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NEBA

STATE OF THE ART ANALYSIS

JOINT SUMMARY

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NEBA: Supporting the integration of New European Bauhaus values and principles into the regional planning processes

This State of the Art analysis has been developed by the Advisory Partner of the Interreg Europe programme project “Supporting the integration of New European Bauhaus values and principles into the regional planning processes (NEBA)”, with the support of the Lithuania Innovation Centre (Lead Partner).

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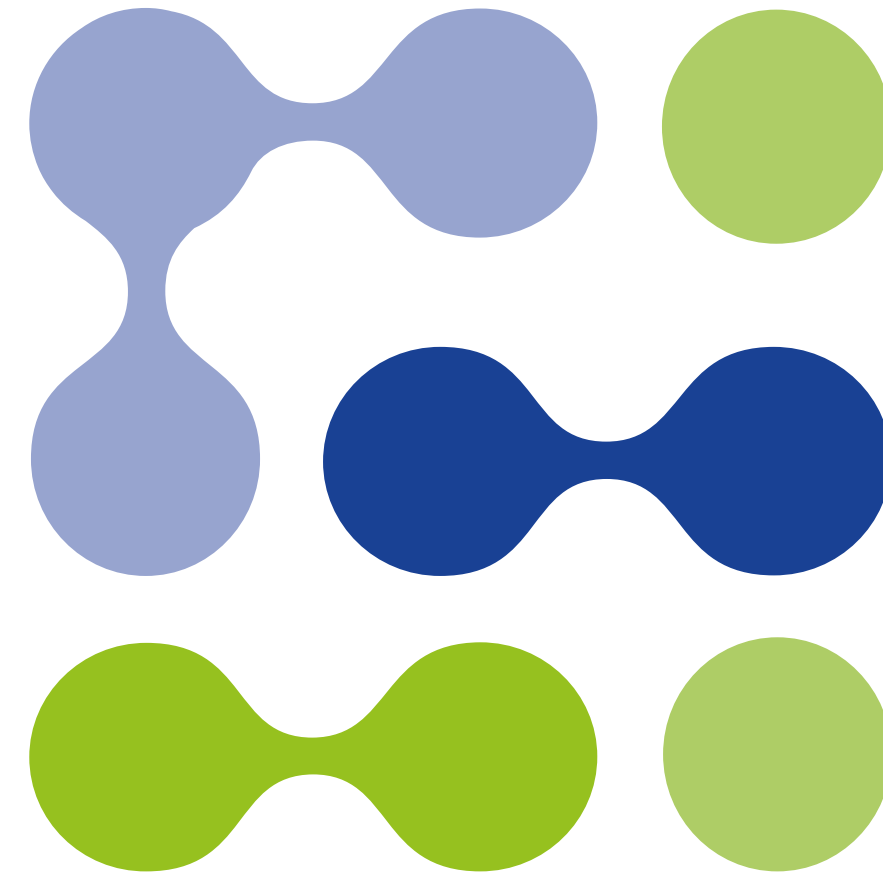


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CONTENT INDEX



04

Introduction

05

Methodology for SoA analysis

06

Background and essential features

07

SoA analysis of Project Partners

08

Internal factors

12

External factors

20

Current policy practices

23

SWOT and PESTLE

25

The policy learning synergies and areas of interest for good practice investigation

INTRODUCTION

The Interreg Europe Project *Supporting the integration of New European Bauhaus values and principles into the regional planning processes* - **NEBA** - is aimed at strengthening the capacities of regions and cities to develop and introduce inclusive and sustainable territorial planning policy instruments, to increase resilience and adaptation to social and climate change in regions and cities.

The project focuses on bringing the values and principles of the EU Commission **New European Bauhaus** (NEB) 2021 initiative into territorial planning processes at a regional and local level.

While the effects of climate change become more apparent, there is an emerging need to develop environmentally friendly technological solutions whilst ensuring the involvement of citizens in solving the criticalities thus taking into account their needs and interests, strengthening social justice.

This might support the development of legal models and guidelines to integrate principles, values and actions in a way that is most beneficial for the local communities and the environment.

The NEBA project brings together regions with different experiences of NEB application and their unique local backgrounds. It explores the best practices and ensures synergies of interregional cooperation in the areas.

The State of the Art (SoA) joint summary is based on each project Partner situation [see the *Regional Reports*], and it serves as a foundational analysis to understand and evaluate the current NEB-related landscape across Partner regions. This document identifies **challenges, gaps, and opportunities** for integrating NEB principles into planning practices, facilitating the development of shared strategies and fostering learning across regions.

The report is divided into sections covering:

- **Introduction;**
- **Methodology;**
- **Internal and External Analysis:** examining internal (organisational expertise, knowledge gaps, and challenges) and external factors (policy integration, innovation management, funding opportunities, and citizen participation);

- **Policy Assessment:** using SWOT and PESTLE methodologies to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and external influences based on the Internal and External Analysis. The core of the document focuses on the joint analysis of project Partners' contexts. This section provides detailed insights into the interplay between NEB values and existing planning practices.
- **Good Practices and Synergies:** highlighting areas for NEB application and interregional cooperation.

The document emphasises that it is necessary to deeply implement legal analysis and tools to support an effective NEB implementation across different countries and contexts, not considering legal rules as barriers, but as enabling conditions. In this perspective, various policy instruments might be developed.

As it is partially already happening in several countries, policy instruments might include regulatory, investment, communication, and analytical tools.

Additionally, new spatial planning frameworks, capacity building, and other policy-learning strategies are essential in designing the NEB implementation in regional and local planning processes.

The State of the Art will analyse regulatory instruments and the development of innovative legal tools, which can easily become replicable models.

The analysis envisages **investment instruments** (such as the capabilities to attract funding opportunities) to ensure that investments and methods align with NEB principles (see the new EU NEB self-assessment method, 2024).

Communication instruments permit the incorporation of ideas from local communities, ensuring a sense of ownership and meeting social needs. Designing policy instruments for NEB recalls the analytical policy instruments: the elaboration and use of strategic documents to guide urban regeneration projects in various contexts support the achievement of sustainability and local cultural identity.

To underline how fostering partnerships with regional and international organizations might address knowledge gaps to facilitate best practices exchange, capacity building and policy-learning strategies will also be provided in the text.

Outcome: The State of the Art analysis helps project Partners to better target their NEB integration objectives and potential areas for policy improvement and to involve local stakeholders more actively.

METHODOLOGY FOR STATE OF THE ART ANALYSIS

Providing a preliminary overview and study of NEB values and principles in the different project Partners' countries, the State of the Art analysis aims to establish pathways for the future project development and implementation of common values with concrete effects.

Based on the main findings collected in a dedicated Survey, this document covers the individual territorial specificities while proposing a holistic vision of NEB, connecting values and principles with further recommendations and final considerations on the NEB future perspectives.

Thus, the overarching goal is to analyse the **effective development of the NEB in the environmental, economic and social sustainability fields, inclusion and beauty, for greener and smarter cities for all.**

Theoretical Framework: the analysis combines **SWOT** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and **PESTLE** (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental) methodologies to assess internal capacities and external challenges in NEBA regions. These tools are tailored to identify synergies, gaps, and opportunities for policy improvement.

Goals:

- Evaluate existing policy frameworks and knowledge gaps.

- Identify regional challenges and potential synergies.
- Propose areas for good practice exploration.

Outputs:

The final report serves as a strategic baseline to foster interregional learning, inspire NEB implementation, and align policies with sustainability goals. It emphasizes overcoming barriers through innovative legal tools, collaborative strategies, communication, financial and capacity-building instruments to integrate NEB principles effectively.

THE NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS INITIATIVE: BACKGROUND AND ESSENTIAL FEATURES

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative, launched in 2021 by the European Commission, connects the European Green Deal with our daily life. Its overarching aim is to create sustainable, inclusive, and aesthetically enriched environments while addressing climate challenges, promoting social justice, and enhancing well-being.

The NEB integrates three core values:

- **Sustainability:** Focusing on climate neutrality, circular economy, and biodiversity.
- **Inclusion:** Advocating for diversity, accessibility, and equity.
- **Aesthetics:** Designing spaces that inspire harmony and enhance quality of life.

The initiative emphasizes three guiding principles: **multilevel transformations** (global to local), **participatory approaches**, and **transdisciplinary collaboration across science, culture, and design**.

Thematic Axes

Key focus areas include:

1. **Reconnecting with Nature:** Using nature-based solutions and sustainable materials for greener urban areas.
2. **Regaining a Sense of Belonging:** Encouraging intergenerational solidarity and cultural connections.
3. **Prioritizing Marginalized Communities:** Addressing accessibility barriers and supporting social inclusion.

4. **Long-Term Thinking:** Promoting sustainable urban development through life-cycle design.

Achievements and Tools

The 2023 NEB Progress Report highlights significant advancements, including:

1. **NEB Lab:** a collaborative platform fostering innovation and policy frameworks in urban planning, architecture, and cultural heritage.
2. **Lighthouse Demonstrator Projects:** five large-scale projects funded under Horizon Europe, illustrating the practical application of NEB principles in diverse European cities.
3. **NEB Academy:** launched in 2023, this initiative trains professionals on sustainable construction and circular economy practices.

Practical tools, such as the NEB Compass and NEB Toolbox or the NEB Dashboard, guide stakeholders in implementing NEB-aligned projects, emphasizing sustainability, inclusivity, and aesthetics.

More tools and developments are yet to come.

Social and Environmental Impacts

The NEB initiative promotes well-being by addressing environmental health (clean air, green spaces) and fostering inclusive communities. It values cultural heritage as a unifying resource, enabling cities to thrive through cooperation and community engagement. Social inclusion remains central, ensuring active participation of all individuals, including vulnerable groups, in shaping equitable and vibrant societies.

Vision for the Future

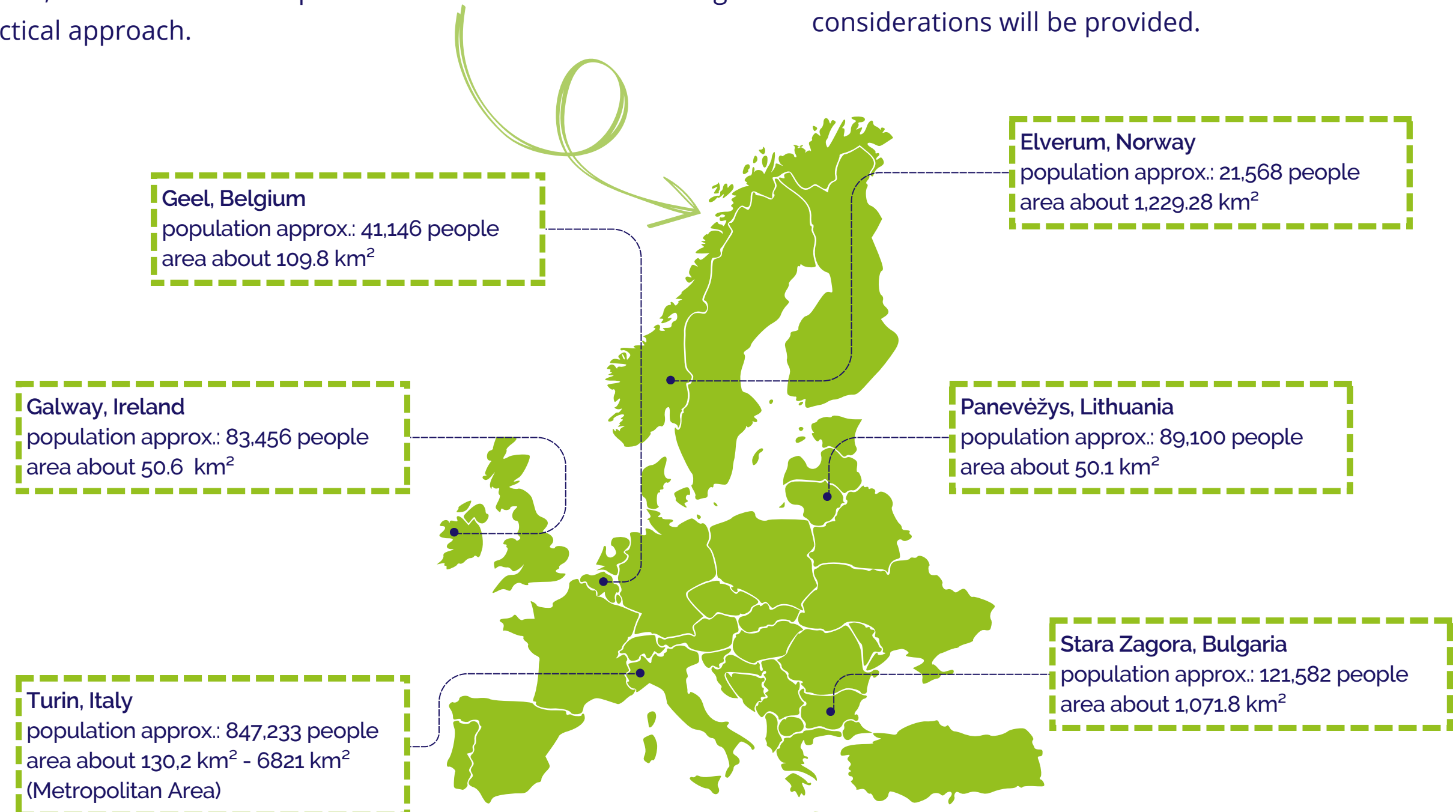
NEB envisions sustainable and beautiful cities, where urban planning integrates green infrastructure and promotes social cohesion. These cities embody **inclusive beauty**, reflecting their cultural and historical contexts while minimizing environmental impact. NEB's interdisciplinary and collaborative approach serves as a roadmap for transforming communities across Europe into resilient, inclusive, and aesthetically rich spaces.

STATE OF THE ART ANALYSIS OF PROJECT PARTNERS

The joint summary has analysed the characteristics and specificities of each project Partner territorial context, starting from the internal factors of the organization to the external ones, which can constitute strengths or weaknesses, opportunities or threats, to ensure the implementation of the NEB through a practical approach.

Analysis of internal (organisational) factors

The analysis of internal factors of project Partners is divided into expertise, NEB organisational knowledge, sources of information, and challenges related to the integration of NEB topics in regional and urban planning. At the end, some final considerations will be provided.



INTERNAL FACTORS SUMMARY

<p>Stara Zagora Municipality</p>	<p>Stara Zagora has a relatively low level of awareness and knowledge gaps regarding NEB principles and values, as they are not well disseminated among professionals, city administration, local inhabitants, and media. The key challenges in integrating NEB values and principles into regional and urban planning are related to the conservative behaviour of the local administration and the strict regulations on new development. From a sociological perspective, the lack of social sensitivity towards a nature-based way of living can negatively impact on efforts to address climate change and economic sustainability, also considering budget restrictions.</p>
<p>Elverum Municipality</p>	<p>In Elverum Municipality, the knowledge level of NEB principles is not widely spread, but they are somewhat familiar within the Planning and Building Department. The planning processes and tools are not specifically connected to sustainability and aesthetics (e.g., “Meeting Place”, Møteplassen), but NEB principles are generally highly emphasized among Norwegian municipalities with an international focus. Elverum especially faces challenges in understanding the importance of NEB, the local relevance of the European Green Deal, and community conviction.</p>
<p>City of Torino</p>	<p>The City of Torino is very aware of NEB values and principles as it is actively engaged in several NEB projects, striving to share values and principles across its complex internal structure, with some criticalities mainly related to the city’s large size. The “Torino New European Bauhaus Manifesto” (March 2023) is an important initiative, although it doesn’t have mandatory provisions. As a systematic introduction of NEB values into urban planning instruments or policies has not yet been achieved, the City must also consider budget issues and the innovation of legal rules. Additionally, there is a significant lack of knowledge among citizens about NEB principles.</p>
<p>Panevėžys Municipality</p>	<p>Panevėžys Municipality demonstrates a solid initial understanding and general concept of NEB values, and it needs to focus on specific tools to aid in the development of densely populated neighbourhoods within the city. It remains challenging to comply with existing laws and regulations, as some regional and urban planning documents miss NEB subtopics, and there are budget issues.</p>
<p>City of Geel</p>	<p>The City of Geel embraces the three NEB core values, but challenges remain, particularly in effectively implementing participation and adopting a comprehensive transdisciplinary approach. Other challenges include property positions, understanding the urgency of climate solutions, and collaborating on projects with diverse actors.</p>
<p>Galway City Council</p>	<p>In Galway City, the existing knowledge and experience of NEB was low until recently. Challenges emerge, especially referring to the “siloeed” organization of Irish Local Authorities, with different approaches in the various departments. Communication of the NEB core values to public servants, citizens, and stakeholders needs to be developed. Moreover, as the rule-based planning system in Galway is very legalistic, a possible lack of collaborative discussion might emerge, despite the strong link among organizations working on spaces.</p>

Expertise of the organisation on NEB's topics

The municipalities involved in the NEBA project exhibit diverse administrative structures and expertise, yet share a strong commitment to integrating sustainable, inclusive, and innovative urban development principles.

It's possible to identify common strengths and areas of expertise, especially focused on urban regeneration, which is often coordinated by dedicated urban planning or city development units (e.g., Stara Zagora, Panevėžys, Galway, Torino, Geel). Indeed, all Partners possess robust legal frameworks to support urban planning and regeneration, where especially planning and building laws guide development efforts.

Cultural programs and social inclusion initiatives are integral to many municipalities (such as Galway, renowned for its arts festivals and inclusion initiatives, and Elverum, which collaborates with NGOs like Møteplassen, or Torino, with all the initiatives for social inclusion programs, which will be analysed in the next sections). Most of the municipalities employ experts or programs addressing inclusion for marginalized groups, including the elderly and people with special needs.

Since this point, it is evident that specific roles on commitment to NEB Principles are absent, although municipalities demonstrate alignment with NEB principles in their experiences and best practices (e.g. sustainability, stakeholder participation).

It seems that some municipalities (for instance, Geel and Panevėžys) are more flexible and iterative in their approach, while others, like the City of Torino, employ a highly structured engagement of specific services.

The legal expertise is in-house in some municipalities (e.g., Elverum, Stara Zagora) and outsourced in others (e.g. Galway).

Level of organisational knowledge of the NEB initiative, its characteristics, its related knowledge gaps and main sources of information

The municipalities display diverse levels of familiarity and integration of the NEB principles. While some territories have made significant strides in embedding NEB concepts into planning and initiatives, others are at an early stage of understanding and dissemination.

It's possible to identify a low awareness of NEB in most municipalities (e.g. Stara Zagora and Galway report a general lack of knowledge within both professional and public spheres, as NEB principles are rarely appearing in planning documents or public discussions at the moment), albeit in some of them NEB is understood at a foundational level (e.g. Panevėžys and partially Geel), while others show a growing but uneven familiarity across departments (e.g. Elverum and Torino).

Despite all, the full integration of NEB principles into planning frameworks remains a challenge for all.

A significant need to communicate NEB principles to communities and foster participatory approaches in project development has been strongly underlined. Most municipalities emphasize the importance of public participation and the challenge of overcoming *siloed* structures within their administrations.

Although opportunities for growth through collaboration development might leverage partnerships with national and international organizations, also to bridge gaps in NEB knowledge and implementation (e.g. Elverum's engagement with the Oslo Region European Office; Torino's involvement in EU-funded NEB projects; Galway's collaborations with academic and professional institutions, etc.).

Key challenges related to the integration of NEB values and principles into regional/urban planning

Project partners face diverse yet interrelated challenges in adopting the values and principles of the NEB into their urban planning practices. These obstacles highlight the need for cultural, structural, and regulatory transformation.

In some cases, resistance to innovation and change has been underlined: for instance, Stara Zagora reported the perils of the conservative mindset among decision-makers and of outdated regulations which further slow innovation.

Elverum reported the importance of significant educational and engagement efforts to convince residents and stakeholders of the importance of international NEB principles.

This lack of awareness and shared knowledge has been provided also by the City of Torino, as a critical first step to progress, or by the City of Geel, where stakeholders and private partners often lack awareness or urgency regarding climate challenges, leading to resistance against integrating social needs like green spaces into projects. Concerning Ireland's rule-based and legalistic planning system, Galway reported a complicated shift to NEB-aligned, collaborative approaches.

Regulatory and structural constraints have been reported by Panevėžys, as outdated planning documents and rigid legal frameworks might present barriers to aligning NEB principles with city development goals. Additionally, implementing innovative solutions often incurs higher costs (e.g. Stara Zagora).

Indeed, financial limitations are another key constraint, underlined by all municipalities.

Budget limitation could undermine efforts to implement large-scale projects that reflect NEB's vision, especially in a densely populated territory.

Finally, the transdisciplinary nature of NEB projects requires extensive collaboration among diverse stakeholders, thus causing heavy workloads especially for small municipal teams. Integrating NEB principles demands simultaneous engagement at grassroots and policy levels, requiring a balance of local projects with broader strategic alignment, and the complexity of multidisciplinary collaboration might be another key challenge.

Final considerations on internal (organisational) factors

Concerning internal factors, the diverse expertise and administrative structures across municipalities might provide a robust foundation for the NEBA project, thanks to a cross-fertilization approach and best practices exchange. Shared strengths in urban regeneration and inclusivity, coupled with unique territorial nuances, ensure a multifaceted approach to achieving NEB principles.

Especially for small municipalities, it could be hard to see how global issues like the European Green Deal affect them directly: overcoming this mindset and realising impact on the world requires education and community engagement, which may face challenges also from the point of view of public officials, who need to co-working on different projects with diverse actors and a transdisciplinary approach.

The aim to be pursued is to give a clear set of rules and guidelines to explain when or how a policy or a project can be branded as NEB compliant, to avoid old planning systems which do not consider the specificities and/or needs of local dimensions.

Indeed, larger local administrations may have greater expertise, but they may face more challenges in terms of organization and specific rules or local legal provisions. Albeit, smaller realities have more difficulties from a knowledge point of view, but find it easier to implement good practices.

Integrating NEB values into urban planning requires addressing deep-seated resistance to change, enhancing awareness, reforming outdated regulations, and securing adequate funding. Collaboration across departments, stakeholders, and levels of governance is essential. Demonstration projects, educational campaigns, and transdisciplinary approaches can serve as catalysts for embedding NEB principles into urban development practices.

By leveraging their specific strengths and fostering cross-municipal collaboration, each municipality might effectively drive sustainable and innovative urban solutions.



Analysis of external factors

Concerning the external factors, the results of the analysis present very different issues: the integration of environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation, social sustainability and social inclusion in policies and planning processes; the integration of NEB core values in urban and regional development strategies; the integration of NEB key principles in urban and regional development strategies; the guidelines and framework integrating NEB into local context; the potential funding opportunities; the management of local innovation processes for regional and local development and the experiences of social and territorial inclusion, based on citizens' participation and co-creation. Finally, some final considerations will be provided.

EXTERNAL FACTORS SUMMARY

<p>Stara Zagora Municipality</p>	<p>Stara Zagora integrates environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation into its urban policies, focusing on reducing energy consumption and emissions. Projects include energy-efficient renovations and zero-emission urban transport. Civic participation is encouraged in urban development. The Bulgarian government supports vulnerable groups in climate adaptation and most of the initiatives include regenerating public spaces and using nature-based materials.</p>
<p>Elverum Municipality</p>	<p>In Elverum, sustainability and aesthetics values are integrated into urban planning through Norway's Planning and Building Act. The city participates in European projects and promotes international cooperation. Elverum's climate and energy plan aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy. Public participation is essential in planning processes and national funding is available for climate projects.</p>
<p>City of Torino</p>	<p>The City of Torino has developed policies for environmental sustainability and social inclusion, participating in several EU projects for environmental and social innovation. The General Town Plan incorporates NEB values, with initiatives for urban regeneration and sustainable mobility. The city promotes community participation through engagement campaigns and co-creation projects, while funding opportunities are available through cohesion policy funds and NEB prizes.</p>
<p>Panevėžys Municipality</p>	<p>Panevėžys Municipality has provided for sustainable development strategies that include environmental sustainability, aesthetics, and social inclusion. Urban planning documents promote public participation and the integration of global and local dimensions. The municipality seeks ways to implement NEB principles in local policies, and public-private partnerships are in place for local development.</p>
<p>City of Geel</p>	<p>The City of Geel is recognized for its community-based care model, integrating sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion into urban development strategies. The Spatial Policy Plan aims to create green connections between the city centre and the surrounding landscape. Public participation and transdisciplinary are being developed. Geel seeks synergies with EU programs for funding strategic projects.</p>
<p>Galway City Council</p>	<p>In Galway City Council, environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation are central to the City Development Plan. The City Council has adopted a climate action plan involving the community and businesses. The Galway Charter promotes sustainable urbanism and community participation and funding opportunities are available through national and European programs for NEB projects.</p>

Integration of environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation, social sustainability and social inclusion in policies and planning processes

Municipalities are progressively embedding environmental sustainability, climate adaptation, social sustainability, and inclusion into their policies and planning processes, reflecting a shared understanding of the interconnected nature of these challenges. However, their approaches reveal varying degrees of advancement, focus, and integration.

Many cities have begun incorporating sustainability and inclusion into urban planning frameworks, often guided by national or regional policies: Elverum and Galway have developed comprehensive urban plans, including measurable climate action goals, while, for example, Torino and Panevėžys utilize updated urban development strategies to align with broader sustainability objectives. These efforts demonstrate a growing recognition of the need for integrated and actionable planning tools.

A strong emphasis on environmental sustainability is evident, focusing on reducing energy consumption, promoting nature-based solutions, and adapting to climate impacts. Strategies include reusing and regenerating urban spaces (e.g. Stara Zagora and Torino), optimizing resource use (e.g. Elverum), and targeting emissions reductions (e.g. Galway). However, challenges persist, such as outdated regulations and financial constraints, limiting the pace of adaptation and innovation.

Moreover, social inclusion is increasingly seen as integral to sustainability, with efforts ranging from targeting disadvantaged groups (e.g. Galway, Stara Zagora) and to fostering inclusive urban regeneration (for instance, in Torino). While some cities emphasize participation through legally mandated planning processes (e.g. Elverum), others draw from cultural heritage to inspire inclusive practices (e.g. Geel).

It has been underlined broadly that achieving meaningful social inclusion often requires addressing systemic barriers, such as limited resources and siloed governance structures (as reported in the internal organisational analysis).

Integration of three core values of the NEB in urban and regional development strategies

The integration of the NEB core values into urban and regional development strategies varies across municipalities, reflecting both progress and ongoing challenges. While the principles are recognized in many planning frameworks, their application often remains at an early or fragmented stage.

Stara Zagora has taken significant steps toward incorporating these values through energy-efficient building renovations, green space improvements, and the introduction of zero-emission transport. However, a broader cultural and professional shift is still needed for these principles to become deeply embedded in planning and decision-making processes. Projects like NEBA hold promises for increasing awareness and fostering this transition.

In the City of Torino, the NEB principles are more explicitly integrated into urban strategies, as the “PN Metro Plus Operational Plan,” which focuses on sustainable mobility and urban regeneration.

Targeted initiatives, such as redevelopment projects in socioeconomically challenged districts, combine physical improvements with social and cultural interventions. The city's strategic alignment with its "[New European Bauhaus Manifesto](#)" highlights its commitment to inclusive and sustainable development, incorporating active local participation and resilience.

Panevėžys has embedded NEB-aligned topics into their long-term strategic plans, ensuring that sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion guide all development projects.

Similarly, Geel emphasizes green connectivity in its Spatial Policy Plan, approved after a participatory process, aiming to link urban and rural spaces sustainably.

In other cases, Elverum and Galway, NEB values align with broader national or regional strategies, like the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and Ireland's regional spatial policies. However, specific and practical implementation of these principles often requires further efforts, particularly in adapting overarching goals to localized contexts.

Overall, the integration of NEB principles is progressing, with some municipalities demonstrating robust frameworks and others still working to operationalize these values in tangible, localized ways. Efforts such as participatory planning processes, targeted regeneration projects, and strategic alignment with national and EU policies are advancing the adoption of NEB principles, but a continued focus on cultural, structural, and financial challenges is crucial to their full realization.

Integration of NEB's three key principles in urban and regional development strategies

The integration of the NEB principles (combining global and local dimensions, fostering participation, and encouraging transdisciplinarity) into urban and regional development strategies demonstrates different degrees of advancement and creativity across municipalities.

Combination of global and local dimensions: municipalities are increasingly bridging global goals, such as climate action and sustainability, with localized initiatives. For instance, Elverum integrates global sustainability goals through its Climate and Energy Plan, emphasizing renewable energy, emissions reductions, and biodiversity protection, while also addressing local infrastructure needs and public awareness. Similarly, Geel collaborates with Flemish authorities and regional stakeholders to align river valley projects with local urban development, highlighting the connection between broader ecological goals and specific city-centered outcomes. Panevėžys leverages international and local expertise to address infrastructural integration, such as its forum on Rail Baltica, which exemplifies how global projects can be tailored to local urban contexts. Meanwhile, Galway's Development Plan ensures alignment with national and regional strategies (NPF and RSES) while fostering a unique local vision through the Galway Charter, which seeks to shape the city's future as a sustainable and inclusive hub.

Participation: citizen engagement is central to NEB principles, and municipalities are increasingly embedding participatory processes in their planning strategies. In Stara Zagora, public participation is mandated for investment approvals, ensuring alignment with community expectations and fostering shared responsibility for urban development. Galway incorporates extensive public consultation in its development planning process, integrating input from elected officials, residents, and local stakeholders to craft a sustainable city vision. Torino exemplifies innovative participation, with projects like "Voci di Quartiere" (Neighborhood Voices), which engages citizens through cultural and interactive activities to co-create inclusive urban spaces. This approach underscores the city's commitment to embedding community voices into planning. In Panevėžys, dedicated municipal employees work with youth and community leaders, ensuring that participation is celebrated across all development initiatives.

Transdisciplinarity: collaboration across disciplines and sectors is essential for embedding NEB values. Torino demonstrates this through its partnership with Urban Lab, where activities span libraries, public spaces, and cultural institutions, fostering a holistic approach to urban transformation.

Elverum's Climate and Energy Plan involves cross-sectoral efforts, incorporating agriculture, transport, and energy stakeholders, while promoting education and international exchanges to enhance competence among residents and municipal staff.

Geel is taking initial steps in transdisciplinary approaches, particularly in integrating private and public stakeholders in projects, though further exploitation of this potential is needed. Similarly, Panevėžys employs peer review sessions to bring together international and local experts, promoting a cross-disciplinary dialogue in planning processes.

Guidelines and framework integrating NEB into local policies

While some municipalities have tried to develop frameworks, others are in the early stages of aligning NEB values with their planning and policy-making processes.

More in detail, municipalities such as Stara Zagora and Torino have taken concrete steps to incorporate NEB principles into local policies.

In Stara Zagora, a sectoral approach underpins the integration of NEB, with specific selection criteria established for projects funded through the Development of Regions Program. These criteria emphasize low-carbon and circular economies, climate neutrality, and the creation of accessible and culturally significant urban spaces. Projects should aim to strengthen communication links between urban and peripheral areas while enhancing green infrastructure and environmental protection.

Similarly, as mentioned above, Torino has developed the [New European Bauhaus Manifesto](#) in 2023, which is a foundational document that adapts NEB principles for local application. The manifesto offers an overview of guidelines and inspirational principles rather than binding regulations, and it aligns closely with the objectives of the city's Territorial Project Plan and urban regeneration initiatives, under the National Cohesion Policy Program. These efforts lie on the implementation of sustainability, inclusivity, and urban beauty in large-scale projects, although the city has yet to achieve systematic incorporation of NEB values into all urban planning instruments.

Some emerging initiatives and strategic planning have been identified: Galway and Panevėžys are laying the groundwork for future integration of NEB. The Galway Charter serves as a foundational document advocating sustainable urbanism, emphasizing infill capacity, and piloting community-led development projects. This charter has garnered national support, with successful examples in areas like Westport serving as templates for NEB-aligned planning. Panevėžys, while lacking specific guidelines, is actively seeking expert advice and studies to identify efficient ways of embedding NEB values into its local policies, signaling a commitment to progress.

All municipalities face challenges in fully integrating NEB principles, but Geel has yet to establish clear connections to NEB values within initiatives like the Blue and Green Deal. Similarly, Elverum recognizes the importance of NEB principles and aims to integrate them into its local planning through the NEBA project, but its strategies remain in the developmental phase.

Potential funding opportunities

Municipalities are leveraging diverse funding opportunities to support the integration of NEB into urban and regional development. These opportunities span national, regional, and European levels.

Stara Zagora and Torino have developed frameworks that align project funding with NEB principles. In Stara Zagora, the Development of Regions Program, managed by Bulgaria's Ministry of Regional Development, includes specific selection criteria emphasizing NEB values. Projects focusing on urban regeneration, green infrastructure, and low-emission initiatives are prioritized, ensuring NEB values are reflected in public investments and EU-funded initiatives. This approach demonstrates how funding criteria can strategically advance NEB-aligned urban planning.

In Torino, the city taps into funding opportunities under the Cohesion Policy's National Programme, focusing on urban regeneration projects.

Additionally, the city benefits from the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, which supports NEB-related initiatives like WONDER, fostering collaborations between designers and third-sector organizations, and SIMBIOSI, targeting biodiversity protection and resilience to climate change. Such diverse funding mechanisms highlight Torino's capacity to adapt financial resources for NEB-related innovation.

Elverum and Galway utilize national funding schemes tailored to climate action and urban sustainability. Elverum accesses Norway's Klimasats program, which supports local climate projects, promoting greenhouse gas reductions and a low-emission society. This program aligns with regional climate and energy strategies, emphasizing collaboration across municipalities.

In Galway, the Thrive - Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme, promoted by the Department of Environment, Local Government and Heritage, advances NEB principles through ERDF objectives. The scheme focuses on sustainable urban development, cultural heritage, and community plan-led initiatives, such as revitalising historic urban cores.

Cities like Geel and Panevėžys are exploring synergies within broader European programs. For example, Geel aims to align its spatial plan projects with EU funding opportunities, such as the HORIZON-MISS-2024-NEB-01 call, which offers a pathway to integrate NEB values into urban planning initiatives.

Panevėžys, while not yet tied to specific funding opportunities, actively seeks instruments and partnerships that align with NEB principles. The city's ongoing exploration underscores the need for adaptive strategies to identify and leverage funding streams.

Funding opportunities align NEB principles with broader European and national policy goals. For instance, Galway's Thrive initiative supports ERDF objectives like fostering sustainable, inclusive, and integrated urban development. Similarly, Torino's alignment with regional and EU programs showcases the role of multilevel governance in advancing NEB principles.

Funding opportunities for integrating NEB principles vary across municipalities, with tailored programs, national schemes, and European calls providing critical resources. Stara Zagora and Torino exemplify structured frameworks that explicitly embed NEB principles, while cities like Galway and Geel demonstrate adaptive strategies to align broader funding mechanisms with NEB goals. This diversity in approaches highlights the potential of targeted financial instruments to foster sustainability, inclusion, and aesthetics in urban development [see NEB Investment Guidelines].

Management of local innovation processes for regional and local development

The management of local innovation processes for regional and local development reflects diverse approaches across municipalities, showcasing creative adaptations to address unique challenges while aligning with broader goals like sustainability, social inclusion, and aesthetic improvements. Most of the municipalities emphasize partnerships, stakeholders' engagement, and restructuring to integrate innovative solutions.

Municipalities like Stara Zagora actively incorporate innovation into their processes by embedding sustainable practices into public tenders and architectural competitions. A notable example is the city's green public tender for installing a solar hot water system on the southern facade of the city swimming pool, which exemplifies how innovation can drive both environmental and urban development goals. Collaborating with professional organizations and learning from foreign partners further enriches Stara Zagora's approach.

Public-private collaborations play a crucial role in fostering innovation. Torino's Homes4All project, funded by the Italian Fund for Social Innovation, highlights how partnerships can address critical urban challenges like affordable housing (good practice presented in Vienna in 2024, as an example of renovation, [here](#)). This initiative mobilizes private real estate assets, transforming vacant properties into affordable homes for vulnerable tenants, while employing a "pay by result" model that incentivizes private providers through performance-based rewards. Such projects demonstrate how innovation can simultaneously benefit citizens and reduce costs for public administrations.

In Panevėžys, while public-private partnerships are more traditionally focused on infrastructure and public services, hackathons and similar collaborative efforts in cities like Vilnius and Kaunas serve as inspiration for fostering local development ideas.

From another point of view, Geel has implemented structured governance mechanisms to manage strategic local development projects. These efforts are led by steering groups comprising city council members, administrative staff, stakeholders, and external design offices. This collaborative model ensures that diverse voices contribute to planning and innovation processes, fostering well-rounded development outcomes. In Galway, a shift toward NEB principles is evident through significant organizational restructuring. The creation of an Urban Development Directorate, encompassing placemaking, forward planning, architectural services, and arts and cultural development, highlights a commitment to integrated urban innovation. Newly established roles, such as a Senior Architect and a second Senior Planner, reinforce this focus. Moreover, Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) provide a formal mechanism for stakeholder engagement, ensuring that representatives from various sectors influence policy formulation and review.

Also, regional partnerships are pivotal to innovative local development in cities like Elverum, which participates in the Climate Partnership initiative. This collaboration between public and private sectors supports the municipality's climate goals, focusing on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable practices. Such partnerships exemplify how regional cooperation can enhance local innovation while addressing global challenges.

Experiences of social and territorial inclusion, based on citizens' participation and co-creation

The promotion of social and territorial inclusion through citizen participation and co-creation processes is already in place across municipalities, with specific projects and initiatives tailored to local contexts. These initiatives often focus on revitalizing spaces, engaging communities, and fostering cultural and social cohesion.

Stara Zagora exemplifies the transformative potential of co-creation through extensive park renovations. Projects such as Ayazmoto Park and Artileriysky Park showcase the integration of cultural, recreational, and green spaces designed for

all age groups and community needs through new walking paths, sports facilities, and a refurbished zoo with an educational focus on biodiversity. Similarly, the Zheleznik neighborhood features a heat-mitigating green space with solar-powered amenities, reflecting a commitment to sustainable and inclusive design.

Panevėžys demonstrates how participatory planning can shape urban spaces. During the renewal of the Culture and Recreation Park, the city engaged children through a drawing competition, incorporating their ideas into the final design. This initiative highlights the importance of fostering a sense of ownership and inclusion from an early age.

For innovative culture and social engagement, Torino has implemented pioneering projects to address urban challenges through co-creation. The Casa Bottega initiative transforms vacant commercial properties into art workshops and living spaces for young artists, simultaneously tackling issues like urban decay and youth engagement. Additionally, Torino's ToNite project, focused on improving nighttime urban safety, integrates participatory research and co-design to foster social innovation and secure public spaces.

In Galway, the Galway Charter embodies a collaborative approach to sustainable urban design. Originating from public workshops and roundtable discussions, the Charter has evolved into a set of 12 urban design principles, endorsed by key institutions and stakeholders. This framework has already guided two NEB-aligned projects funded through Thrive, demonstrating its potential as a template for future community-driven initiatives.

In this field, the City of Torino developed the collaborative pacts model for community welfare. These pacts allow to manage urban commons exemplifying how shared governance can address social challenges. These pacts bring residents and local actors together to co-create solutions that enhance welfare and reduce exclusion in deprived areas.

While some municipalities have established numerous co-creation mechanisms, others, such as Geel, are in earlier stages of adopting these practices. Past efforts in Geel focused on gathering input and feedback, but co-creation remains an untapped opportunity. Similarly, Elverum has yet to implement notable participatory projects but acknowledges the importance of citizen engagement in future initiatives.

Final considerations on external factors

In the external factors analysis, it emerges the requirement to implement NEB in regional/urban policies and planning processes through a new concept of sustainability and adaptation to climate change: especially in cities, it has been underlines how the way of living (urban mobility, energy consumption, real estate development, waste management) should consistently reduce the impact on nature.

Albeit sustainable solutions for environmental protection could be different: there is an urgent need for the re-use, regeneration and transformation of existing buildings to secure liveable conditions adapted to new temperatures and use of new nature-based construction materials and planning perspective.

Concerning the social aspects, it is crucial to underline that the “case study” initiatives could become a good practice implementation, to connect the well-being and health with environmental and green transition.

The participation of citizens requires active and vibrant issues for urban development, to create a sense of shared responsibility, and develop green connections between the city centre and the surrounding landscape. It has been noticed that many regional planning processes must involve citizens, but the lack of specific provisions on the NEB implementation could be a problem, with experiences not structured.

Another external factor that must be considered is the lack of resources and clear guidance on how to invest them in an effective NEB-oriented manner (e.g. [NEB Investment Guidelines](#)). Indeed, all the municipalities highlighted the need to implement policies and guidelines for an effective NEB-oriented way to plan cities (or neighbourhoods), facing the climate change challenge for a better sustainable and more inclusive future.

While municipalities vary in their progress, the integration of NEB principles into local policies is gaining traction. Success depends on creating structured frameworks, fostering stakeholder engagement, and aligning NEB goals with local and regional strategies.

Collaboration, expertise, and practical pilot projects remain key to embedding NEB values across all aspects of urban development.

CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTED POLICY PRACTICES

Based on the Regional Reports all project Partners are pursuing or attempting to integrate into their respective organizations diverse policies directly or indirectly referred to NEB values and principles implementation: indeed, actions for urban regeneration, climate change, sustainability, social inclusion, and aesthetics are being enforced by all partners.

Several initiatives have been highlighted in the Regional Reports and summarized below.

Stara Zagora Municipality is focusing on environmental sustainability in the face of climate change challenges (resilience and reuse), raising awareness in the city's political agenda and capital investment policies.

Additionally, policies are being implemented to support vulnerable groups, including disabled people, the socially disadvantaged, and those living in energy poverty, in their steps towards climate adaptation.

However, Stara Zagora Municipality has not yet visibly adopted the basic NEB values. Instead, it is developing a framework to integrate NEB principles by adding specific selection criteria to the general ones set by the Ministry of Regional Development for assessing project ideas expected to be funded through the Development of Regions Program.

PROJECTS AND INVESTMENTS SELECTION

CRITERIA: Stara Zagora has developed a framework to integrate NEB under the form of specific selection criteria added to the general criteria of the Ministry of Regional Development for the assessment of project ideas, expected to be funded through the Development of Regions Program.

These criteria aim to give additional emphasis to NEB values and principles in the process of assessment and approval of investments in the field of urban development and regeneration of public areas in bad condition, green infrastructure, transport communications and other public investments expected to be funded.

Another best practice or policy learning could be the setting of common action and evaluation criteria in project proposals (as well as public contracts). Thus, this could help to prevent the spread of individual practices, concluded with public administrations by a specific group of citizens or in a particular situation, instead increasing the development of common and replicable NEB models.

In Elverum Municipality, the core values of NEB are not being effectively addressed in urban and regional development plans, although national legal policies and guidelines include sustainability and aesthetics in urban planning documents (e.g., mandatory inclusion of citizens in planning processes).

As a current policy, recently the Municipal Council adopted a plan for international work in Elverum, recognizing its role as an “international municipality”.

It should also be underlined that Elverum joined a regional initiative called the Climate Partnership, aiming to create active partnerships between the public and private sectors, which could be a concrete action to introduce NEB values.

City of Torino has been actively engaged in several NEB projects since 2021 and strives to share values and principles across its complex internal structure. The main policy, developed in collaboration with various stakeholders, is the “Torino New European Bauhaus Manifesto” (2023). This Manifesto is the first local expression of the NEB guiding principles, providing preliminary guidelines for stakeholders and citizens interested in developing NEB projects in Turin, without imposing strict rules or regulations.

Many other initiatives are reported by the City of Torino, from citizen involvement (“Voci di Quartiere”, neighbourhoods voices) to the perspective of the Cohesion Policy funds (EU 2021-2027) specified in the National Programme for Cohesion.

Through this opportunity, Torino has started a large-scale Urban Regeneration project, which outlines in a more structured manner how NEB principles must be integrated into every phase of its implementation (“PN Metro Plus Operational Plan of the City of Torino”) to generally improve the quality of life for residents in challenging areas of the city (Aurora and Barriera).

Other policies and experiences of social and territorial inclusion are highlighted by the City of Torino Regional Report, such as the “collaborative pacts,” the Casa-Bottega project, the Homes4All project, the UIA ToNite project, and more.

MANIFESTO: A first set of guidelines to anyone interested in developing NEB projects in Torino, without giving strict rules or regulations, is settled with the principles established by the “New European Bauhaus Manifesto”. It has been elaborated through the involvement of a variety of local stakeholders, as part of the European Commission initiative “New European Bauhaus”.

An analysis of the needs and specific requirements at an EU level, each local entity could gain recognition among citizens from various realities.

In this way, knowledge (even in pillars) can be better disseminated among all citizens, thereby increasing participation and awareness in pursuing the principles and values of the NEB.

Different specifications and needs could gain a fundamental role in each Manifesto, to highlight at least one of the thematic axes to develop NEB values and principles.

The Manifesto could be considered as an evolving process, aimed at effectively implementing what is already in place in the different local organizations.

City of Torino NEB Manifesto, November 2023

The Manifesto was created as the first form of local expression of the guiding principles of the “New European Bauhaus: Inclusion, Sustainability and Beauty” initiative and was developed through a series of meetings (held in Turin within Open Incet’s Policy Lab), which involved the initiating actors, some members of civil society and the third sector.

The outcome of the multi-stage journey will lead to the development of the final version of the Manifesto, which aims to inspire interventions and initiatives on the ground within the framework of the New European Bauhaus.

Current policy practices in Panevėžys include the “Sustainable Panevėžys City Development Strategy”. It is a feasibility study from 2022, aligned with the “Panevėžys Strategic 2021–2027 Plan”, which details and connects goals to specific locations and maps potential future development sites. Based on this study, the “2023–2029 Panevėžys City Sustainable Development Strategy” was created with the necessary resources to develop selected projects and locations across various NEB-related themes and core values.

Municipality of Panevėžys dedicates particular attention to NEB principles and values, and it is involved in several EU projects.

Above all, the City of Geel has considered its commitment to cultural heritage (see 2023, UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage). In recent years, the planning processes have aimed to incorporate the ancient community-based foster care model and the tradition of care and inclusion. Extensive participation processes have also characterized the Spatial Policy Plan (2021), which aims to establish green connections between the city centre and the surrounding landscape, including agricultural plots and river valleys.

The Galway City Council has reported various resources and guidance incorporated into the Northern and Western Regional Assembly’s Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. In this context, the main public statement of planning policies in the City Development Plan 2023–2029 (National Planning Framework (NPF) and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) policies) has been approved to guide the future growth of the city with a focus on environmental sustainability. The Plan, a written statement of goals, includes maps and graphic representations of the development.

Moreover, the Galway City Council refers to the Local Authority Climate Action Plan, which embeds actions and incorporates engagement from the community and businesses.

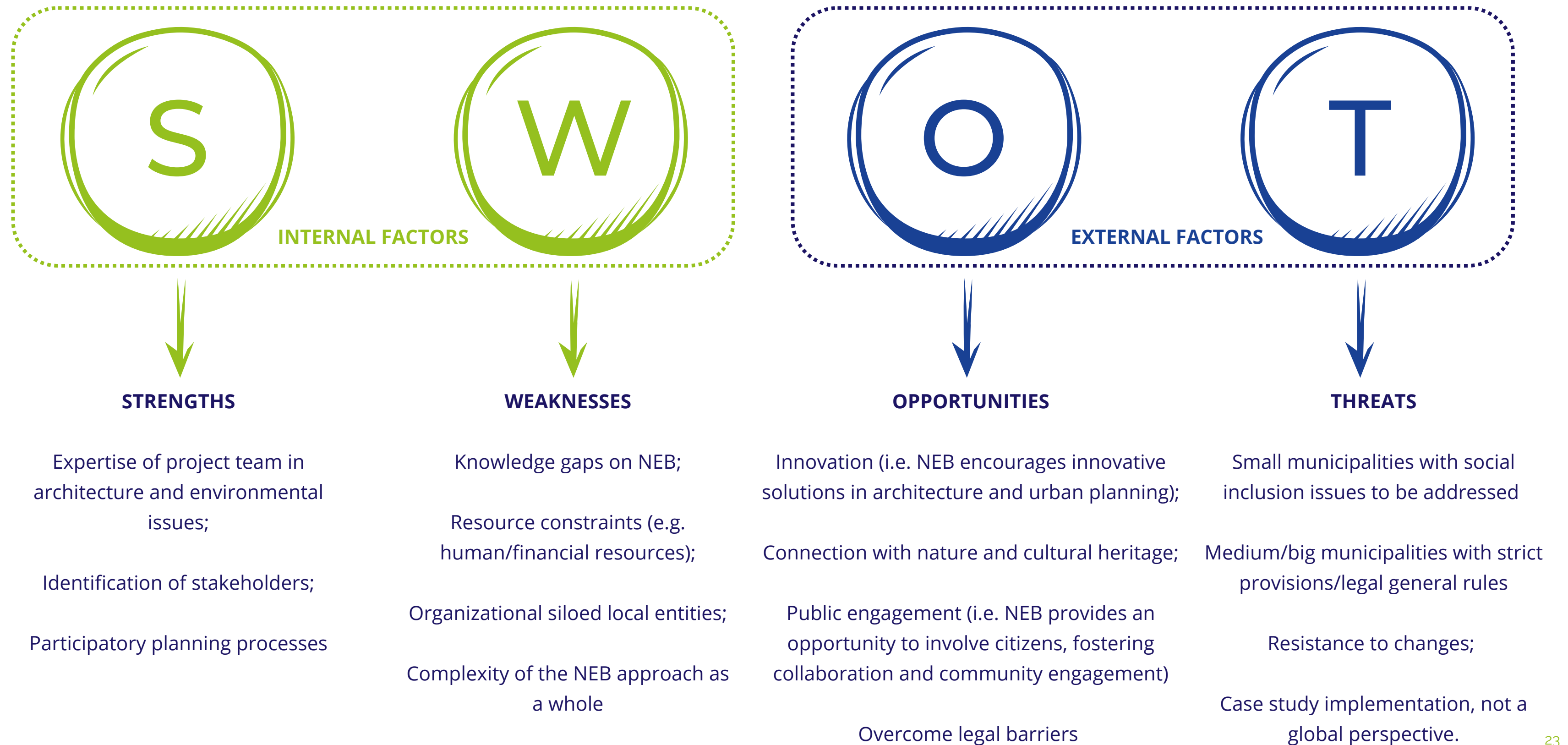
It is important to highlight the Galway Charter, a statement of intent that outlines the principles of Sustainable Urbanism. The Charter aims to promote Galway as a shining example of city-making, providing a wonderful home for current and future Galwegians from a civic transformation perspective, while also inviting stakeholders.

MAPPING: The Panevėžys Municipality Administration, in 2022, completed the „Sustainable Panevėžys city development strategy”, a feasibility study under the „Panevėžys strategic 2021 – 2027 plan”, detailed and connected goals and aims to the specific locations, also mapping possible future development sites.

As well as, the Galway City Council reports that the Galway City Development Plan 2023 - 2029 includes maps that give a graphic representation of how the city/county will develop and improve sustainably, to look at one area in detail with the community and all other stakeholders and see how to develop NEB in community plan led development (“Aftersprawl”).

These experiences highlight a necessity: an efficient green transition of cities and urban areas, guided by the principles of the NEB, can only occur if the areas are known. In this regard, digital technologies are very useful, hypothesizing their utilization firstly at the local level to map areas, know details and information at different levels and making citizens aware of the available spaces to plan NEB regeneration and development interventions and projects (e.g. creation of Digital Maps of NEB-Zones).

SWOT and PESTLE. SWOT-PESTLE analysis based on the Regional Reports illustrates the main opportunities and challenges, the promises and perils of implementing NEB principles and values in the different local organizations





POLITICAL

State and local policies for green;
State and local policies for social inclusion;
Climate resilience actions.

ECONOMIC

European investments for incentives and projects on developing the green transition;
Regeneration of city areas that can implement services.

SOCIAL

Local experiences on social inclusion;
Active citizen participation in strengthening sustainability (in parks, neighbourhoods, etc.)

TECHNOLOGICAL

Digital challenges for urban planning (e.g. mapping areas to be regenerated);
Lack of knowledge on connections between digital and green transition.

LEGAL

Complexity of rules and provisions;
Provisions on urban planning that considers green and social but not connected to NEB;
Specific criteria and requirements in public procurement.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Climate change and climate resilience (extreme weather conditions)
Spread sustainability for a resilient future;
Differences in local dimensions, environments and needs.

THE POLICY LEARNING SYNERGIES AND AREAS OF INTEREST FOR GOOD PRACTICE INVESTIGATION

The analysis provided above identified key synergies and areas of mutual learning that can enhance future steps for NEBA project implementation while addressing shared challenges.

Each municipality has unique experiences and approaches that might be developed as a tool for integrating NEB in regional planning. Every city shows valuable insights into specific aspects of sustainability, inclusion, and aesthetics.

Below are some of the key recommendations that emerge from this analysis, derived from their practices and strategies:

Foster Participatory Processes

Incorporating ideas from local communities, such as children's input for park design, ensures a sense of ownership and aligns projects with community needs (e.g. in Panevėžys); strengthening innovation through new legal tools (such as the collaborative pacts for managing urban commons, in Torino) could provide a replicable model for engaging citizens and local actors in co-creation.

Realize Urban Regeneration

Transforming underused urban areas highlights how inclusive and sustainable spaces can be created for diverse age groups (like the Ayazmoto Park and Artileriysky Park in Stara Zagora), also using strategic documents to guide urban regeneration projects, emphasizing sustainability and local cultural identity (as in Galway) or providing selection criteria for funding projects to guide sustainable urban regeneration. Promoting innovation in green infrastructure, linking urban and rural areas through green corridors, ensures ecological harmony and social inclusivity (e.g. Geel).

Develop adaptive policy frameworks

The Torino's NEB Manifesto might be an inspirational document that provides guidelines for embedding NEB principles into urban planning without rigid restrictions. Also, aligning local initiatives with broader national and regional strategies might create coherence and ensure funding eligibility, facilitating public-private partnerships.

Bridge Knowledge Gaps

Partnerships with regional and international organizations can address knowledge gaps and facilitate exchange of best practices (as reported by Elverum). Moreover, focus on capacity building and invest in training and education for public officials and stakeholders, enhance understanding of NEB.

Develop digital tools to strengthen the implementation of NEB projects

Digitalisation plays a crucial role in NEB implementation, particularly in addressing knowledge gaps and fostering informed decision-making. Digital tools can provide a comprehensive understanding of urban spaces, enabling the identification of opportunities for sustainable, inclusive, and aesthetically aligned interventions. Mapping supports the integration of NEB principles into urban development by visualizing spatial and economic dynamics and linking strategic goals with specific locations, ensuring targeted and efficient planning. In this perspective, digitalisation can bridge gaps in knowledge, facilitate participatory processes, and drive data-driven urban transformation aligned with NEB values.

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