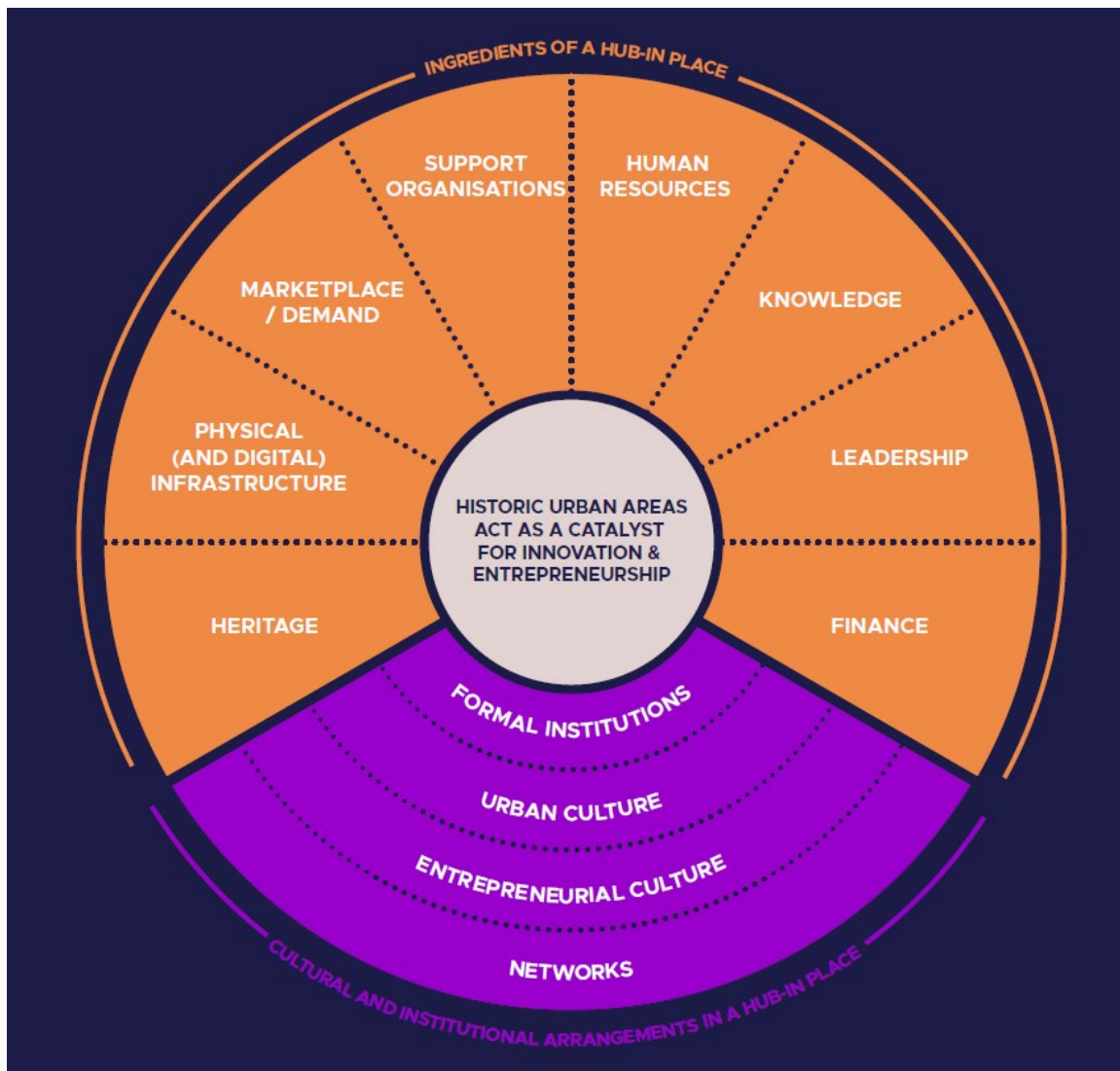


Figure 5: Entrepreneurial ecosystem ingredients

**In summary the eight ingredients relate to:**

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Heritage</b></p> <p>which represents those tangible and intangible elements inherited from the past which reflect and express constantly evolving values, beliefs and traditions.</p> | <p><b>Physical and digital infrastructures</b></p> <p>which refer to the availability of structures and facilities that facilitate proximity and interaction between different stakeholders.</p>  | <p><b>Marketplace/demand</b></p> <p>which shows the importance of innovative and entrepreneurial activities addressing a clear need, or a receptive marketplace.</p>                                       | <p><b>Support organisations</b></p> <p>such as research institutes or incubators, which can provide input for innovative and entrepreneurial processes.</p> |
| <p><b>Human resources</b></p> <p>the experience, skills and talents of the local population, and of those who are attracted to the area from outside the city.</p>                          | <p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <p>as an openly accessible resource that both local and extra-local partners can build upon (e.g., through open-data sources, accessible work and educational spaces)</p> | <p><b>Financial resources</b></p> <p>which can take the shape of innovative financial models. Finance and funding that support innovation and entrepreneurship are key to enable creative communities.</p> | <p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p>understood as the presence of individuals or groups that guide and direct collective action.</p>                                |

In each HUB-IN Place, the availability and level of development of the above ingredients results in a unique mix of resources.

The four arrangements relate to: **entrepreneurial culture** (general attitudes towards risk and creative processes), the **urban culture** (meanings and ambience in parts of the HUA), **networks** (density and strength of formal and informal connections), and the presence and priorities of **formal institutions** – all of these influence the way in which ingredients can be mobilised, combined and employed for transformative change.

More insights into the dynamics of heritage-based entrepreneurial ecosystems within Historic Urban Areas can be found in D2.7, linked below.

**Key HUB-IN resources**

[D3.3 – HUB-IN Framework](#)

[D 2.7 – Entrepreneurial ecosystems in the HUA](#)

A fuller list of HUB-IN resources is provided in Section 5.1.

## 4.2. EU INNOVATION SCORECARD AND HUB-IN

### Overview:

The European Commission's Regional Innovation Scoreboard provides a comparative analysis of innovation performance in EU regions across approximately 30 headline indicators (approximately 70 including sub-indicators). Each nation has indices for the innovation maturity of its regions relevant to national level, relative to EU level, and an overall categorization as an emerging/moderate/strong/leading innovator, amongst other metrics. Tracked annually, these are intended to assist assessment of how favourable conditions are to innovation in any given region<sup>4</sup>.

Cities can assess their region's innovation scores considering where their HUB-IN Actions may assist their development, for example, using the Actions' evidence when building business cases for investment, funding, replication or scaling. Whilst any of the Innovation Scorecard indicators may be relevant to Hubs of Innovation, **ten are of relatively high relevance and coherence with HUB-IN's methodologies and focus:**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Population involved in lifelong learning</i>    | <i>SMEs introducing product innovations</i>          |
| <i>R&amp;D expenditures public sector</i>          | <i>SMEs introducing business process innovations</i> |
| <i>R&amp;D expenditures business sector</i>        | <i>Innovative SMEs collaborating with others</i>     |
| <i>Non-R&amp;D innovation expenditures</i>         | <i>Employment in innovative enterprises</i>          |
| <i>Innovation expenditures per person employed</i> | <i>Sales of innovative products</i>                  |

**Innovation scorecard indicators are not a direct indicator of local innovation readiness:** For HUB-IN cities, this is particularly important as Actions are shaped and implemented in a specific locality or neighbourhood. Being at regional level, the indicators are too large a geographical scale to be representative of innovation appetite for specific neighbourhood-level Actions implemented in a relatively short time period. **At a local level**, cities can assess their maturity using the steps laid out in the [HUB-IN Framework](#) (pages 47-48): Phase 1 - Understanding ecosystems; Phase 2 - Sharing tools and methodologies; Phase 3 - Densifying networks of innovation and guiding replication.

**Innovation readiness also needs to be considered in light of prevailing local factors** and other aspects of Hub creation, such as political buy-in and stakeholder needs. For example, a local government can provide certainty and ambition in the early and middle stages of its term (e.g. Slovenska Bistrica's Crouzet refurbishment). Conversely, a new local government can lose interest in continuation of an Action by the previous mayor (as in the case of adoption of guidelines in Braşov). Stakeholder needs also vary with socio-economic and cultural factors, such as demographics; for example, stakeholders in historic urban areas subject to regeneration plans can be fatigued from start-and-stop activities from previous projects and initially not keen to engage (Lisbon, Genova), or specific CCI stakeholders and communities may be hard to reach (Grand Angoulême, Nicosia).

In summary, while specific Innovation Scorecard indicators provide useful cues, several socio-economic-political-cultural factors will affect readiness for a *particular* innovation Action *at neighbourhood level*, and should be considered in the design of the Hubs, from Current Landscapes mapping to engagement with stakeholders to shape and implement the Actions.

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<sup>4</sup> For further detail: please see D5.4 Final Economic, Social and Environmental Appraisal page 169  
D5.5 HUB-IN Guidebook for Cities - February 2025

## Findings/ recommendations:

The implementation of accelerator programmes and open calls provides some insights into innovation readiness at a local level and some steps that cities took to realise innovation opportunities in their local Hubs.

- **Bring in expertise through partnerships:** Most pilot cities brought in expertise and support through collaborations and partnerships to support their open calls. For example, **Slovenska Bistrica** cooperated with the Centre for Creativity/MAO to design an open call for participation in the 'Crouzator' accelerator programme. Having an experienced partner throughout the process proved to be invaluable, also as they brought a pool of mentors to guide the successful participants. To enhance their mentoring capacity, **Braşov** extended their search nationally, particularly in Bucharest, helping the team onboard mentors with specific knowledge for this program. The additional support was invaluable for innovators, allowing them to develop their ideas into original prototypes and solutions. Larger cities too benefitted from expertise brought in by specialist experts, such as **Lisbon** who brought in a specialist in the Ceramics sector to scope suppliers and exhibitors.
- **Establish strong synergies with other on-going initiatives in the area:** for example, Genova HUB-IN project worked in close synergy with the Caruggi Urban Regeneration Plan, while Belfast made the link with its "Bolder Vision" document explicit to activate interest in the Maritime Mile. Lisbon aligned relationships with C40 and other sustainability projects to accelerate its HUB-IN efforts.
- **Extend the call to surrounding areas to enhance quality and diversity of proposals:** As a small town, **Slovenska Bistrica** opened its call to artists and creative entrepreneurs from surrounding Municipalities. This can also apply to specific areas in bigger cities. For example, **Lisbon** initially opened the De-incubator call to entrepreneurs from the Colina do Castelo neighbourhood; however, they did not receive applications due to the lack of a critical mass of local entrepreneurs. The call was subsequently opened internationally and received 45 proposals (from which 7 teams and 21 entrepreneurs were selected, and 11 solutions with a social, environmental and heritage impact for Colina do Castelo realised). In this new context, a portfolio of national and international entrepreneurs came together and worked collaboratively to respond to local needs.
- **Balance flexibility with simplicity:** Calls that are too broad may not be attractive to creative entrepreneurs, while calls that are too narrow may only invite a limited interest. HUB-IN pilot cities took different approaches to address this. **Slovenska Bistrica** invited ideas for small projects for the HUA and, judging from the breadth of ideas (but lacking detail) that the call was too open, it narrowed the proposal development to a specific part of the HUA – this helped develop tangible proposals. **Grand Angoulême** created the objectives of the call with stakeholders to help ensure that call would be of interest to them; the Hub team also disseminated the call widely to artists outside its network to invite new perspectives on the territory. **Belfast** took a Match & Ignite approach. In advance of launching the Maritime Mile Challenge Fund, the Hub team provided numerous opportunities for innovators to connect to potential partners – this included engaging with local communities and stakeholders to partner with innovators, developing a Hub of Innovation co-design directory to help innovators connect to potential partners and, finally, a co-design workshop to soft-launch the fund and providing an opportunity for 40 innovators and potential partners to meet and discuss Challenge Fund Ideas. **Genova's** defined three pillars for its experimental call (akin to three challenge areas), and were surprised by the response from local associations with a focus on social inclusion. Selecting the most promising proposals that met the challenge definitions resulted in a variety of activities that engaged local residents and businesses, while bringing footfall to the HUA. **Braşov's** open call was unique in that it

engaged students and youth from local schools and colleges, while **Utrecht's** talent development programme sought to support new artists and creative entrepreneurs in the area.

- To guide cities in shaping their calls, the framework below may provide inspiration and clarity on the terminologies and types activities each involves<sup>5</sup>.

## Incubator or Accelerator?

| Features<br>Incubation type | Investment | Office/W ork Space | Services - inc. mentoring | Fixed duration | Cohort-based | Selective |
|-----------------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|
| Incubator                   | N          | Y                  | Y                         | N              | N            | Y         |
| Accelerator                 | Y          | Y                  | Y                         | Y              | Y            | Y‡        |
| Pre-accelerator             | N          | N                  | Y                         | Y†             | Y            | Y         |
| Virtual Accelerator         | Y/N        | N                  | Y§                        | Y              | Y            | Y         |
| Virtual Incubator           | N          | N                  | Y                         | N              | N            | Y/N       |
| Active seed / VC            | Y          | Y/N*               | Y/N*                      | N              | N            | Y         |
| Coworking space +           | N          | Y                  | Y                         | N              | N            | N         |
| Makerspace                  | N          | Y                  | Y                         | N              | N            | N         |

† Less than one month  
‡ Highly selective  
§ Delivered online

*Differences between incubator, accelerator, coworking space and makerspace calls*

- Invest time in awareness raising and inspiration for the community:** Open calls may receive too few responses or proposals that do not make it through the selection criteria. To overcome this, invest time and effort into familiarising the stakeholders and the public of the novel initiatives and their particularities through more intensive processes of **awareness raising, capacity building and inspiration**. This can be done through collective ideation and gathering and refining ideas with the community, focus groups, online surveys, or in-person interactions with the community. Ensure to follow through on Actions and be aware of stakeholder fatigue.
- Be careful with overburdening your stakeholders:** This is particularly relevant for small towns or neighbourhoods that have been subjected to numerous regeneration programmes. Asking the same small pool of stakeholders to contribute can lead to stakeholder fatigue, because they might have already told their story multiple times. Be clear on what you are trying to achieve and why you are contacting them, and follow through with clear communication and actions afterwards.
- Plan stage 2:** Having a plan for what comes next can help keep stakeholders engaged, and can help gain buy-in for the next stage in terms of resource commitments and funding. This can be done by setting up of formal steering groups or committees, or more informal means may be deployed to keep the conversation flowing. For example, **Slovenska Bistrica** set up an “ideas board” in the Crouzator courtyard to invite ideas for the next stages; **Belfast** set up various task groups that bring together multiple cross-sectoral partnerships,

<sup>5</sup> Developed by Connected Places Catapult (WP3 Match & Ignite) and Crowd Funding Hub, and presented at the Slovenska Bistrica Consortium meeting in 2024.  
D5.5 HUB-IN Guidebook for Cities - February 2025



and **Utrecht** 'professionalised' BKC, empowering them to obtain a 3-year funding agreement from a local fund. **Grand Angoulême** found that, while creative entrepreneurs and artists were initially hard to reach and keep engaged, the consolidation of the CCL network and the Caravanes provide them with a reason to convene and keep engaged.

### **Key HUB-IN resources:**

HUB-IN has a number of tools available to help cities understand and realise their innovation opportunities.

- **The [HUB-IN Framework](#)** establishes the conceptual values, criteria and phases that cities can take towards being 'HUB-IN Places'.
- **The HUB-IN Atlas** provides case studies of cities and their innovative approaches to heritage. This can be found here: [Home - HUB-IN Atlas](#)
- **The HUB-IN [Match & Ignite Programme](#)** guides HUB-IN cities teams how to recruit and engage with innovators effectively in their local context and HUB-IN missions, allowing cities to design and manage their innovation programme in five steps: (1) Managing your programme; (2) Design your offer for innovators; (3) Disseminate your offer; (4) Select innovators; (5) Engage with and support innovators. The complete Match & Ignite module can be found within the [HUB-IN Academy](#).
- **The Business Finance and Governance models** guide, and the Dialogue tool can support cities on identifying opportunities and opening dialogue with stakeholders.
- The **HUB-IN Alliance** provides opportunities for peer learning that can assist city leaders and Hub teams looking to develop ideas for stimulating innovation appetite.

A fuller list of HUB-IN resources is provided in Section 5.1.

## 4.3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HUB

### Overview

Financial sustainability is critical to how the Hub survives beyond the time that the initial funding is available, either through a grant or municipal budget. Ensuring financial sustainability required both efficient use of budgets during the programme, as well as making the case for investment beyond the programme.

### Findings

Principles that were seen to contribute to the success of Hubs that succeeded in attracting Funding and Finance beyond the programme were:

- **Stretch municipal budgets by making use of matched funding:** for example, Belfast capitalized on the momentum built through their co-creation activities to attract matched funding from mix of public, private and voluntary organisations in the HUA that shared their aims.
- **Demonstrate alignment with local policies to assist with municipal funding:** for example, the Lisbon Hub's Actions assist with implementation of relevant local policies and place strategies, and are in the process of being awarded funding for their Hub and partners. Demonstrating this alignment can ease the application process.
- **Capture the evidence that makes the case for additional investment and funding:** for example, Belfast attracted funding that was successful due to evidence in the Waterfront Framework to greenify one side of the bridge gateway to Maritime Mile. The Waterfront Promenade Framework was also used to leverage funding from the Irish Government for a feasibility study for a bridge on the Maritime Mile.
- **Leverage political sway:** In Slovenska Bistrica, the municipality has been politically swayed to support the Hub, based on the piloting results. However, public funding alone may not be sufficient or permanent to scale the activities and programmes of the Hub, and the Hub team has also identified some additional funding streams to continue its activities.
- **Leverage networks and ambitions in the local ecosystem:** for example, Utrecht secured a commitment to annual funding from the Entrepreneurs Fund and also the HUA's owners' collective, both committed to recur over the next 3 years and based on the Hubs' experiences, accomplishments and shared ambitions.
- **Think outside the Hub, for wider project synergies:** for example, a member in Braşov's governance structure submitted a project for funding from Braşov Municipality and the complementary activities used alignment with the local HUB-IN Actions to help their case: multidisciplinary events in the HUA focussed on transforming public spaces into hubs of art and creativity, involving local artists, the community and companies.
- **Small investments can have a "flywheel effect" in making places and organisations investable:** 'Un-investability' can be a problem in declining heritage areas, due to lack of confidence from investors and stakeholders with regards to "return on investment" (RoI) and value. The relatively small initial financial investments from HUB-IN in the cities local Hubs have initiated a flywheel effect. In Utrecht, the financial investments enabled the local organisations to have quarterly meetings, create a better website, and have better communications and events. This in turn made the hub more credible and trustworthy, and ultimately more investable for other stakeholders. (for further detail, see D5.4 pp 41-42).

## **Key HUB-IN resources**

Current Landscapes

[Business Finance and Governance Models](#)

Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology

## 4.4. HUB-IN APPROACH TO ETHICS

### Overview:

HUB-IN is an iterative, collaborative and participatory project aiming at innovation, change and regeneration dealing with many dimensions of the city and of the lives of citizens. The ethical dimension provides some conceptual clarity in the moral sphere and a checklist of concerns to be reflected upon, contributing to validate actions and decision taken to increase the positive impact of the work done for society. Being more conscious of the ethical component of a project enlarges details may have gone unnoticed. Looking more closely and carefully triggers and develops a sensitivity to issues otherwise ignored.

Ethics approach followed by HUB-IN partners and pilot cities

The HUB-IN ethics approach was developed through discussions and workshops with all partners. Working with an ethical advisor, the partners tried to understand and be more aware of how ethics is relevant for work with and within cities, as well as how to enact and implement it in developing the Hubs.

The approach is outlined in three videos of three minutes each:

**Video 1: Ethics and HUB-IN:** The HUB-IN project has many dimensions and they are all connected with ethics in one way or another. This short video provides an introduction to ethics, as a system of principles and field of inquiry & practical guidance on choices for citizens and cities. See what this means in HUB-IN.

**Video 2: Ethics and Citizens:** As a co-creative project listening to citizens is a core part. This short video talks about ethical citizens and the two-way relationship implementing innovation, change and regeneration. See what this means in HUB-IN.

**Video 3: Ethics and cities:** Can HUB-IN cities and citizens co-create ethical futures? This short video gives an outlook on the benefits of ethics in cities, with a call to purposefully address social challenges, sustainability, decarbonisation, accountability in governance, equity to name a few. See what this means in HUB-IN.

In addition, **an ethics paper** (WP1) was prepared to stimulate the discussion and to guide the consortium in considering its approach at each step of their HUB-IN journey.

### Findings/ Recommendations:

These resources and embedding ethics principles early in the project process stimulated discussions and shaped ethical approaches that **fostered inclusivity, openness** and a **willingness to learn and adapt** at key stages; for example, when identifying and including stakeholders, exploring community needs, or considering impact of interventions on wider communities and businesses (for example, those who may not want to adopt innovation). This allowed the city Hubs to foster creativity and inclusion and bring together stakeholders who would not normally have met or collaborated.

The ethical approach is reflected in the outcomes of each of the cities' Hubs. For example, Braşov considered the needs of its residents, **including older/younger demographics**, who could not use the city centre due to overcrowding or disengagement. Grand Angoulême ensured that their efforts **benefit emerging local artists and communities**, not only the main creative organisations. And Belfast focused on **resurfacing lost histories** within its HUA, including those of marginalised communities.

### Key HUB-IN resources:

HUB-IN ethics videos: [HUB-IN & Ethics - HUB-IN](#)

HUB-IN toolkit provides resources to support cities at various stages in the HUB-IN process adopting an ethical approach: [Toolkit - HUB-IN](#)

## 4.5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A solid monitoring approach can help your Hub to more easily prove, and improve, its impacts. The sheer diversity of opportunities (and challenges) within HUAs mean that there is no single technique or dataset that will demonstrate benefits across all projects in all Hubs - however, there are some common principles that the pilot cities used to measure and understand progress towards their objectives. Some key principles include:

- **Getting clear on your “Theory of Change”**  
The “anchor” for the pilot cities’ monitoring and evaluation work is their Theory of Change. This uses logic models to map how the envisioned activities and projects in the Hub intend to drive change for different stakeholder groups in the short-, medium- and long-term. These are best done in close collaboration with key stakeholders, for example in interactive workshops, with a logic model as the output. This enables indicators to be prioritised, baselined and evaluated, as well as providing a foundation that can be revisited over time to see if adaptations are needed.
- **Co-design your indicators and data collection**  
There is often not one single “correct” answer for a Theory of Change. Rather, different stakeholder groups may have different views and priorities - the power lies precisely in the debate, as assumptions can be uncovered and tested, barriers and enablers identified, and consensus built around a common view of how change will happen, for who, and in what timeframes. If you have access to expert facilitators, you might consider a systems-based logic model that can capture complex dynamic feedback loops. HUB-IN used linear versions to easily distinguish the short-term impacts from long-term impacts (i.e. expected within project timelines Vs expected to occur post-project).
- **Consider the unintended**  
A typical starting point for stakeholders is identifying the challenges in the HUA and the vision and benefits the Hub will bring. However, an important aspect of monitoring and evaluation is considering the *unintended* impacts – both positive and negative. For example, is there a risk that revitalising the HUA will increase demand for local housing from affluent outsiders and thereby contribute to gentrification? If so, then indicators on the availability and affordability of housing may become relevant. Each intervention is unique, so local knowledge is key. Pay attention to underprivileged communities, for whom negative effects of any intervention can be disproportionate.
- **Make use of local experts**  
Assessing impacts can be a complex area, especially when many other investments, programmes, policies or trends are affecting the HUA. Hubs may find themselves asking, how can they credibly attribute change to *their* Actions (as opposed to other causes). And what other factors might affect the discovery of net overall impacts. For example, if new businesses are enticed to locate in the HUA, do they genuinely lead to a *net* increase in local commerce or could some of it be simply displacing business from another local location? Municipal colleagues in economics and social / environmental sciences can advise on how to account for some of these complexities, thus empowering decision makers with more robust evidence.
- **Plan your monitoring to be cost-effective and realistic**  
Monitoring plans needs to be actionable and feasible in order for the evaluations to generate useable insights and instil a process of regular reflection. Cities (and stakeholders) can assess the Theory of Change and knowledge of local datasets to prioritise the top indicators that will give insights and enable adaptive action to be taken (if needed). Here a principle of proportionality is important, whereby the value of additional data collection needs balanced against the additional insights it will reveal and the cost-effectiveness of doing so.

Different outcomes and theories of change require different techniques, ranging from quantitative to qualitative, simple to complex. For example, pilot cities deployed a variety of methods including land use studies, representative community surveys, accelerator economics studies, input-output models, carbon emissions tracking, semi-structured interviews, skills assessments, visitor demographic dashboards, attitudinal studies, trendline analysis, investment tracking and more.

Example outcomes assessed by the pilot cities are summarised at high level below. N.B. this is not an exhaustive list of all potential areas that future Hubs could measure: HUAs are complex areas with complex needs, and Hubs may well have their own bespoke objectives according to their local context and current focus – as above, this is where establishing a clear Theory of Change, with stakeholders, will help to refine and identify the priority indicators for your Hub.

#### *Economic indicators*

- Start-ups created
- Revenues attracted
- Jobs supported
- Supply chain effects
- Innovation improvement
- Networks and knowledge

#### *Social indicators*

- Social inclusion
- Accessibility
- Sense of place
- Feelings of belonging
- Health and well-being
- Behavioural change

#### *Environmental indicators*

- Avoided waste-to-landfill
- Carbon emissions
- Skills in environmental innovation
- Inclusion in strategies and policies

#### *Other indicators*

- Flywheel effects – whereby small nudges attract resources and initiatives across the ecosystem
- Financial sustainability of the Hub - funding, contributions, stakeholder commitments etc
- Demographic inclusion – for example representation from key groups, gender, age etc
- Interim progress towards the Theory of Change – building an evidence base to assist decisions
- Process evaluation – reflecting on lessons learned and key turning points in implementation

Example frameworks and templates for the above can be found in the project Toolkit (<https://hubin-project.eu/toolkit>), categorised by the following headings in the Toolkit:

- *“Get clarity on what will be measured and why”*  
Simple logic model templates and workshop guidance
- *“Consider the approach for impact assessment”*  
A common impact assessment framework, as applied in the pilot cities
- *“Tailored Monitoring Methodology (examples)”*  
Examples of how the pilot cities tailored the impact assessment framework to their needs
- *“Evaluation Reports”*  
Each pilot city’s findings and learnings on their impacts

# 5. FURTHER RESOURCES

## 5.1. OVERVIEW OF HUB-IN RESOURCES

HUB-IN resources referenced in this document and available to follower cities include:

| Deliverable  | Description   |
|--|---|
| <a href="#">D2.5 HUA Atlas</a>   | International case-studies of Historic Urban Areas regenerated through entrepreneurship and innovation  |
| <a href="#">D2.7 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in Historic Urban Areas</a>      | the key elements and dynamics of heritage-based entrepreneurial ecosystems within Historic Urban Areas (WP2)  |
| <a href="#">D3.1 Current Landscapes of the Eight HUAs</a>                    | the city-level narratives on local moods, hopes, fears and community needs that are the point the cities are starting from (WP3)  |
| <a href="#">D3.2 HUB-IN Framework</a> and three Long Read Papers             | the conceptual values, criteria and phases that cities can take towards being 'HUB-IN Places' (WP3)<br>Long reads: HUB-IN Clusters of Innovation; Ingredients of a HUB-IN Place; Alignment with European and International Policy   |
| D3.3 <a href="#">HUB-IN Toolkit</a>  | structured along the stages of the HUB-IN journey, this contains downloadable 'tool worksheets' and links to HUB-IN resources and reports, as well as external content (WP3)  |
| D3.4 HUB-IN <a href="#">Match &amp; Ignite</a> Programme                     | guides HUB-IN cities teams on how to recruit and engage with innovators effectively in their local context and HUB-IN missions  |
| <a href="#">D3.5 Eight Tailored City Roadmaps</a>                            | the overarching vision, values and missions of each Hub, offering numerous Action outlines to address those (WP3)   |
| D3.6 <a href="#">Business Finance and Governance Models in HUB-IN cities</a> | document mapping Actions identified in City Roadmaps to opportunities for finance and governance, as identified by cities in dialogue with stakeholders   |
| D4.1 <a href="#">HUB-IN Geotool</a>  | a georeferenced framework, to get to know each of the "HUB-IN Places" in terms of their Social and Economic Profile, Environmental Assets, Urban Innovation and Development, Cultural Heritage, and Local Communities & Initiatives, as well as to participate in their activities (WP 4) |
| D4.2 <a href="#">Eight HUB-IN City Action Plans</a>                          | operational details on the specific Actions being implemented: their context, goals, objectives, steps and timelines (WP4)  |
| D4.5 <a href="#">Final HUB-IN Story Telling</a>                              | retrospective city narratives highlighting the Actions implemented and the activities that took place in the eight Historic Urban Areas (WP4)   |
| <a href="#">D5.1 Common Impact Assessment Framework</a>                      | key principles and considerations in impact assessments on urban innovation programmes, with introductions to logic modelling, example indicators and some template materials (WP5)   |
| <a href="#">D5.2 Adapted Monitoring Methodology for each Pilot City</a>      | tailored monitoring plans and materials developed with pilot cities for collecting, analysing and evaluating data (quantitative and qualitative) on the benefits of their Actions (WP5)   |
| D5.3 pilot cities' <a href="#">Evaluation Reports</a>                        | the results of the pilot cities' monitoring and evaluation activities, including findings on positives and negatives, outcomes, impacts, learnings over time and next steps (WP5)   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| D5.4 <a href="#">Final Economic, Social and Environmental Appraisal and Lessons Learned</a> | an overall appraisal of economic, social, environmental and cultural impacts across the eight pilot cities' and - given many of HUB-IN's intended impacts are longer term than the duration of the programme - an evaluation of interim progress against the programme's bigger picture (WP5) |
| D6.2 HUB-IN Alliance  | network of HUB-IN follower cities formed as part of the project committed to replicating and scaling up the HUB-in approach (WP6)   |
| D6.3 <a href="#">Historic Urban Areas Leadership Guide</a>                                  | a guide on key conclusions and policy recommendations for Mayors, politicians, CEOs, creatives, community leads, institutions and more (WP6)  |
| D7.3 <a href="#">HUB-IN Academy</a>   | open co-learning environment for Municipalities, communities, and local stakeholders to develop their individual skills and competencies and their organisational capacities on entrepreneurial approaches to heritage-led urban regeneration (WP7)   |
| and other resources   | such as other HUB-IN reports, webinars, papers, training and more (WP1,2,3,4,6,7)   |



## 5.2. GLOSSARY

### Key terms

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Action Plans</i>              | A description of the implementation for each of the eight pilot cities, including definitions of the objectives, resources and timings for setting up their Hubs of Innovation and their associated local projects (“Actions”).                                   |
| <i>Co-creation</i>               | A collaborative innovation approach actively involving stakeholders in the design process (e.g. public sector, private sector, academia, community etc), to keep them informed, consulted, involved and empowered.  |
| <i>Cultural heritage</i>         | HUB-IN considers cultural heritage in the broad sense, drawing on UNESCO’s ‘Historic Urban Landscapes’ <sup>6</sup> to cover tangible and intangible values of a place including monuments, archaeological sites, paintings, know-how, oral traditions, and more. |
| <i>Entrepreneurial Ecosystem</i> | HUB-IN’s configuration of 12 ingredients that aid innovative and entrepreneurial behaviour, contributing to cultural heritage led regeneration. For example: Finance, Leadership, Knowledge, Marketplace / Demand, Urban Culture, Networks, etc.                  |
| <i>Follower cities</i>           | Cities who wish to join the network of HUB-IN cities (HUB-IN Network), learn from the knowledge developed (HUB-IN Academy) or otherwise replicate Hubs of Innovation in their Historic Urban areas  |
| <i>Historic Urban Areas</i>      | Urban areas resulting from the historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of “historic centre” or “ensemble” to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting.                                 |
| <i>Pilot cities</i>              | The eight cities (Belfast, Braşov, Genova, Grand Angoulême, Lisbon, Nicosia, Slovenska Bistrica, Utrecht) who piloted, tested and demonstrated activities of co-creation and co-design for Hubs of Innovation   |

### Key acronyms

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <i>CCI</i>    | Cultural and Creative Industries   |
| <i>HUB-IN</i> | Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the Transformation of Historic Urban Areas |
| <i>HUA</i>    | Historic Urban Areas (see above for definition)  |
| <i>SME</i>    | Small and Medium-sized Enterprises   |

*See the HUB-IN Framework for a full set of HUB-IN definitions, at: <https://hubin-project.eu/library>*

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<sup>6</sup> Member States, 2019. The UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Available at: <<https://whc.unesco.org/en/hul/>>

# HUB-IN



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