D6.2 HUB-IN Alliance

February 2025

HUB-IN Alliance

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How to cite this document: Smith, B, HUB-IN Alliance, HUB-IN Project -Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the Transformation of Historic Urban Areas H2020-SC5-2019, GA 869429.

Project information:

Project name: HUB-IN

Project duration: Sep 2020 – February 2025

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Version history:

Version	Date	Authors	Description
1.0	February 2025	Smith, Brian	D 6.2 HUB-IN Alliance

Contents

About HUB-IN

Mission

Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (HUB-IN) aim to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in Historic Urban Areas (HUAs), 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 directly draws from the UNESCO concept of Historic Urban Landscapes. HUB-IN fully aligns with and contributes to strategic European policy including 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 for innovation and entrepreneurship will be developed in the HUAs of eight city partners (Lisbon, Slovenska Bistrica, Braşov, Nicosia, Genova, Grand Angoulême, Belfast, and Utrecht). In the second stage, the resulting methods and tools will be scaled up to a global network of HUAs in follower cities and the HUB-IN Alliance. The Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship will test, demonstrate, and pilot activities through co-creation and co-design in three main clusters with the potential to deliver the sustainable transformation of HUAs: 1) Culture and Creative industries, 2) New Lifestyles and 3) Resilient and Human Connected Places.

Vision

HUB-IN expects to contribute to reverse trends of abandonment and neglect of historic heritage in a systematic way through the creation of networks of Hubs where innovation will be the main driver. The project will also 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 Behind HUB-IN

D6.2 HUB-IN Alliance

1. Background

The HUB-IN project is a research and innovation initiative-funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 programme, that aims to create a sustainable and inclusive knowledge-sharing network across Europe, focused on the

heritage-led regeneration of historic urban areas through innovation and entrepreneurship.
The project's development plan set out an iterative process with overlapping stages designed to achieve this aim (see diagram). The necessary tools and methods needed to trigger heritage-led regeneration were developed by the consortium, road tested and validated by the 8 pilot cities through the creation of 'Hubs of Innovation' in their historic urban areas.
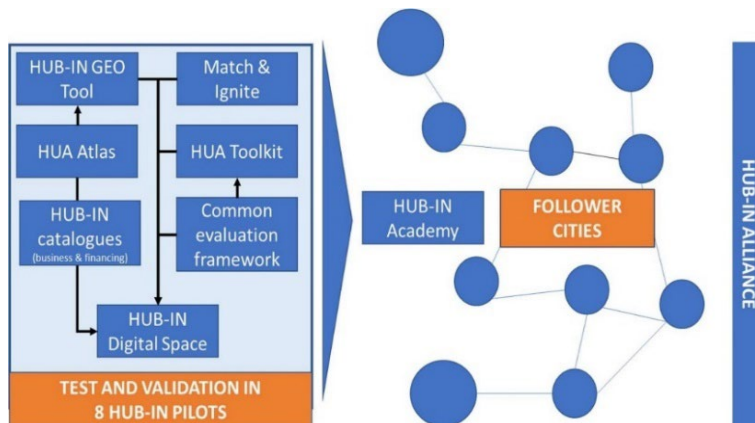

Diagram 1: HUB-IN Indicative Project Schematic

D6.2, HUB-IN Alliance**,** reports on the recruitment of 20 follower cities, the co-creation and testing of a 'Knowledge Transfer Plan', the development of the HUB-IN Academy to support future learning, and the launching of a HUB-IN Alliance to take the project's legacy forward to continue the HUB-IN journey after the project ends. In this way it addresses the following key project objectives:

- **To upscale the project by adding at least 20 'Follower' cities to the initial network of 8 pilot cities during the life of the project**

- **To support the on-ongoing exploitation and development of the Hub in concept after project end, by establishing a broader HUB-IN 'Alliance' of historic urban areas**

- **To facilitate access to the HUB-IN Academy as a key resource to support the ongoing upscaling and exploitation of HUB-IN**

2. Alignment with other Deliverables

D6.2 is closely related to all deliverables and milestones within Work Package 6. The HUB-IN Alliance and Academy together will make a major contribution, for example, to D6.1 the HUB-IN Exploitation Plan (internal document) through creating new structures and services central to the long-term upscaling and wider replication of HUB-IN's results and impacts.

The Future expansion and viability of the initial HUB-IN Alliance and Academy will be directly supported by recently available HUB-In Guidance particularly D6.3 the HUB-IN Leadership Guide which sets out the project's key findings, overall project conclusions and strategic policy recommendations aimed at influencing Europe's leaders-Mayors, politicians, CEOs, creatives, entrepreneurs, community leaders, and European and international institutions.

3. Recruitment of Follower Cities

The first step toward building a broader HUB-IN Alliance was the recruitment of follower cities as 'Early Joiners' of the Alliance over the life of the project.

A joint working group of key consortium partners, including representatives of pilot cities, was launched in March 2022 to co-create how best to attract follower cities and to determine the selection criteria ensuring there was a range of city sizes and locations across Europe. From June to August 2022, a 'prospectus' leaflet was produced in 8 languages and disseminated to approximately 1000 cities using a wide range of sources.

From **September 2022**, written 'Expressions of Interest' were evaluated and a Memorandum of Understanding, clarifying the respective roles and expectations of joining HUB-IN, was produced. As a result, key stakeholders from the following 20 cities of differing sizes across 12 European countries, have signed Memorandums of Understanding:

1. Arad, Romania
2. Birmingham, UK
3. Corigliano - Rossano, Italy
4. Exeter, UK
5. Fundão, Portugal
6. Fyli, Greece
7. Guimaraes, Portugal
8. Halandri, Greece
9. Kampen, Netherlands
10. Leeuwarden, Netherlands
11. Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina
12. Palmela, Portugal
13. Paris, France
14. Porto, Portugal
15. Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina
16. Seixal, Portugal
17. Sevilla, Spain
18. Sinj, Croatia
19. Waterford, Ireland
20. Ventspils, Latvia

The map below shows the opinions of a selection of follower cities on their experience of HUB-IN.

3.1 Development of a 'Knowledge Transfer Plan'

Having recruited follower cities as early joiners of the Alliance, we developed a Knowledge Transfer Plan to provide an initial framework within which the follower cities learned how the overall HUB-IN process works in practice, as well as an opportunity to contribute their own experiences to HUB-IN. This process also provided a basis for testing and evaluating how best to transfer the knowledge gained over the course of the project to other cities in the future as part of the HUB-IN Academy.
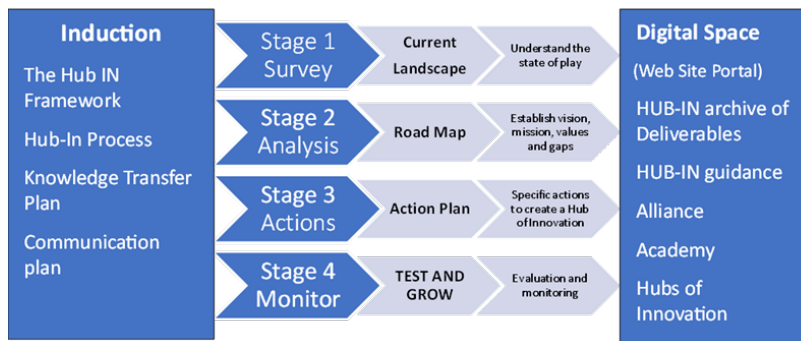

Diagram 2: HUB-IN Learning Journey

Heritage Europe facilitated the follower cities to collectively share their challenges and approaches to heritage led regeneration with the Pilot cities, for example through 'City profiles', available on the HUB-IN website, and through a programme of 10 interactive webinars and 3 consortium meeting workshops follower cities have been involved in the cross-fertilization of knowledge and experience – both learning from pilot cities and expert consortium partners and maximizing the added value they bring to HUB-IN. This cross-fertilization programme is catalogued in more detail both D4.4 on cross-fertilization and in the project's final report.

Through this learning process and cross-fertilisation of experiences, Follower Cities have developed their own plans for future Hubs of Innovation. For example:

Waterford, Ireland is developing a Cultural Quarter in their Historical Centre, focusing on the creation of Maker Spaces, a community and cultural Hub and the use of green principles and community engagement processes. They joined the project to explore approaches to link cultural heritage, innovation and citizens through their involvement in HUB-IN, as well as learning about best practice around the regeneration of heritage buildings, community engagement and attracting innovation and enterprise.
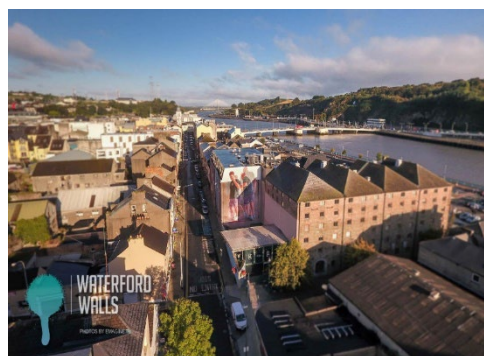
Waterford, Ireland

Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina is the economic and cultural centre of the Herzegovina region. The city's cultural strategy 2018-2026 seeks to use culture to bridge divides between citizens and contribute to a

House of Mujaga Komadina, Bosnia and Herzegovina

healthier and more integrated community. Their HUB-IN Process focuses on the House of Mujaga Komadina, a historic building, once the First Mayor of Mostar's residence, which will be turned into a Hub for creative industries and young entrepreneurs. Plans include looking at integrating the Hub of Innovation into the current review of the Mostar World Heritage Master Plan.

Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Arad, Romania has played an important role in shaping Romania's identity. The historic centre of Arad is filled with beautiful old buildings, some of which are heritage buildings, with hidden inner courtyards and terraces. The city reveals a blend of architectural styles, ranging from Baroque to Neoclassical, showing its rich history and cultural influence. Arad joined the project to gain more information and knowledge, and to learn from the ongoing projects of the other participating cities.

Palmela, Portugal is a city with a vibrant historic centre dominated by an 8th century castle. The city's regeneration will focus on the rehabilitation of buildings and public space, demographic regeneration and socio-economic revitalization. Palmela started the HUB-IN Process by exchanging knowledge with the pilot cities, meeting with the local mayor and councilors, and their Hub location. They are now looking to increase and strengthen their HUB-IN Team and move onto creating their road map and action plan.

Palmela, Portugal

4. Creation of the HUB-IN Academy

The HUB-IN Academy will be a key legacy asset supporting ongoing knowledge transfer of HUB-IN's methods and tools particularly to cities and key stakeholders joining the HUB-IN Alliance as well as potentially to a wider audience. It includes all the resources created by the HUB-IN consortium which can be accessed on the HUB-IN 'Digital Space' www.hubin-project.eu. alongside the learning courses now available on the online Academy 'learning' platform.

An Academy working group was established, led by Energy Cities in April - May 2023 to co-create and prioritise its learning content given its limited initial budget. The online Academy platform is however designed to be expanded as resources permit. Consortium partner Partners subsequently worked on the production of the learning offer and created content in line with the HUB-IN Knowledge Transfer Plan—this

included setting up courses, formats, and recording presentations. A communication leaflet was developed to promote the Academy beyond the project partnership in May 2024 and disseminated at events such as the New European Bauhaus Festival to encourage other cities to join the Academy and Alliance.

The HUB-IN Academy was also a key part of the Final HUB-IN Conference, where pilot cities, follower cities and other key stakeholders participated in a practical workshop on how to create a Hubs of Innovation. The workshops showcased resources available via the Academy digital space and the online platform. The conference was also an opportunity to explore future potential collaborations, partnerships, and alignments such as with the NEB Academy.

4.1 HUB-IN Learning Pathway

The Hub-IN Academy is now live at LTLC: HUB-IN Academy - with **five free online courses** that provide practical tools, real-world strategies and inspiring case studies to guide cities and their key innovators on their journey of revitalising historic urban spaces. The five courses learning pathway is summarised below:

Step 1: Understand the foundations
*Follow the course: **Heritage-Led Innovation: Strategies for Ecosystems, Business Models and Funding***
Before you start planning, explore how heritage can be a driver for innovation. Learn from real examples across Europe and discover how to build entrepreneurial ecosystems, develop sustainable business models and secure funding.

Step 2: Create a vision and roadmap, followed by an action plan and monitoring framework
*Follow the course on: **Roadmap Process for Historic Urban Area Regeneration***
A successful transformation starts with a vision and a structured plan. This course walks you through stakeholder engagement, co-design processes, strategic planning and action plans to ensure long-term impact as well as theory of change.

Step 3: Use smart tools for better decision-making
*Follow the course on: **HUB-IN GeoTool: a georeferenced framework to assess the potential of historic urban areas**. Mapping assets and opportunities*
Cities are complex ecosystems. Learn how to visualise urban assets, identify key stakeholders and use geospatial analysis to make informed and strategic decisions.

Step 4: Engage and accelerate local innovators
*Follow the course: **HUB-IN Match and Ignite***
Innovation thrives in collaboration. This course helps city teams connect with innovators, recruit entrepreneurs and design tailored support programmes to accelerate change in their historic urban areas.

Step 5: Build and activate your Innovation Hub
*Follow the course on **Driving Innovation Hubs for Heritage Revitalisation***

Now it's time to bring ideas to life! Learn how to launch and manage open calls, develop acceleration programmes and engage local entrepreneurs and creatives in your regeneration efforts.

5. Building the HUB-IN Alliance

The HUB-IN project was conceived as being in two stages with the second stage seeing the resulting methods and tools developed in stage one, upscaled to a network of historic urban areas of follower cities forming the basis for a broader long-term Alliance of cities to extend the exploitation and upscaling of the project's results after the project ends. The concept envisaged in the Grant Agreement conceived the alliance as a 'community or network of interest' providing a space for sharing views and experiences in delivering sustainable Hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship as an integrated part of the regeneration of their HUAs.

With the building blocks set out above – recruitment and engagement of follower cities, delivery of the knowledge transfer process, and the creation of the Academy all well underway, Heritage Europe presented a business case paper to the Exploitation Plan Steering Group of consortium partners and pilot cities, discussed between June- September 2024**.** This looked at the scope, target membership, potential governance structures and possible funding sources alongside a market assessment of current initiatives and established networks to gauge challenges, opportunities and viability of a HUB-IN Alliance.

The conclusions reached were:
- HUB-IN's twin focus on innovation and cultural heritage gives it a unique position within the European 'market'- an 'offer' that could add value locally and at the European level
- The project's transformational outcomes triggered are not 'one-off 'but ongoing and will take longer than the timescale of a single Horizon project to fully realise, and therefore merit further support
- Building on and utilising the knowledge gained to include a wider audience as part of an Alliance was crucial otherwise the experience and insights gained run the real risk of being lost as other priorities take precedence.

The results of these considerations, including feedback from follower cities, were presented and considered at the HUB-IN consortium meeting in Brasov in September, and further developed in October 2024 leading to proposals being submitted to the Lisbon final Conference in November -thus laying the foundations for the Alliance.

5.1 Laying the Foundations of an Innovation and Heritage Alliance

The agreements reached in Lisbon at the project's inspiring Final Conference **'Innovation Meets Heritage in Cities'** provides the framework for taking forward the HUB-IN Alliance in what we see as the start of a new journey.

Vision: The Alliance will be a community of key stakeholders in historic urban areas, with a common interest in sharing knowledge, views and experiences in delivering sustainable hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship. A 'community of interest' connecting HUBs of Innovation across Europe

- encouraging and supporting cross-collaboration enabling entrepreneurs and innovators to connect and benefit from each other
- sharing access to the HUB-IN Academy - a scalable web platform providing open access to the HUB-IN information and resource base

Strategic Aim: To boost the regeneration of Historic Urban Areas through innovation and entrepreneurship, whilst preserving their unique cultural and social identity and the environment

Initial Delivery Model: Mutual sharing, transparent, independent, bottom – up, stakeholder driven 'Informal Association' broadly in line with the favoured approach to the governance structures of the pilot Hubs of Innovation

Starting Point: The foundational group of 8 Pilot Cities, 20 Follower Cities, and their key stakeholders along with the 2 European City Networks, 2 Universities, and 2 Specialist SMEs already part of HUB-IN

Operational Strategy: Step by step approach building foundations -creating momentum using the projects key results and policy recommendations to attract interest and active support at local and European levels

City and Stakeholder Benefits

- Pilot cities and their key stakeholders – Support in further developing their HUBs of Innovation, helping others to benefit from their experience
- Opportunities for new partnerships and funding, being part of a European network
- Follower cities and their key stakeholders – Continued support in establishing their Hubs of Innovation, accessing the HUB-IN Academy
- Historic Town and Innovation Networks – member cities and stakeholders and their key stakeholders –access to tried and tested tools and methods to kickstart the regeneration process
- European and other Cities with Historic Urban Areas and their key stakeholders

Alignment with the New European Bauhaus (NEB)

The Conference explored NEB's current plans and HUB-IN's close affinity with, and active engagement in, NEB to date, with keynote speeches from, **Soléne Laeticia Gautron** (European Commission, Joint Research Centre), **Brian Smith**, Secretary General Heritage Europe (EAHTR) and **Margarida Oliveira**, Portugal's National Contact Point (ANI).

This enabled a fruitful panel discussion, chaired by **Vera Gregório** (Lisboa -E-Nova), which confirmed NEB as a possible future funding source for the HUB-IN Alliance and identified areas for potential deeper collaboration. **Soléne Laeticia Gautron** also participated in the later session on 'Laying the foundations of an Innovation and Heritage Alliance providing advice and support on the next steps for the Alliance following it launch at the conference.

5.2 Funding and Next Steps

EU operational funding opportunities to support upscaling and network development are limited, periodic and sensitive to double counting whilst a fully funded project is still running e.g. Creative Europe. We have identified these challenges in our Strategic Policy Recommendations. e.g. where longer- term **follow-up funding** mechanisms would more effectively deliver the transition from experimentation to impactful large-

scale upscaling and capitalise on the initial investment over a longer period than is currently possible within the lifespan of a single project.

Nest Steps to take the HUB IN Alliance forward to the next stage Include:

- Registration of the brand. Due to a potential name clash with the established international 'Cities Alliance', registration of the brand name **'HUB-IN Cities Network'** with its associated logo, has been applied for and is currently under consideration, by EUIP - the European Union Intellectual Property Office.
- An updated **'Memorandum of Understanding'** has been produced to attract a wider range of cities to the HUB-IN Cities Network
- Immediate potential funding sources include

  - NEB will launch the **NEB Facility** possibly in March 2025, a multi-annual and cross-cutting tool that builds on and combines different funding instrument- one of its focuses is the 'development of innovative, inclusive architectural design solutions to preserve and promote Europe's cultural heritage while addressing challenges such as climate change, energy poverty and inequalities.'

  - **Horizon Europe** Calls are being monitored

  - **EIT Culture and Creative Europe calls** also have early potential for pilot and follower cities and are being monitored. The latest Innovation Call with a close date in April could be relevant to Alliance cities and other partners and this has been circulated to them.

- A series of quarterly webinars will be convened by the HUB-IN Coordinator to enable all members to co-create the network's future plans.

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