

HUB-IN Final Results

Transforming Historic Urban Areas Through
Innovation & Entrepreneurship

February 2025



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research and innovation programme
under grant agreement No 869429

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to find out more!

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1 - About HUB-IN

The HUB-IN project, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 program (GA 869429), aimed to revitalize Historic Urban Areas (HUAs) through innovation and entrepreneurship, while preserving their cultural, social, and environmental identity. Running from 2020 to 2025, it brought together eight pilot cities, universities, city networks, and regional agencies, transforming heritage into a driver for sustainable and inclusive development.

HUB-IN aligns with UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach and supports key European and international policies, including UNESCO's Cultural Sustainable Development Agenda and the Council of Europe's Cultural Heritage Strategy.

The project followed a two-stage approach:

- **Creating Hubs of Innovation** – Established in eight pilot cities (Lisbon, Slovenska Bistrica, Braşov, Nicosia, Genoa, Grand Angoulême, Belfast, and Utrecht), each adapted to local ecosystems and challenges.
- **Scaling & Global Expansion** – The methods and tools developed in the pilot cities were continuously refined and shared through a collaborative process, engaging 20 follower cities in capacity-building and knowledge exchange. This ongoing effort lays the foundation for the **HUB-IN Cities Network**, fostering broader adoption and long-term impact.

HUB-IN structured its transformation efforts into three clusters of innovation: Cultural and Creative Industries, New Lifestyles, and Resilient & Human-Connected Places.

Through co-creation and entrepreneurship, HUB-IN proved that heritage-led innovation can transform historic areas into vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive urban hubs.

The legacy continues through the HUB-IN Cities Network, enabling European cities to adopt tested strategies and innovative tools to future-proof urban regeneration.

Consortium behind HUB-IN



2 - Purpose of This Report

This report presents the key methodological insights, results, lessons learned, and **policy recommendations** from the HUB-IN project, demonstrating how innovation and entrepreneurship can revitalize **Historic Urban Areas (HUAs)** while **safeguarding their unique social, cultural, and environmental identity**.

It offers **practical insights and inspiring stories** from HUB-IN cities, showcasing **real-world applications of heritage-led regeneration**. Additionally, it serves as a gateway **to the extensive work developed over the past five years**, providing cities, policymakers, and stakeholders with the **tools and strategies needed to implement and scale HUB-IN's approach**.

Beyond capturing project results, this report acts as an invitation to action, encouraging cities to join the **HUB-IN Cities Network** and ensuring that the project's impact and legacy continue to grow.

3 - Who is this report for?

This report is designed for key stakeholders involved in urban transformation, providing actionable insights and strategic guidance for:

- ✓ **Policymakers & city leaders** – Developing heritage-led regeneration strategies.
- ✓ **Urban planners & cultural organizations** – Integrating innovation into historic urban development.
- ✓ **Entrepreneurs & investors** – Exploring business opportunities linked to cultural heritage.
- ✓ **Local communities** – Encouraging active participation in shaping their urban environment.

By sharing practical methodologies and real-world case studies, this report empowers cities to adopt and scale HUB-IN's approach, ensuring long-term impact in Historic Urban Areas.



4 - Understanding the state-of-the-art

To gain a comprehensive understanding of heritage-led regeneration in Historic Urban Areas (HUAs) across Europe, HUB-IN conducted an extensive mapping and analysis of around 100 cases. These real-world examples provided valuable insights and laid the groundwork for two key resources:

- **The HUB-IN Atlas** – an open-source tool showcasing innovative regeneration projects across Europe.
- **The Business & Financing Models Guide** – a practical resource for developing financially sustainable innovation hubs in HUAs.

Both tools serve as essential sources of inspiration and guidance, supporting cities, policymakers, and entrepreneurs in shaping the future of heritage-led urban regeneration.

4.1 - The HUB-IN Atlas: mapping heritage-led regeneration

The HUB-IN Atlas is an interactive online tool presenting best practices in heritage-led regeneration across Europe. It highlights how HUAs have successfully attracted new investment, created jobs, and developed innovation ecosystems in key sectors such as:

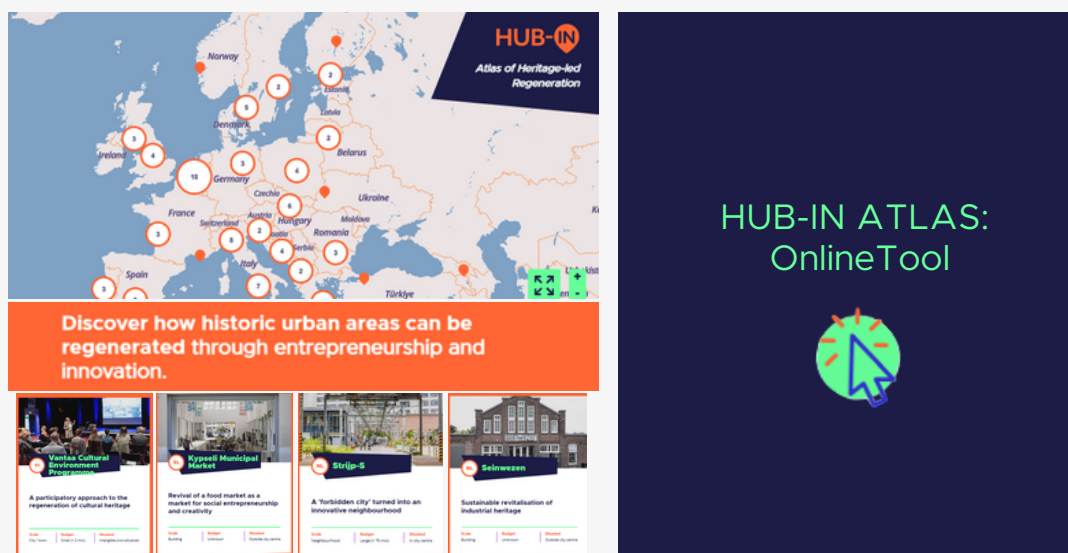
The Knowledge Economy – leveraging cultural heritage for research, education, and digital innovation.

Creative & Cultural Industries – transforming historic spaces into hubs for creativity and entrepreneurship.

The Maker Economy – promoting craftsmanship, circular production, and sustainable business models.

By showcasing real-world examples, the Atlas provides practical learning opportunities, demonstrating how historic buildings and urban landscapes can offer a competitive advantage for economic sustainability and social resilience.

The Atlas is designed as an accessible online platform, enabling cities and stakeholders to explore and apply relevant insights to their own local contexts.



4.2 - New Business & Financing Models: enabling sustainable regeneration

The HUB-IN Business & Financing Models Guide identifies key success factors in heritage-led regeneration, emphasizing blended financial approaches and community-driven solutions.

Key Funding Strategies

Public & Private Investment – Government and commercial funding for regeneration.

Impact Finance – Supporting cultural and social projects.

Community Funding – Crowdfunding and cooperative investments.

Public-Private-Community Partnerships – Leveraging shared resources.

Land Value Capture – Using property appreciation for reinvestment.

Regenerative Financing – Prioritizing sustainability and social impact.

Beyond funding, effective storytelling is crucial to engage investors and sustain transformation. The guide offers practical tools to help cities unlock investment and build thriving HUAs.



HUB-IN Business & Financing Models Guide



5 - The HUB-IN Framework: a unique approach to cultural-led urban regeneration

The **HUB-IN Framework** is an adaptable methodology designed to revitalize Historic Urban Areas (HUAs) through innovation and entrepreneurship, while preserving their cultural and social identity. Developed through co-creation, it provides cities with strategies and tools to transform heritage into a catalyst for sustainable regeneration. At its core, the **HUB-IN Framework** is built around **three key components** that work together to drive sustainable change:

1. Clusters of Innovation [1]

- **Cultural & Creative Industries** : Supporting arts, media, and cultural tourism.
- **New Lifestyles** : Promoting sustainable urban living and circular economies.
- **Resilient & Human and Connected Places**: Leveraging local assets for environmental and community-driven regeneration.

By focusing on these clusters, cities can **leverage their heritage as a catalyst for sustainable urban transformation**.

2. Co-Creation [2], engaging communities in transformation

The HUB-IN Framework emphasizes co-creation, ensuring that cities implement:

- **Collaborative urban planning**, involving residents, businesses, and policymakers.
- **Participatory processes**, such as living labs and digital engagement platforms.
- **City-to-city knowledge exchange**, sharing best practices to scale solutions.

By embedding co-creation at every stage, cities **strengthen local ownership, fostering long-term success and social cohesion**.

3. Heritage-Led Entrepreneurial Ecosystem [3]

The HUB-IN Framework also supports the development of a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, helping cities:

- **Transforming historic assets** into spaces for entrepreneurship, creative industries, and innovation.
- **Connecting key players**—entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers—to develop viable business models for heritage-led regeneration.
- **Diversifying funding sources**, from public-private partnerships to community investments, ensuring financial sustainability.

By integrating **entrepreneurship with heritage**, cities can **foster innovation, attract investment, and create lasting economic opportunities**.



[1]. [HUB-IN Clusters of Innovation](#)

[2]. [Eight Roadmaps](#) and [Eight Action Plans](#)

[3]. [HUB-IN-Framework-Ingredients](#)



6 - How to create Hubs of Innovation

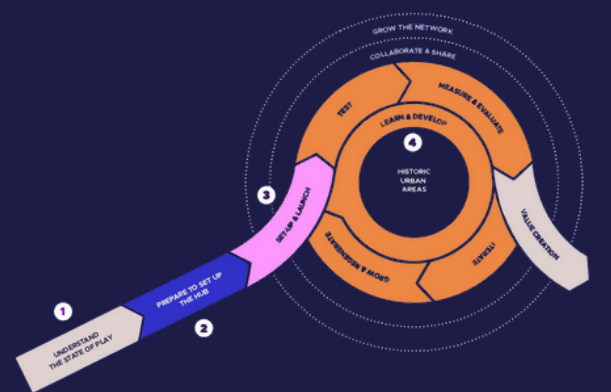
Building on the **HUB-IN Framework**, this section outlines how cities can apply its principles **step by step** to develop **Hubs of Innovation in Historic Urban Areas (HUAs)**.

Creating a successful hub requires **balancing entrepreneurship, sustainability, and community engagement** while **preserving cultural identity**. The HUB-IN Framework provides a clear workflow, supported by the **HUB-IN Toolkit**, which offers **practical resources, methodologies, and case studies for implementation**.

The Four Key Phases to Develop a Hub of Innovation:

1 Understand the State of Play – Analyze & Define Opportunities

The first step is to understand the unique characteristics of the HUA, including its historical assets, local economy, and stakeholder ecosystem. This foundational work helps identify key challenges and opportunities for innovation.



◆ HUB-IN Toolkit Online Resources - Stage 1



- ✓ Understand the HUB-IN mission, principles, and key concepts
- ✓ Identify who needs to be involved.
- ✓ Gain a good understanding of your area and its uniqueness
- ✓ Identify hopes and concerns
- ✓ Discover your opportunities and gaps
- ✓ Explore what is happening elsewhere
- ✓ Examine urban conditions through an ethical lens

◆ Recommendations:

- ✓ Conduct stakeholder mapping to identify key actors in the ecosystem.
- ✓ Perform a SWOT analysis to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- ✓ Research global best practices in heritage-led innovation and entrepreneurship.

📌 **Tip:** Engage local communities early in the process to ensure their needs and aspirations shape the hub's development.



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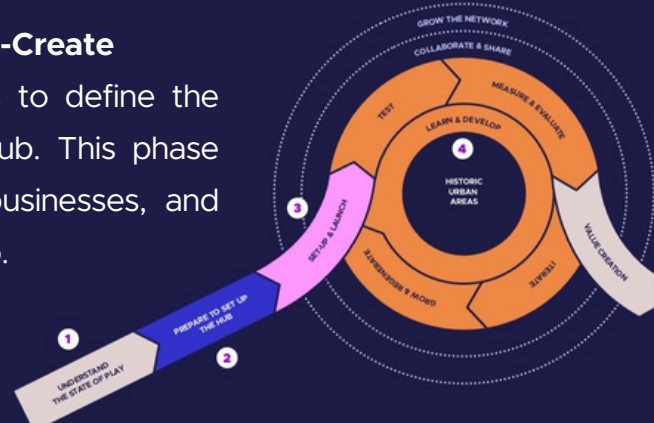
Current Landscapes



6 - How to create Hubs of Innovation

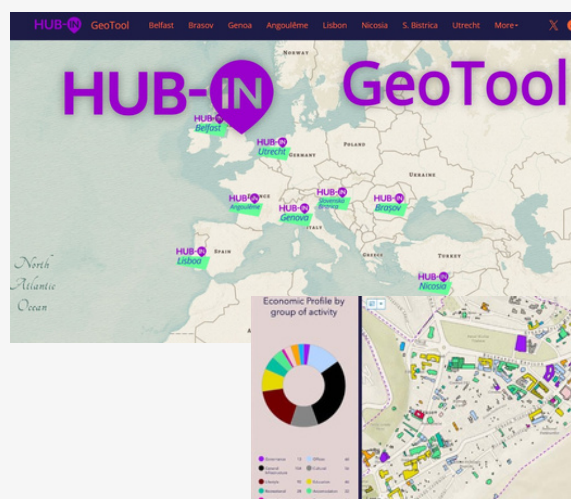
2 Prepare to set up the HUB – Strategize & Co-Create

Once the landscape is assessed, the next step is to define the vision, mission, and strategy for the Innovation Hub. This phase emphasizes co-creation with local communities, businesses, and policymakers to ensure a shared sense of ownership.



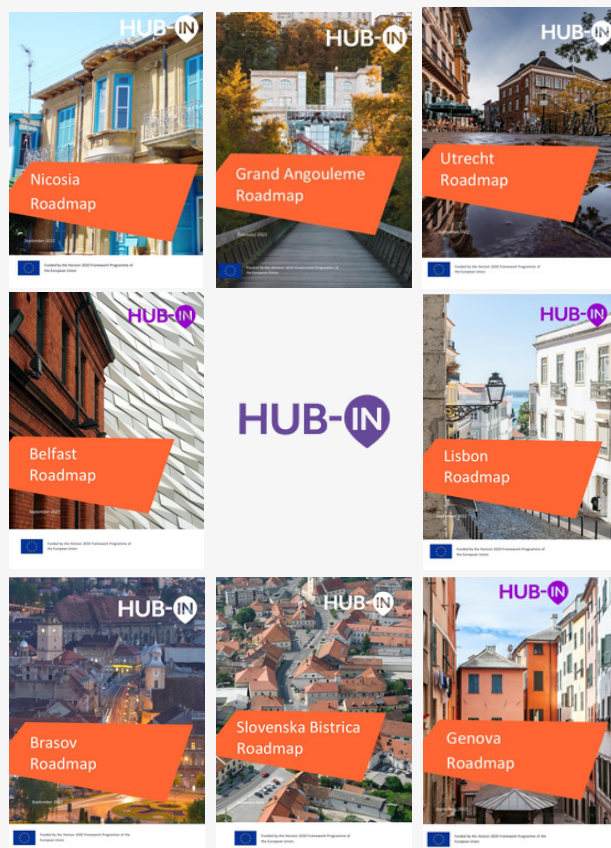
HUB-IN Toolkit Online Resources - Stage 2

- ✓ Co-create a strategic, actionable way forward
- ✓ Prioritize who needs to be involved and when
- ✓ Define how you engage with key people and partners
- ✓ Georeference your local ecosystem and resources
- ✓ Explore business, finance and governance models
- ✓ Explore and strengthen your heritage-led entrepreneurial ecosystem



8 HUAs - 8 GeoTools

HUB IN
GeoTool



8 HUAs - 8 Roadmaps

HUB IN RoadMaps

Recommendations:

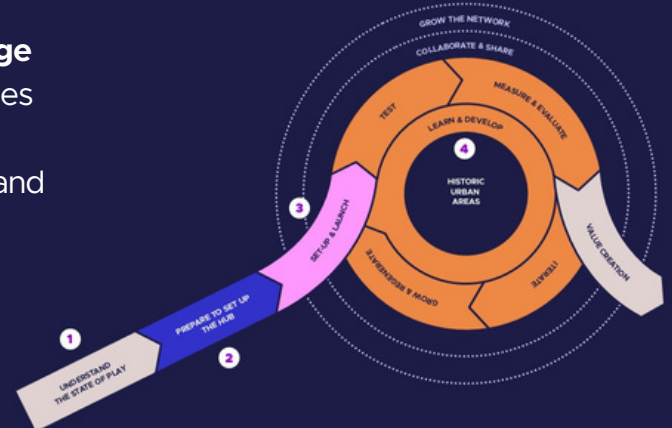
- ✓ Develop a strategic roadmap outlining the long-term vision and key objectives.
- ✓ Co-design the hub's physical and digital infrastructure to suit local needs.
- ✓ Establish governance and financing models that ensure long-term sustainability.

Tip: Involve multidisciplinary teams—including designers, entrepreneurs, historians, and urban planners—to ensure diverse perspectives in the co-creation process.

6 - How to create Hubs of Innovation

3 Set Up & Launch the Hub – Activate & Engage

At this stage, cities begin implementing their strategies by launching entrepreneurial programs, innovation challenges, and community initiatives. The branding and positioning of the hub are crucial to attracting talent, businesses, and investment.



◆ HUB-IN TOOLKIT Online Resources - Stage 3 :

- ✓ Develop and test ideas
- ✓ Get clarity on what will be measured and why
- ✓ Consider the approach for impact assessment
- ✓ Define actions, resources and responsibilities
- ✓ Attract and onboard innovators and investors in relation to your HUB's opportunities
- ✓ Communicate your HUB and increase its visibility
- ✓ Review and iterate on your local ecosystem map
- ✓ Tailored monitoring – Capture ongoing data as appropriate



8 HUAs - 8 Action Plans

HUB IN Action Plans



◆ Recommendations:

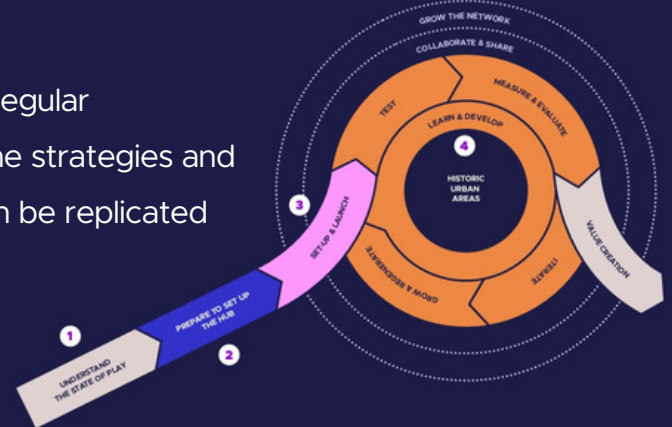
- ✓ Organize placemaking and branding activities to establish the hub's identity.
- ✓ Launch acceleration programs, challenge calls, and business incubators.
- ✓ Foster collaboration through networking events, creative spaces, and co-working hubs.

💡 Tip: Use storytelling and digital engagement tools to raise awareness and attract investment.

6 - How to create Hubs of Innovation

4 Test & Grow– Monitor & Evolve

Innovation Hubs must be adaptive and responsive. Regular monitoring, evaluation, and feedback loops help refine strategies and ensure long-term impact. Successful models can then be replicated and scaled to other cities.



◆ HUB-IN TOOLKIT Online Resources - Stage 4

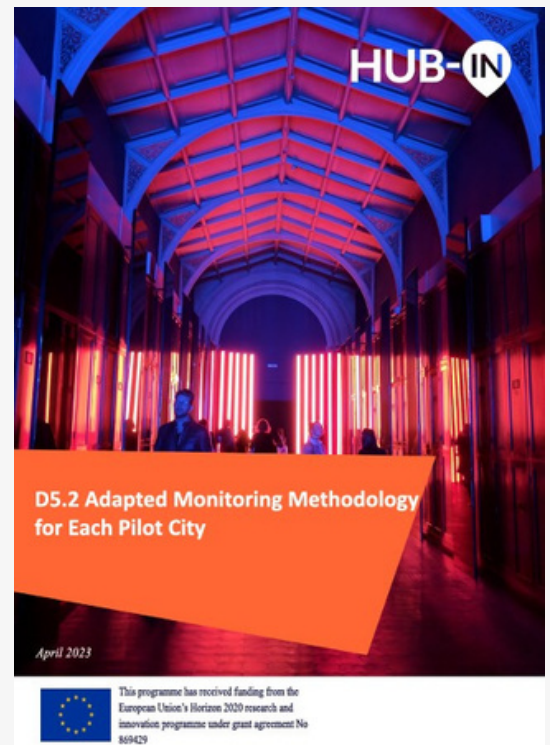


- ✓ Develop and test ideas
- ✓ Understand what is going well and what is not going well
- ✓ Review and iterate on your local ecosystem map
- ✓ Connect and grow, strengthen the movement
- ✓ Develop business, finance and governance models

◆ How Adapted Monitoring Helps:

- ✓ Prioritizing key outcomes
- ✓ Identifying unintended effects
 - ✓ Engaging stakeholders
- ✓ Ensuring structured data collection
- ✓ Balancing qualitative & quantitative analysis
 - ✓ Addressing risks & limitations

Adapted Monitoring Methodology



◆ Recommendations:

- ✓ Measure impact through KPIs and community feedback mechanisms.
- ✓ Adjust strategies based on lessons learned and evolving local needs.
- ✓ Share insights through case studies, webinars, and knowledge-sharing networks.

✚ Tip: Join the **HUB-IN Cities Network** to exchange best practices and co-develop future solutions.

7 - A Shared Vision For Historic Urban Regeneration

HUB-IN worked closely with the H2020 Sister Projects, **Centrinno** and **T-Factor**, to amplify impact and scale urban innovation models.

Key Areas of Collaboration

Knowledge Sharing & Joint Research

- Exchange of best practices in **heritage-led regeneration** and **innovation ecosystems**.
- Co-development of methodologies for evaluating urban transformation.

Policy & Institutional Engagement

- Development of a **Joint Policy Report**, providing strategic recommendations for EU urban policy.
- Advocacy for **heritage-driven urban regeneration** in European and global forums.

Scaling Innovation & Replication

- Expansion of a **network of 26 cities**, plus **20 additional HUB-IN follower cities** across Europe.
- Introduction of the **Cluster of Innovative, Inclusive, and Creative Hubs**, uniting cities under a shared vision.

Cities involved as pilot sites in the 3 Sister Projects

- | | | | |
|---------------|----|------------------------|----|
| 1. Amsterdam | ●● | 14. Lisbon | ●● |
| 2. Angoulême | ● | 15. Łódź | ●● |
| 3. Barcelona | ●● | 16. London | ●● |
| 4. Belfast | ● | 17. Marseille | ●● |
| 5. Bilbao | ●● | 18. Milan | ●● |
| 6. Blonduos | ● | 19. New York | ●● |
| 7. Brasov | ● | 20. Nicosia | ● |
| 8. Copenhagen | ● | 21. Paris | ● |
| 9. Dortmund | ● | 22. Shanghai | ● |
| 10. Florence | ● | 23. Slovenska Bistrica | ● |
| 11. Genève | ● | 24. Tallinn | ● |
| 12. Genova | ● | 25. Utrecht | ● |
| 13. Kaunas | ● | 26. Zagreb | ● |

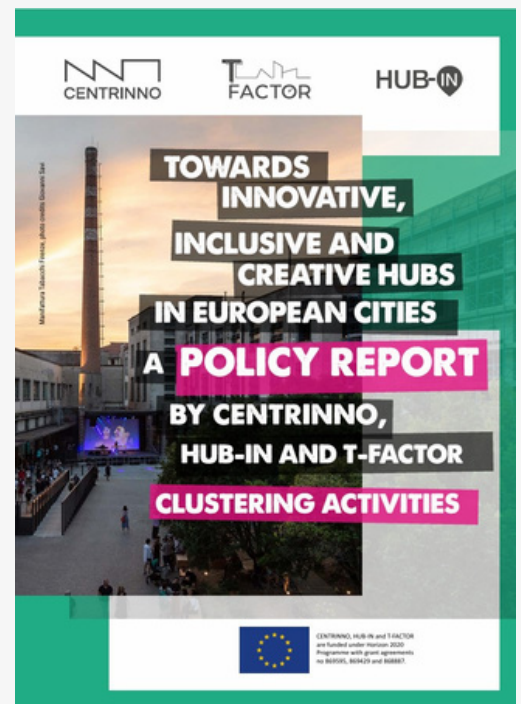
- CENTRINNO in blue
- T-FACTOR in red
- HUB-IN in green



Strategic Recommendations:

- **Institutionalize knowledge-sharing**, establishing formal mechanisms for ongoing exchange.
- **Strengthen financial models**, ensuring long-term economic sustainability of innovation hubs.
- **Expand policy advocacy**, reinforcing the role of heritage-led regeneration in urban policies.

📌 HUB-IN Impact: Joint activities across Sister projects fostered knowledge exchange, capacity building, and strategic alignment, reinforcing the foundations of **HUB-IN Cities Network**



Policy Report

Towards inclusive creative and innovative hubs in European cities

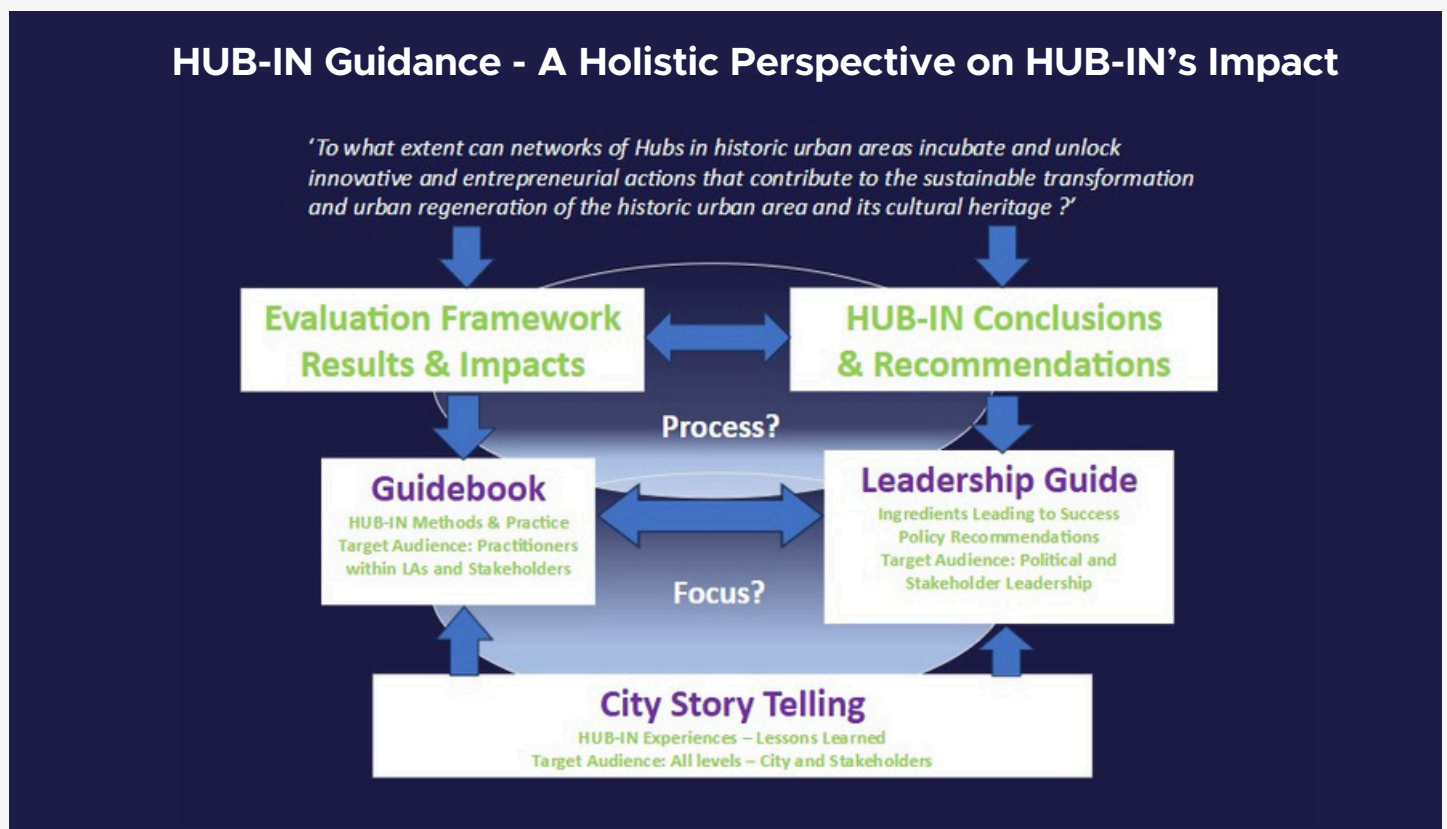


8 - The HUB-IN Guidance to Explore Results

At the heart of the HUB-IN project was the key research question:

"To what extent can networks of hubs in Historic Urban Areas incubate and unlock innovative and entrepreneurial actions that contribute to the sustainable transformation and urban regeneration of Historic Urban Areas and their cultural heritage?" [1]

HUB-IN explored this by developing and testing a framework for heritage-led innovation, assessing how Innovation Hubs can drive sustainable urban regeneration through entrepreneurship, community engagement, and cultural preservation.



The project's findings are captured in three key tools, each offering a different perspective:

- ✦ City Storytelling → Inspires and engages the public with real-life narratives.
- ✦ City Guidebook → Equips follower cities and professionals with practical insights and transferable knowledge.
- ✦ Leadership Guide → Provides strategic recommendations for follower cities and policymakers.

Together, these resources demonstrate HUB-IN's impact and provide actionable insights for cities looking to replicate and scale heritage-led urban transformation.

8.1 - City Storytelling

Over 30 Inspiring Narratives of Heritage-Led Urban Transformation Across HUB-IN Cities

What it is:

A **detailed collection of city stories**, presenting **first-hand accounts of innovation, regeneration, and entrepreneurship** in Historic Urban Areas (HUAs). This **digital and interactive booklet**, integrated into the **HUB-IN GeoTool**, offers an immersive exploration of the experiences, challenges, and successes of each pilot city, bringing heritage-led transformation to life



Target Audience:

General Public, Cultural Institutions, Creative Entrepreneurs, Local Communities

HUB-IN GeoTool

The HUB-IN Storytellers

Experience & Transform

> Sobre esta coleção

1 INTRO
Sem localização

2 Belfast

3 Brasov

4 Genoa

5 Grand Angoulême

6 Lisbon

7 Nicosia

8 Slovenska Bistrica

9 Utrecht



City Storytelling Booklet | HUB-IN Geotool

Key Takeaways:

- ✓ A richly illustrated journey through the transformation of eight HUB-IN cities.
- ✓ Highlights the role of local communities and their involvement in shaping innovation hubs.
- ✓ Captures the human stories behind urban regeneration, emphasizing creativity, resilience, and impact.



8.2 - City Guidebook

A practical guide for cities to adapt and replicate HUB-IN initiatives, using pilot city insights to develop their own Hubs of Innovation

What it is:

This guidebook **offers key insights from the eight HUB-IN pilot cities** to **help follower cities revitalize their Historic Urban Areas (HUAs)**. It supports the **exchange of knowledge, highlighting common insights, actionable strategies, and tactical recommendations** for replication and implementation.

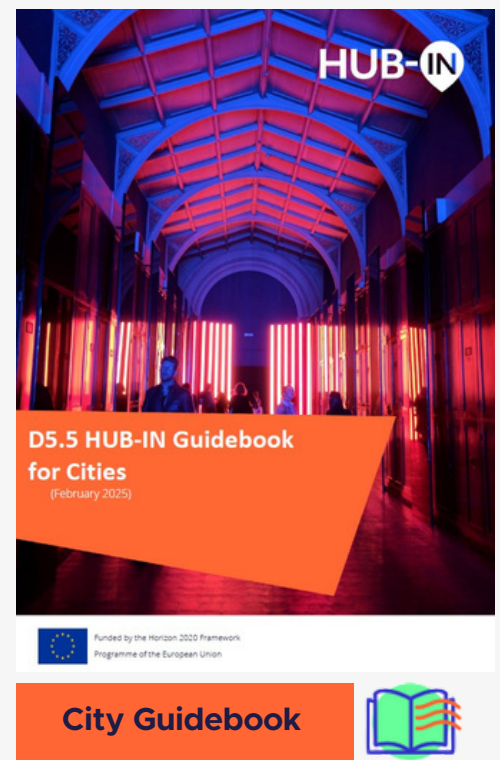


Target Audience:

Follower Cities & Local Governments, Urban Planners & Regeneration Experts , Entrepreneurs & Business Networks

Key Takeaways:

- ✓ **8 Key Outcomes** from HUB-IN cities, supported by **8 case studies** and **tactical insights**.
- ✓ **Key ingredients** that fuel a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- ✓ **Transferable guidelines** based on 52 tactical recommendations, , providing structured guidance for cities to implement HUB-IN methodologies.
- ✓ **Focuses on Hub co-creation process**, including stakeholder engagement, business models, financing strategies, and a well-developed Entrepreneurial Ecosystem.



The findings in this report are drawn from multiple HUB-IN resources:

Action Plans, Pilot Cities Evaluation Reports, Economic and Environmental Assessments , and **Cross Fertilization Sessions with Cities and Experts** at consortium meetings in 2024.

NEXT: Discover how these cities created change and how their actions and learnings can be transferred to new contexts!

8.3 - Connecting Impact: Stories, Insights & Key Ingredients

HUB-IN pilot cities transformed their Historic Urban Areas by applying **tactical insights** that led to real impact. Each city's journey is mapped across **eight key outcomes**, showing **how innovation ecosystem ingredients**—like heritage, infrastructure, and networks—helped shape successful hubs.

Key HUB-IN resources :



City Guidebook, City Storytelling Snapshot, The Ingredients of a HUB-IN Place

HUB-IN
Angoulême



Grand Angoulême – "Caravane Creative Lab"


Action Overview


Built an informal network of local actors through exploratory walks, fostering partnerships in culture, arts, and education.


Outcome : Ecosystem Infrastructure Creation

Creating physical and digital networks to support entrepreneurship and collaboration in Historic Urban Areas (HUAs).

Transferability Guidelines by key ingredients:

 **Networks:** Understand who needs to be involved through stakeholder mapping.

 **Finance:** Condition funding on the involvement of other key stakeholders.

 **Urban Culture:** Find innovative ways to bring stakeholders together around heritage and culture.



"Without HUB-IN, it would have been difficult to convince people of the value of such an approach. Many of the partners found it hard to see themselves in the project before they got there."

Action Lead, Grand Angoulême




Action Overview


Funded three cultural and entrepreneurial projects, boosting local business and social cohesion.


Outcome : Acceleration Programs & Challenge Calls

Supporting startups, new business models, and innovation through structured funding, mentoring, and collaboration.

Transferability Guidelines by key ingredients:

 **Market:** Design the program to be inclusive and ensure that access needs are considered.

 **Support Organizations:** Bring expertise through partnerships and collaborations.

 **Formal Institutions:** Use HUB-IN tools and methodologies, such as stakeholder mapping and co-creation, to ensure involvement and success.

"With the right support, even the smallest ideas can grow into powerful movements for urban renewal."




Action Overview


Hosted creative events to showcase traditional ceramic industries, attracting over 250 visitors.


Outcome: Placemaking

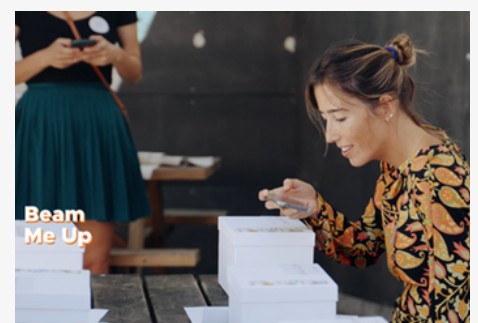
Using creative and participatory approaches to revitalize underutilized spaces and engage the local community.

Transferability Guidelines by key ingredients:

 **Networks:** Consider participants as advocates for the HUA and knowledge disseminators.

 **Knowledge:** Leverage the knowledge of local residents to identify private landowners.

 **Leadership:** Think about synergies between Actions to build buy-in and ensure rules for the safety of younger participants.



"The acceleration program for new businesses aimed at providing support for the creation and development of innovative, creative, and sustainable projects." – HUB-IN Lisbon

Action Overview

Integrated 10 historic walking routes into a digital twin for interactive exploration.

Outcome: Data Collection & Visualization

Enhancing decision-making by gathering and utilizing data to inform urban development and heritage preservation.

Transferability Guidelines by key ingredients:

Physical (and digital) Infrastructure: Consider data as an important 'enabling' Action in its own right.

Support Organizations: Leverage the capabilities of existing assets and their stakeholder reach.

Formal Institutions: Leverage synergies with existing initiatives and departmental areas to help gain buy-in and resources.

Human Resources: Provide targeted training and support programs to groups excluded from digital offerings.



"I got to know places I didn't even know existed. I will go again with family / friends." – Heritage Walk walkers, Nicosia

Action Overview

Engaged students in revitalizing public spaces through co-creation and design workshops.

Outcome: Co-Creation & Community Involvement

Engaging local communities and stakeholders in the design and implementation of urban transformation initiatives.

Transferability Guidelines by key ingredients:

Knowledge: Gather insights through focus groups or surveys before designing the event.

Support Organizations: Seek community interactions as a springboard for a bigger journey, such as upskilling.

"This project gave me another perspective on Braşov, so in the future I want to develop these ideas, participating in the city's evolution process." – Student, Braşov





Belfast – "Waterfront Promenade Framework"


Action Overview

Created a vision for balanced heritage and economic development, guiding city planning.

Outcome: Policy & Regulation Developing

Enhancing decision-making by gathering and utilizing data to inform urban development and heritage preservation.

Transferability Guidelines by key ingredients:

 **Formal Institutions:** Iterative Improvement—work with public authorities, testing smaller-scale projects based on community input and evaluating their success.

 **Balance** "soft power" and guidelines with enforceable regulations.

 **Knowledge:** Promote and disseminate the Hub's achievements.



"It's great to see us starting to face towards the river again rather than turning our back on it and to help regenerate the communities and the rich heritage that exists right along the River Lagan." – Councillor, Belfast



Genova – "La via delle storie"

Action Overview


Used public art and storytelling to bring visitors into narrow historic streets, revitalizing forgotten spaces.

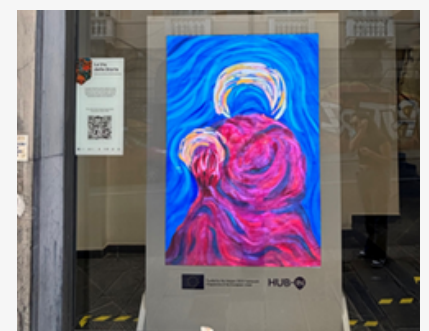
Outcome: Art & Creativity

Using artistic interventions to revitalize spaces and attract people to historic urban areas

Transferability Guidelines by key ingredients:

 **Knowledge:** Gather insights through focus groups or surveys before designing the event.

 **Support Organizations:** Seek community interactions as a springboard for a bigger journey, such as upskilling.



"We need to overcome the prejudice that coming to Via Prè is dangerous, it is absolutely not true." – Shop Owner, Genova


Action Overview


Developed a green certification program to promote sustainable tourism.

Outcome : Sustainability

Sustainability Ensuring long-term environmental, economic, and social sustainability through heritage-led innovation.

Transferability Guidelines by key ingredients:

 **Human Resources:** Ensure that the data collected represents a broad demographic range.

 **Entrepreneurial Culture:** Encourage experimentation with sustainability and circularity.

 **Human Resources:** Dedicate resources for transformation, such as a project manager.

★ **Leadership:** Actions are dynamic and must be able to adapt.



"Sustainability isn't an add-on; it's the foundation for future urban regeneration."

8.4 - HUB-IN Leadership Guide

Strategic Insights for Policymakers & City Leaders - 10 keyfindings

What it is:

The **HUB-IN Leadership Guide** is a **high-level strategic document** summarizing the key findings and recommendations of the HUB-IN project. Designed for European leaders - including **mayors, policymakers, CEOs, creative industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and community leaders** - it demonstrates how Hubs of Innovation in Historic Urban Areas (HUAs) can drive **long-term regeneration while addressing challenges** such as climate change, globalization, and economic shifts.



Target Audience:

Local, national, and international leaders, Local, national, and international leaders, Cultural and creative industry leaders, Entrepreneurs and innovation hub managers, European institutions and global networks

10 Key Findings at a Glance

Cities' Actions Examples



Lisboa
Storytellers

1 Hubs of Innovation strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems, leading to a thriving creative sector with heritage as the catalyst for economic growth

✦ Lisbon's De-Incubator, supporting heritage-based businesses.



Genova
Storytellers

2 Hubs of Innovation's 'Accelerator Programmes' deliver effective skills development and new 'start ups'

✦ Genova's "Experimental Call" funded creative urban projects.



Nicosia
Storytellers

3 Hubs of Innovation contribute to sustainable tourism by balancing heritage preservation and use of new technologies

✦ Nicosia's "Heritage Walks" Digital Twin enhances cultural tourism



Utrecht
Storytellers

4 HUBs of Innovation-led cross-sector collaboration that can lead to enhanced value chains

✦ Utrecht's business networks securing financial sustainability.



G. Angouleme
Storytellers

5 Hubs of Innovation increase stakeholder engagement and civic participation, fostering inclusive decision-making processes

✦ Grand Angoulême's "Caravane Creative Lab" activated local networks.



Braşov
Storytellers

6 Hubs of Innovation's regenerative actions improve social cohesion and a sense of belonging, strengthening community ties

✦ Braşov's City as a Classroom fosters sustainability education.

10 Key Findings at a Glance

Cities' Actions Examples



7 Hubs of Innovation can lead directly and indirectly to the rehabilitation of underused spaces and vacant land, revitalizing historic urban areas

Slovenska Bistrica's Crouzet Hub institutionalizes creative entrepreneurship support.

8 Hubs of Innovation strengthen local identity by integrating cultural heritage into regeneration strategies, improving community pride and participation

Belfast's policy work aligns regeneration with city planning.



9 Hubs of Innovation contribute to climate resilience by embedding sustainability principles into regeneration processes

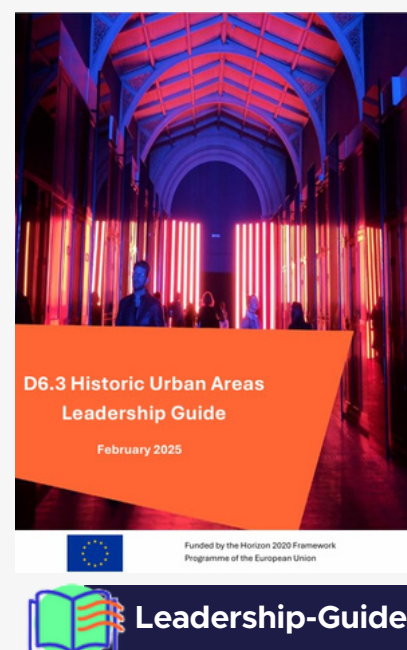
Belfast's Waterfront Promenade Framework integrates policy and regeneration.

10 Hubs of Innovation have shown that they can generate a “flywheel effect”, building momentum to trigger on-going longer-term transformational change in historic urban areas

“Belfast have leveraged its networks and evidence to unlock approx. €70,000 of matched funding (£50,000) towards its Actions in the HUA, specifically the Waterfront Promenade Framework..... “

“In Utrecht, initial investment in the Hub attracted more stakeholders and the Hub has now leveraged approx. €642,000 of funding towards its future Actions in the HUA. “

Hubs of Innovation and the **HUB-IN Cities Network** provide a scalable and sustainable model for historic urban regeneration, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration to ensure lasting impact across European cities and beyond.



9. HUB-IN Cities Network : The legacy

Creating Hubs of Innovation in Historic Urban Areas



What it is:

The **HUB-IN Cities Network** is a dynamic alliance of cities committed to driving innovation-led regeneration in Historic Urban Areas. Expanding from the eight HUB-IN pilot cities to a growing network of 20+ follower cities, this initiative fosters collaboration, knowledge exchange, and shared learning.



Target Audience:

By linking **cities, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and creative communities**, the network ensures that the transformation of historic areas continues beyond the HUB-IN project, securing a **lasting legacy of sustainable urban innovation**.

Now, we invite your city to be part of this journey!

By joining the HUB-IN Cities Network, cities gain access to :

- **A collaborative network** of forward-thinking cities sharing best practices.
- **The HUB-IN Academy**, offering free training, tools, and strategic roadmaps.
- **Funding opportunities**, including European programs supporting innovation in HUAs.
- **Collaboration & Support**: Share experiences, best practices, and co-create solutions.
- **Expert guidance**, co-creation tools, and tested methodologies for heritage-led regeneration.

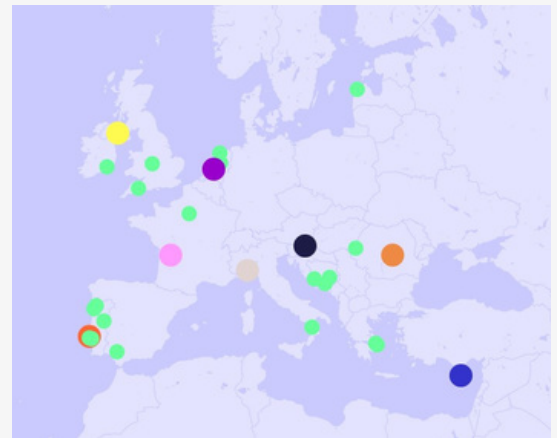
Join the HUB-IN Cities Network today!

Be part of a growing community of forward-thinking cities and unlock new opportunities for your historic urban area

Sign up **here**:



20 Follower Cities signed the Memorandum of Understanding to be part of the Alliance



Discover our Follower Cities



Funded by the Horizon 2020 Research
Programme of the European Union

HUB-IN Cities Network



9. HUB-IN Cities Network : The legacy

Creating Hubs of Innovation in Historic Urban Areas

Join the HUB-IN Cities Network today! Unlock the HUB-IN Academy - your gateway to expert guidance, innovative tools, and real-world strategies for transforming Historic Urban Areas!



HUB-IN Academy

Learn how to regenerate your historic urban area via entrepreneurship and innovation

Innovation meets cultural heritage in cities

Enhance your skills with the HUB-IN Academy's free online courses. Designed for urban innovators, these courses cover:

- Strategic Roadmap Development:
- Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Cultivation
- Georeferenced Framework Implementation
- Engaging Innovators through Match & Ignite

Join a collaborative learning environment and transform historic spaces into vibrant, sustainable communities.

Enroll now at the [HUB-IN ACADEMY](#).

HUB-IN Academy: discover the new courses

January 27, 2025




Our Academy has further enriched its offering of free online courses aimed at empowering urban innovators



HUB-IN Academy Booklet

📌 The **HUB-IN Cities Network** is more than a project outcome, **it's a movement!** By uniting cities under a shared vision of innovation, cultural heritage, and sustainability, this alliance is shaping the future of Historic Urban Areas.

Sign up **here:** 



Glossary of Terms

Co-creation - A collaborative innovation approach actively involving stakeholders (and experts) in the design process towards HUB-IN Places. From discovery to implementation (and beyond), stakeholders are informed, consulted, involved and empowered, with their insights and efforts strengthening the outputs and impact, increasing the sense of agency and pride. This results in social, economic and environmental outcomes that are essential and (in combination with greater value creation) are more likely to remain sustainable

Cultural Heritage-HUB-IN considers the term Cultural Heritage in the broad sense, covering tangible and intangible values, exploring its ecological, economic, and social dimensions. Following work by UNESCO, the concept has been evolving during the last few decades, including not only tangible cultural and natural heritage but also intangible heritage. The tangible heritage includes elements, such as monuments, archaeological sites, paintings, sculptures, cultural landscapes. The intangible cultural heritage includes local know how and cultural identities, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.)

Entrepreneurship - The process by which opportunities to create future goods, services and systems are discovered, evaluated, and exploited. It involves managing risk and judgment to implement innovative ideas from wherever they originate.

Entrepreneurial Ecosystems - A set of interdependent actors and factors coordinated in such a way that they enable urban innovation and productive (value-enhancing) entrepreneurship.

Heritage-led regeneration- Regeneration with the focus on the value of heritage as a powerful catalyst for transformational change – building on the ‘spirit of the place’, meeting the needs of residents whilst attracting investment, jobs and improving quality of life.⁴

Historic Urban Areas (HUAs) - Draws directly from UNESCO ‘Historic Urban Landscapes’ defining urban areas as 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 setting⁵. In this way Historic Urban Areas relate to both the tangible and intangible factors that both set the context and shape the historic area’s character, identity and values. Within HUB-IN we consider three subcategories of HUA: 1. Historic areas which are, in whole or in part, town or city centres. 2. Historic areas which are outside of the town or city centre. These will typically be part of medium and larger towns and cities. 3. Historic areas that focus on the wider urban values that define the identity and character of the town, city, or place

HUB-IN Clusters of Innovation - Economic, social and ecological hotspots of innovation at the neighbourhood scale for the heritage and cultural led regeneration of HUAs. The HUB-IN cluster approach considers three interconnected clusters: • Culture and Creative Industries (CCI) – Cultural heritage is at the centre of innovation and creativity, to nurture socio-economic development. • New lifestyle (NLS) – Innovative sustainable living patterns, inclusivity, and diversity are the main ingredients to improve wellbeing. • Resilient & Human Connected Places (RHCP) – Sustainable and regenerative use of resources, community cohesion, digital and human connectivity are key to improve ecological and social resilience of

Glossary of Terms

HUB-IN Places - A physical or virtual hub of innovation, where cultural wealth and heritage provide a unique competitive advantage – a key resource for enhancing the sustainable regeneration of historic urban areas. HUB-IN Places are distinguished by their local action and their global interconnection. They are local hotspots of creativity, community empowerment and entrepreneurship, bringing together local stakeholders, academia, industry, and local governments. HUB-IN Places are hubs of innovation recognised by their project integrated portfolio approach that blends three HUB-IN clusters of innovation. They are places to co-design, test and develop new solutions, ideas, and creative businesses in a real urban environment. HUB-IN Places are also globally interconnected in a network that favours sharing knowledge, open innovation processes and the development of innovative circular models

Innovation - Implementation of novel, creative ideas in order to tackle real challenges in a purposeful way. In order to create change, we need to understand interconnections and reality (intelligence), as well as empower people (talent), enable action (technology), developing interventions that shape reality (solutions)

Open innovation - A concept coined by Chesbrough in 2003. “Open Innovation means that valuable ideas can come from inside or outside the company and can go to market from inside or outside the company as well”¹⁰. For the urban regeneration and sustainability of HUB IN Places, open innovation processes are much more granulated and requires the development of co-creative partnerships between different groups of actors from industry, academia, citizens and local governments.

Purposeful placemaking - The value and importance of community-oriented spaces, embedded strongly in the local ecosystem with stakeholders, is key for the health and vitality of a place with purpose. Purposeful placemaking¹¹ has a social, cultural, economic and environmental impact on the development of individuals and neighbourhoods and can serve to spark inclusive/good growth.

Source : HUB-IN Framework

ANNEXES

Local HUBS of INNOVATION at a glance

source :

HUB-IN StoryTelling Snapshot



HUB-IN *Belfast*

Belfast is unlocking the full potential of the Maritime Mile by transforming it into a people-centric, revitalised, vibrant destination home to local creatives and cutting-edge technology companies.

ACTIONS CARRIED OUT:

- Developing a framework for a full connected Belfast Waterfront Promenade
- Sustainability audit of businesses in the area
- Developing and launching a challenge call



HUB-IN Belfast

**Transforming the Maritime Mile:
Celebrating Belfast's future and rich
maritime past to deliver a vibrant,
accessible place for all to enjoy**



[Belfast
Storytellers](#)

HUB-IN Braşov

Braşov is becoming a people-friendly destination, a sustainable example for other cities, by fighting neglect, museumification, and gentrification in the city centre.

ACTIONS CARRIED OUT:

- Transforming the public realm
- Presenting the historic city as a classroom through co-creating a series of 'Pretext Objects'
- Creating an immersive night-time experience.



HUB-IN Braşov

An inclusive and vibrant place where innovation, learning and collaboration thrive!



Braşov
Storytellers

Genova is striving to regenerate its historic center, especially the Caruggi area, making it a more sustainable, beautiful, vibrant and inclusive place both for residents and tourists.

ACTIONS CARRIED OUT:

- Urban outfitting for an inclusive and lively Historical Urban Area (HUA)
- Public art initiative
- Creative storytelling of the HUA
- Experimental call for innovators



HUB-IN Genova

**Revitalizing Genova: A Journey
Towards a Sustainable, Vibrant,
and Inclusive Historic Center**



Genova
Storytellers

GrandAngoulême is fighting against the neglect and abandonment of the industrial heritage and the lack of preservation of the inhabitants' memory through art.

ACTIONS CARRIED OUT:

- Investigating and mapping the historical heritage to reveal the sense of the place
- Co-Designing a Metropolitan Trail as a framework for *Caravane Creative Lab*
- Setting up an itinerant HUB of Innovation: The *Caravane Creative Lab*
- Creating and running an open call to raise awareness about cultural heritage



Caravane Creative Lab

An itinerant space to meet and build together in GrandAngoulême



Lisbon aims to fight touristification and population loss by preserving its cultural identity and fostering a more entrepreneurial, innovative and creative local community.

ACTIONS CARRIED OUT:

- Ignite the Hill: Building an entrepreneurship and innovation network
- *De-Incubator*: Decentralised & dematerialised incubator
- Pop-Up Space: Multifunctional space for creative & sustainable urban regeneration solutions
- Sprout Tank: Experimentation for a circular and climate neutral *Colina do Castelo*



HUB-IN Colina do Castelo

Be part of the story





Nicosia is striving to reverse the abandonment trends of the city center by becoming a powerhouse of culture and innovation-led transformations.

ACTIONS CARRIED OUT:

- Set-up of the digital stage
- Heritage walks and their digital twins
- Activation of the HUB: interacting and engaging
- Creation of a Culture and Creative Industries (CCI) Accelerator Programme



HUB-IN Nicosia

Look at the Past and See the Future: transforming Nicosia into a beacon of innovation and entrepreneurship



Nicosia
Storytellers

Slovenska Bistrica is striving to create an environment that regenerates traditional industries, while boosting the creative sector and encouraging sustainable development through innovation.

ACTIONS CARRIED OUT:

- Crouzet HUB, a central space for creativity, innovation and heritage
- Crouzet start-up accelerator programme
- Mechanism of support for small local projects



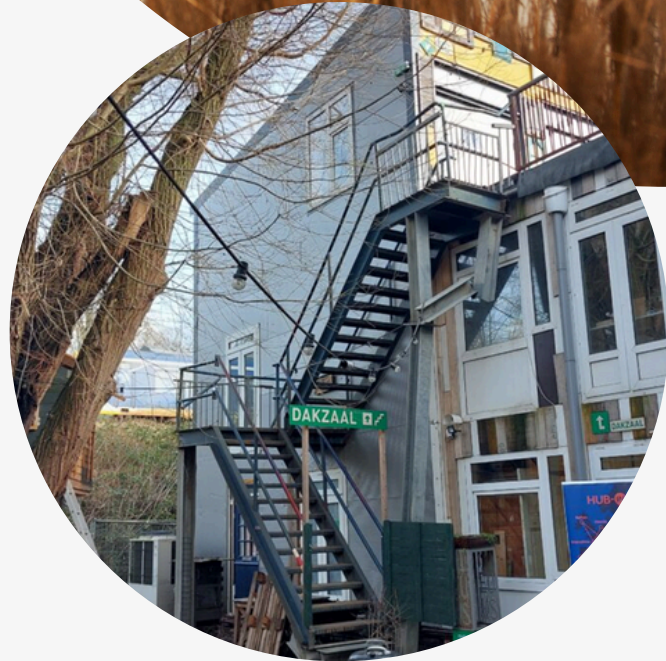
The Crouzet HUB Cultivating Creativity, Celebrating Heritage



Utrecht is transforming its industrial area, where back in time trains used to be built, into a creative venue home to hundreds of artists and creative businesses.

ACTIONS CARRIED OUT:

- Transforming the business association *Bedrijvenkring Cartesiusweg* (BKC) into a HUB
- Initiating an art programme in the Historic Urban Area
- Boosting innovation and creativity via talent development programmes
- Developing blueprints for widely applicable governance structures for both the HUA and Utrecht in general



HUB-IN Utrecht

The 'Werkspoorkwartier', a maker district where creativity thrives



Utrecht
Storytellers

www.hubin-project.eu

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