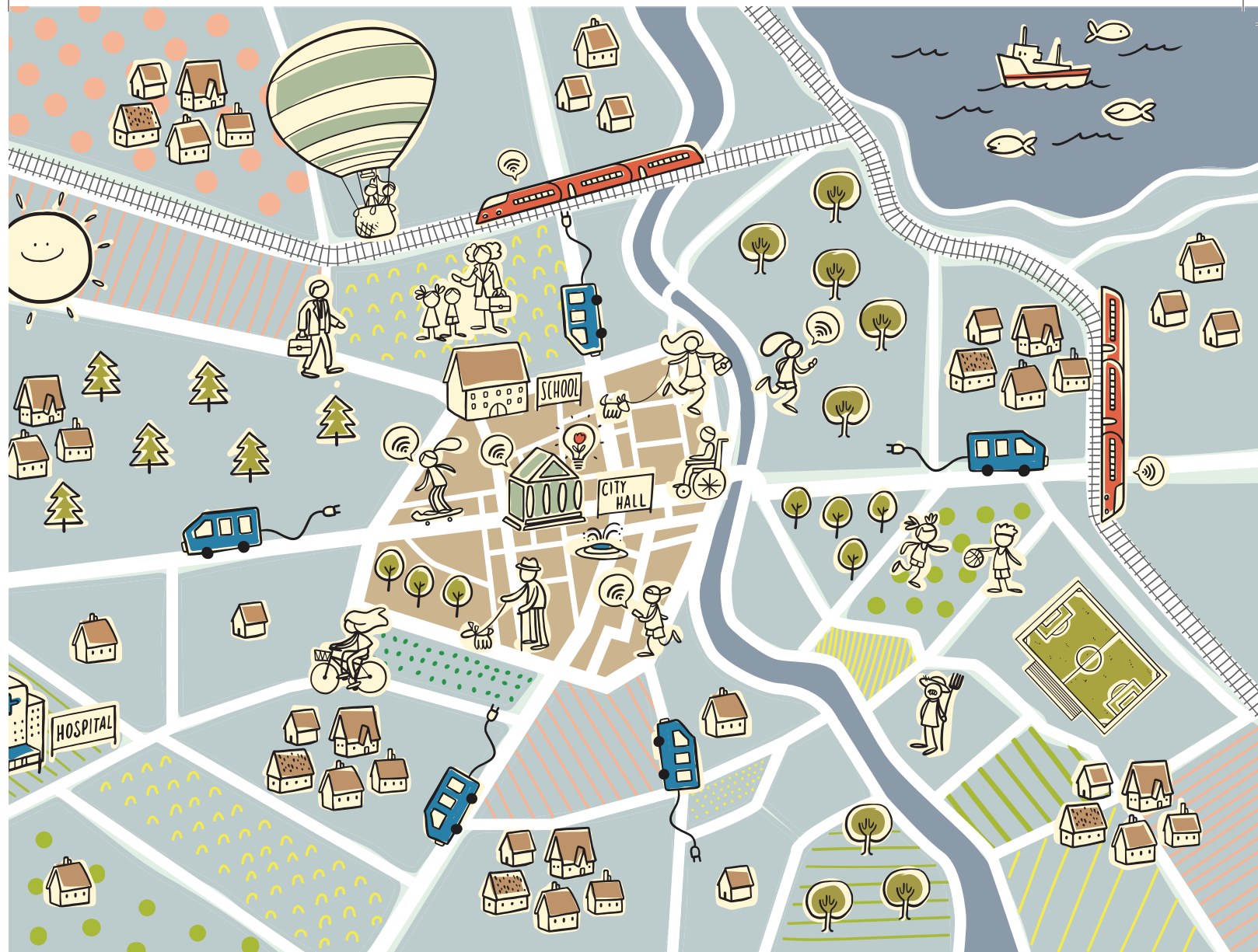




ECONNECTING

July 2025

Integrated Action Plan

of the municipality of Berane

Berane: The Hub of the North

URBACT



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*e*CONNECTING
greener & closer communities

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Members of Berane ULG group

Berane, July 2025

Table of Content

	THE ECONNECTING NETWORK	6
1	DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND NEEDS	10
1.1	Overall topic being addressed	11
1.2	Current Situation	11
1.3	Existing Strategies & Policies	17
2	URBACT LOCAL GROUP	22
2.1	Stakeholder mapping	21
2.2	Organization of ULG	21
2.3	Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Outreach	22
2.4	Planning process	22
3	THE IAP SITES AND ANALYSIS	26
3.1	DESCRIPTION OF IAP-SITES	27
3.2	Emerging topics (problem definition)	29
3.2.1	SWOT Analysis	29
3.2.2	Interlinking challenges and potentials	31
4	STRATEGY, VISION AND GOALS	36
4.1	Project Vision	37
4.2	Project Goals	37
4.3	Integration Challenges	38
4.4	Logical Framework	39
5	SMALL-SCALE ACTIONS	40
5.1	Small-Scale Action 1: Tree-planting and park revitalization	41
5.2	Small-Scale Action 2: Earth Day celebration	43

6	INTEGRATED ACTIONS	47
6.1	Integrated Action 1	48
6.2	Integrated Action 2	49
6.3	Integrated Action 3	50
6.4	Integrated Action 4	51
6.5	Integrated Action 5	52
6.6	Integrated Action 6	53
6.7	Integrated Action 7	54
6.8	Integrated Action 8	55
6.9	Integrated Action 9	56
6.10	Integrated Action 10	57
6.11	Integrated action 11	58
6.12	Integrated Action 12	59
6.13	Integrated Action 13	60
6.14	Integrated Action 14	61
6.15	Integrated Action 15	62
6.16	Integrated Action 16	63

7	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	66
7.1	Implementation Strategy	67
7.2	Action Prioritization	68
7.3	Cost estimation and funding strategy	69
7.4	Overall timeline	72
7.5	General Risk Assessment	73
7.6	Indicators	74

The Econnecting Network



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Municipality of West Mani, Greece
Comunidade Intermunicipal Viseu Dão Lafões, Portugal
Ennis Municipal District, Clare County Council, Ireland
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Municipality of Nagykallo, Hungary
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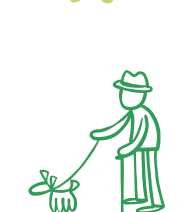
ECONNECTING means...

establishing **strategies and actions for rural-urban functional areas**, fostering the seamless integration of urban sustainable practices, well-being enhancement, and the cultivation of robust social connections through active citizen participation. This Action Planning Network brings together nine city partners from Italy, Montenegro, Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Estonia, Slovenia, Hungary and Spain to collaborate on shaping their „proximity territories,” characterized by intricate urban-rural linkages.

At the core of ECONNECTING lies a **comprehensive exploration of smart mobility solutions for public transport and mobility, coupled with the revitalization of villages, towns and their hub cities** to enhance the overall quality of life for citizens. The initiative embarks on a deep dive into the intricate fabric of these regions, seeking to address key aspects such as mobility, accessibility, and urban regeneration.

By employing a dialogue-oriented planning process and leveraging the proven URBACT methodology, ECONNECTING aims to **harmonize the dynamics between urban and rural areas**. The focus is specifically on optimizing mobility and accessibility, while simultaneously fostering vibrant public spaces that cater to the needs and desires of the local populace. All these efforts are grounded in a **commitment to environmental consciousness and community engagement**, ensuring a sustainable and people-centric approach to development.

Through collaborative efforts, ECONNECTING strives to create a model that not only enhances the connectivity between urban and rural spaces but also promotes a holistic and inclusive vision for the well-being of citizens. The initiative serves as a beacon for innovative strategies that prioritize the intersection of environmental sustainability, community vibrancy, and urban-rural harmony. In doing so, ECONNECTING emerges as a **catalyst for positive change, demonstrating the transformative power of collaborative urban planning on a European scale**.



Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for the Municipality of Berane is a strategic document that aims to promote integrated sustainable development, providing a concrete framework for the local government to address the town's current urban challenges. It is built around the four themes of the ECONNECTING project, which serve as the guiding pillars for the integrated actions: establishing 30-minute territories, expanding green communities, creating accessible and welcoming cities and ensuring good governance.

The IAP rests on a clear vision of Berane as a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable city, which is envisioned as a future regional hub of the north of Montenegro. It is structured into seven chapters that outline a strategy for sustainable urban development.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to Berane's context and challenges, including its location, rich cultural heritage, and socio-economic issues. It highlights the absence of public transport, lacking pedestrian infrastructure and neglected green spaces as key areas needing intervention. This chapter also outlines the existing strategic and legal framework, referencing relevant national, local and EU policies in areas like transport, environment and spatial planning.

Chapter 2 describes the collaborative planning process used to develop the IAP. It explains the formation and role of the URBACT Local Group (ULG), which brought together a diverse set of local stakeholders to ensure a participatory approach.

Chapter 3 presents the core analysis of the IAP sites. It features findings from stakeholder interviews and a comprehensive SWOT analysis, followed by a description of key emerging topics.

Chapter 4 establishes a shared vision and strategic objectives for Berane as a vibrant, green and inclusive hub in the north of Montenegro.

Chapter 5 describes the small-scale actions implemented by the Municipality of Berane in order to test the viability of specific activities to be included in the integrated actions.

Chapter 6 outlines the sixteen integrated actions designed to achieve the plan's objectives. These actions range from large-scale infrastructure projects to specific improvements relating to sustainable urban development. Each action is detailed with goals, activities, timeframes, budgets and potential risks.

Chapter 7 outlines the implementation strategy, including governance structure, funding mechanisms, risk management, timelines and key performance indicators. This chapter also sets out the communication and engagement strategy in order to keep citizens and stakeholders informed and actively involved.

1

Development Context and Needs

1.1 Overall topic being addressed

Nestled in the valley of the Lim River, Berane is one of the biggest towns in the north of Montenegro and the region's educational, healthcare and cultural centre. Located at the intersection of important regional routes and surrounded by picturesque landscapes, Berane has a favourable geographical position, which offers plenty of opportunities for development. Yet, despite its rich potential, the town faces significant urban challenges that impair the quality of life. The absence of public transport, strong car dependency, inadequate pedestrian infrastructure, poor road safety, neglected green spaces and insufficient outdoor amenities are some of the issues that negatively affect the well-being of its residents.

In partnership with seven municipalities from different European countries within the ECONNECTING project, funded by the URBACT IV programme, the Municipality of Berane has set out to develop an integrated action plan aimed at fostering sustainable urban development and improving the quality of life in the town through a collaborative process. Using a strategic approach, the municipality seeks to respond to its challenges by focusing on the four main themes of the project: establishing 30-minute territories, expanding green communities, creating accessible and welcoming cities and ensuring good governance.

Sustainable urban mobility is a major challenge in Berane. The absence of local public transport has led to increased car dependency and mobility challenges for those living in suburban or rural areas, exacerbating social and economic inequalities. The closure of the bus station hinders the connectivity with other towns in Montenegro. Furthermore, despite Berane's walkability potential, poor walking infrastructure and the lack of cycling infrastructure present significant barriers to active mobility and accessibility for persons with disabilities. The overreliance on cars and traditional transport planning policies lead to traffic congestion, road safety issues, parking violations, air pollution and other negative environmental and social impacts.

In terms of green spaces, while the urban part of Berane boasts several parks, many suffer from neglect and underinvestment, limiting both its appeal and function. Outdoor amenities such as sports courts and playgrounds are scarce, limiting recreational opportunities, particularly for children. Also, the immense potential of the Lim River, including for tourism and recreation, remains underexploited.

Berane's rich historical heritage and vibrant cultural life has yet to be fully harnessed to support local development. While the summer months offer a variety of cultural events, the rest of the year lacks similar content. Significant heritage sites, such as the Jasikovac monument and the Tumbarice archaeological site still need proper valorisation to fully realize their potential.

Finally, sustainable urban development is hampered by limited citizen involvement in policymaking, largely due to the absence of a co-design culture. In addition, the responsiveness of institutions is an area that requires special attention in the future.

Through a set of integrated actions, the Municipality of Berane aims to improve the quality of life, prevent population decline, empower both urban and rural communities and make the town a more attractive place to visit and reside in.

1.2 Current Situation

Geography

The municipality of Berane is situated in northeastern Montenegro. Covering an area of 496 km² and encompassing 66 settlements, it ranks among the biggest municipalities in the region. Berane is predominantly rural, with approximately 61% of its population residing in suburban or rural areas.

The municipality lies at the heart of the Berane basin, surrounded by the slopes of Bjelasica, Cmiljevica, Tivran and Previja mountains. It borders the municipalities of Andrijevica to the south, Rožaje to the east, Petnjica and Bijelo Polje to the north and Mojkovac and Kolašin to the west.

The Berane basin extends in a northeast-southwest direction, measuring 9 km in length and 3-5 km in width. The basin is split centrally by the Lim River. The lowest point of the municipality is the Lim Valley at 640 meters above sea level, while the highest is Crna Glava on Bjelasica Mountain, rising to 2,139 meters. Most of the urban area of Berane is flat, with only a few elevations on the outskirts.

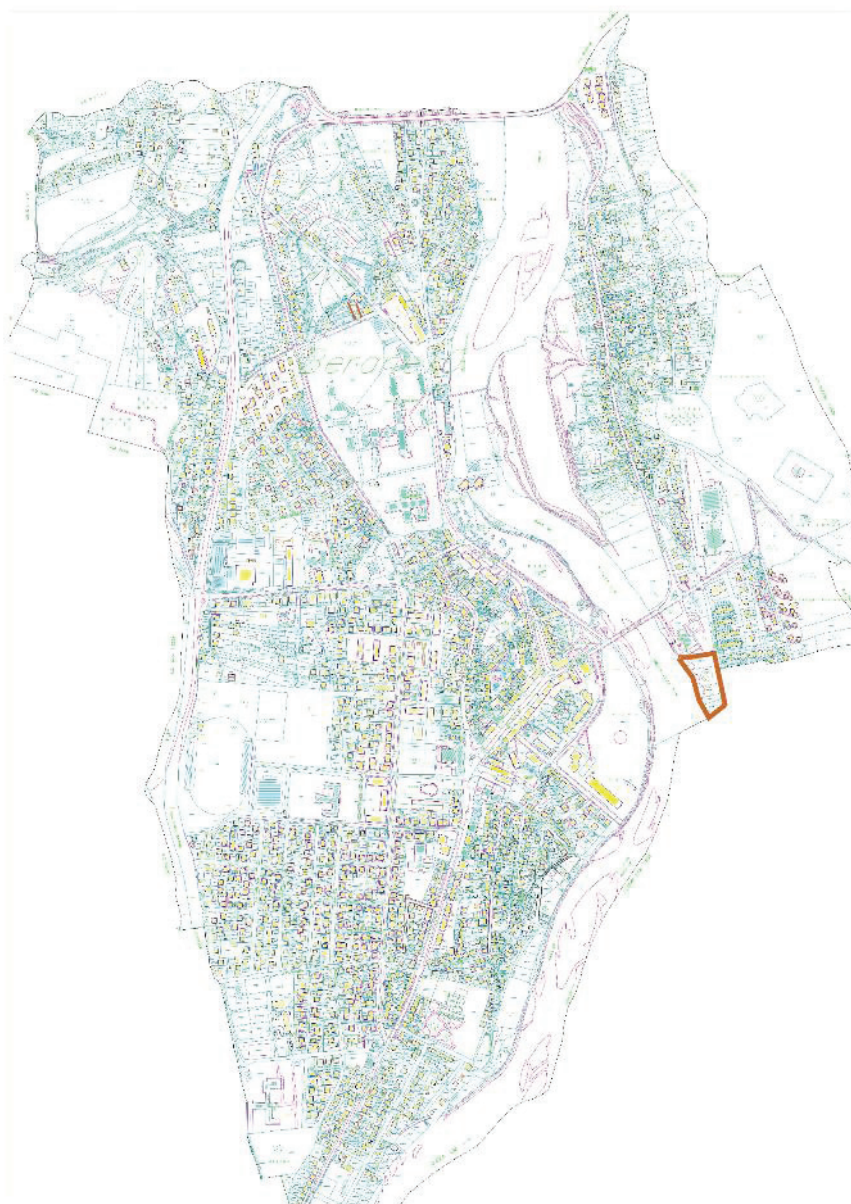


Illustration 1 – A cadastral map of Berane

Climate

Berane is characterized by two distinct climate types: a temperate-continental climate in the Berane basin and surrounding valley areas, and a mountain (alpine) climate in the higher-altitude regions. The average annual air temperature is 10.7 °C, with July being the warmest month at an average of 20.7 °C, and January the coldest at -0.4 °C. Annual precipitation averages 884 mm. According to the Köppen climate classification, Berane falls under the Cfb category, indicative of a temperate oceanic or subtropical highland climate, where the coldest month averages above 0 °C and at least four months average above 10 °C.

History

Berane has a rich historical heritage, with archaeological and written records indicating habitation as far back as 4500 BC. Neolithic and Illyrian settlements have been discovered in the area, along with evidence of Roman cultural influence.

During the Middle Ages, the region was part of the Budimlja parish, under Serbian control until 1455, when

it fell to the Ottoman rule. After its liberation in 1912, Berane became part of Montenegro and, between the two world wars, grew into a significant regional economic, administrative and educational centre.

From 1949 to 1992, the municipality was named Ivangrad, in honour of national hero Ivan Milutinovi. The peak of Berane's industrialization occurred in the 1970s, transforming it into a modern urban settlement. However, following the breakup of Yugoslavia and the decline of industry, Berane faced economic challenges and a population decline. Despite these setbacks, it remains an important educational, health-care, religious and sports centre of northern Montenegro.

Demographics

According to the 2023 census, Berane has a population of 24,645 inhabitants. A total of 39% of the population resides in the urban area of the town, whereas 61 percent live in suburbs and rural areas. In terms of demographics, children aged 0-14 account for 17.7% of Berane's population, those aged 15-64 years constitute 57.5%, whereas people aged 65 and above account for 24.7% of the total population. The municipality faces the challenge of a declining population, primarily due to emigration to the capital and abroad, especially among young, educated individuals.

The majority of residents live in single family homes, with apartments primarily concentrated in the urban core.

From 2018 to 2022, Berane experienced a negative natural population growth, with the highest decline recorded in 2021 (-193). Migration trends further exacerbated the population decrease, with 2018 showing the most significant net migration loss (-262).



Picture 1 – An aerial view of Berane

Economy

While Berane possesses significant potential for economic growth, it currently faces challenges in realizing its full potential. Berane is categorized among the less developed municipalities in Montenegro, with its development level at approximately 60% of the national average. The unemployment rate in 2023 stood at 44.98%, exceeding the average for the northern region. However, a positive trend emerged in the post-COVID-19 era, with the number of employees in the municipality increasing by over 550 between 2020 and 2023.

Berane used to be a strong industrial centre in the former Yugoslavia, but in the post 1990s period many

industries have since closed down. Today, the private sector dominates the economy, with a diverse range of businesses, including trade, tourism and hospitality. As a result, the number of tourist arrivals has tripled over the past decade.

Education

Berane has a diverse range of educational institutions. There are eight primary schools, including three in the urban area and five in rural regions, supplemented by 12 satellite classes. The municipality also has a primary school dedicated to music education and a kindergarten located in the city centre.

Secondary education comprises four schools: one gymnasium and three vocational schools. In terms of higher education, the College of Medical Education, a branch of the state university's Faculty of Medicine, has been operating in Berane since 2005. Additionally, there is a private faculty specializing in traffic and logistics. The municipality also supports inclusive education through a Day Centre for children and youth with developmental disabilities.

Healthcare

Berane's healthcare system serves its residents through the „Dr. Nika Labovi“ Health Centre and the „Dr. Branko Zogovi“ General Hospital. These are complemented by the Institute for Emergency Medical Assistance and the Institute for Blood Transfusion. Recently, the General Hospital was upgraded to a Clinical Hospital Centre, providing tertiary-level healthcare in addition to primary and secondary services.

Rivers and lakes

The Lim River flows through Berane, known for its clear, clean waters and abundant fish populations. It is a popular spot for swimming during the summer. However, the river poses a significant flood risk, particularly in low-lying areas like Talum and Riverside settlements, as well as to traffic infrastructure and agricultural land. Flooding occurs periodically, with the most recent event recorded in 2021. To mitigate such risks, riverbed regulation projects were undertaken, including the construction of stone embankments along the Lim's banks. These efforts have safeguarded the ring road, the central city area and downstream banks near the main city bridge.

Berane is also home to several glacial lakes, all situated on Mount Bjelasica. Notable among them are Lake Peši a, the large and small Lake Šiško, and the large and small Lake Ursulova ko, which enhance the region's natural beauty and ecological significance.

Culture and heritage

Berane serves as the cultural hub of northern Montenegro, offering vibrant cultural activities and a rich heritage. Key cultural institutions include the Berane Cultural Centre, the Museum of Polimlje and the House of Diplomat Gavro Vukovi. One of the city's most notable events is the annual „Berane Summer,“ a tradition spanning nearly 50 years. This summer festival features concerts, exhibitions, plays, and other events, drawing crowds from Berane and the surrounding region, especially youth, and is considered a signature event of the municipality.

The Tumba Town (Tumbarice) archaeological site just outside of Berane is a testament to a city dating back approximately 4,500 years BC. It boasts artifacts from various historical eras, placing Berane on the archaeological map of the region. This site is further protected and promoted through an EU-funded cross-border project, enhancing its preservation and potential as a tourist attraction.

Religious heritage also holds a prominent role in Berane. The Đur evi Stupovi Monastery, dating back to the 13th century and located just 2 km from the city centre, is one of the region's oldest Orthodox Christian monasteries. Another significant religious site is the Šudikova monastery, dedicated to the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In addition, Islamic heritage is represented by the Vakuf House, a cultural monument built in 1883. This house, with its unique fountains and historical significance, is a valuable part of Berane's cultural landscape.

The Roman Castrum at Dolac, located 2 km from the city centre, is a partially excavated Roman military camp with remains of a settlement and a training ground. Measuring 32x10 meters with five rooms, it provides valuable insights into the Roman presence in the region.

The Freedom Monument on Jasikovac Hill commemorates the patriots martyred during World War II.

Standing 18 meters tall in the shape of a bullet, it was declared a national cultural asset in 2022. The Jasikovac site offers panoramic views of the city and provides space for cultural, recreational and sports activities.

Transport

Berane occupies a strategic location at the crossroads of several major roads: Berane-Rožaje, Berane-Ribarevine (Bijelo Polje), Berane-Andrijevica, and Berane-Kolašin. The opening of the Kolašin-Berane road in 2023 has positioned Berane as a significant transit point on the route from Serbia to Podgorica and the Montenegrin coast, reducing the distance to Podgorica from 143 km to 95 km. The anticipated completion of the Bar-Boljare motorway, which will pass through the municipality, will further strengthen Berane's strategic location, while also diverting transit traffic away from the urban core.

No railway passes through Berane and the nearest railway station is located 36 kilometres away in Bijelo Polje. Berane also possesses a local airport, which has been non-operational for over three decades. The airfield is now only used for sports events and occasional air shows. However, a feasibility study has confirmed the economic viability of reactivating the airport and there have been announcements of its potential renewal in the near future.

The urban area of Berane is compact and walkable, with most amenities located within short distances. However, reliance on private vehicles has led to issues such as traffic congestion, poor road safety, and air pollution. The lack of adequate sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure hinders pedestrian movement, particularly in the central zone. Bicycle infrastructure is virtually non-existent, limiting the potential for cycling as a mode of transport. The absence of a local public transportation system, both urban and suburban, contributes to rural depopulation.

Parking is a persistent problem in the city centre, with no organized public parking facilities available. Transit traffic is routed around the urban core, helping to manage traffic within the dense central area. While primary roads are generally in good condition, secondary roads, especially those leading to rural areas, are often in poor condition.

Urban-rural connections

Daily, approximately 3,300 inhabitants from suburban and rural areas commute to Berane for work, education and other activities. Despite a population decline, the number of registered motor vehicles has increased by nearly 25% over the past decade, rising from 5,586 in 2014 to 7,276 in 2023. This indicates a growing reliance on personal cars, although the motorization rate of 295 cars per 1,000 inhabitants remains below the national average. In general, most daily trips within the municipality are made by car, especially by residents of suburban and rural areas.

Public transport

The current public transport system in Berane is inadequate to meet the needs of its citizens. Currently, only one local bus line is in operation, connecting Berane with the villages of Mašte, Babino and Zagra e. School transport for students from rural areas is provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation. Despite numerous invitations to tender for the provision of bus services, transport operators have not found it economically viable to tender for a contract to provide such services. Additionally, there is no direct bus line to the city of Bijelo Polje, which is just 36 kilometres away, nor to the small town of Petnjica, unlike in the past when bus services were available. The non-operational bus station, which has been closed since 2020, further exacerbates the bus transport problem.

As a result, residents of suburban and rural areas rely heavily on private cars or taxis. In 2021, there were 76 licensed taxis, equivalent to 2.8 per 1,000 inhabitants. To ensure equitable access to services for all citizens, it is essential to establish a comprehensive public transport system and improve connectivity between the urban centre and rural settlements.

Tourism

Despite its vast potential, Berane's tourism industry remains underutilized. The municipality boasts rich cultural and historical heritage, stunning natural beauty, unique local gastronomy and vibrant cultural events. These resources provide plenty of opportunities to develop various forms of tourism and establish Berane as a distinctive tourism destination. Overall, Berane's central urban area is compact, with all significant social and business landmarks located within walking distance.

Points of interest

The main attractions and amenities in Berane are concentrated in the city centre:

- Main Street: A lively pedestrian street lined with bars and other businesses; it hosts many of the town's key events.
- Municipality building: The seat of the local government.
- Nearby are the Cultural Centre, the Museum of Polimlje and the House of Gavro Vukovi, all significant cultural and administrative landmarks.
- The Berane Hotel, situated on the left bank of the Lim River, is less than a 10-minute walk from the main street and serves as a central hub for visitors.

Green spaces also play an essential role in the city's appeal:

- Lim Park, the largest park in Berane, located near the main pedestrian street.
- Jasikovac Memorial Park, located just 15 minutes uphill from the city centre, combines cultural significance with recreational opportunities.

These attractions and spaces position Berane as a walkable and accessible city with the potential for further development in tourism and recreation.

1.3 Existing Strategies & Policies

The following laws, regulations and strategic documents are relevant for the development of the Integrated Action Plan.

National documents

National Sustainable Development Strategy 2015-2030: The National Sustainable Development Strategy 2015-2030 sets out a comprehensive plan for addressing sustainable development challenges identified in the UN 2030 Agenda. The Strategy, among other things, envisions objectives and measures in the field of sustainable urban mobility, particularly emphasizing the need for developing an integrated, multimodal sustainable transport system in Montenegro. The Strategy also recognizes the importance of establishing efficient public transport in reducing car dependency and alleviating traffic congestion.

Transport Development Strategy 2019 – 2035: This Strategy outlines the current state of Montenegro's transportation sector and establishes infrastructural, organizational and operational goals for its development, implemented through short-term and long-term plans. Its primary objective is to enhance and improve the country's transportation system while aligning regulations with EU standards. Some of the measures to achieve the Strategy's goals include promoting public transport and non-motorized modes of transportation, alternative types of fuel and electromobility.

Road Safety Act 2019: This act governs the rules of road traffic, outlining the duties and responsibilities of road users, as well as traffic restrictions, signals, markings, signage and orders to ensure road safety. It establishes guidelines for safe and sustainable mobility in urban areas, including provisions for priority roads, one-way streets, vehicle speed limits, pedestrian and cycling paths, vehicle parking regulations, traffic-calming zones, pedestrian zones and other measures.

Roads Act 2022: This act governs the legal status, development, maintenance, protection, management and financing of public roads. Among other things, it requires local governments to finance and maintain sustainable urban mobility infrastructure, including pedestrian and bicycle paths, parking facilities and other traffic-related spaces.

Road Transport Act 2019: This act establishes the conditions and methods for conducting public passenger and cargo transport activities in road traffic. It also covers the provision of bus and freight station services, transportation for personal needs and other important matters related to public road transport. Key provisions include the requirements for drivers and vehicles involved in public passenger and cargo transport, the licensing for these activities, the operation of public passenger transport and the regulations for bus stations and bus stops.

Road Transport Contract Act 2013: This law governs contractual and other obligatory relationships in the transport of passengers and cargo in both domestic and international road traffic. It specifically addresses the general conditions for passenger transport.

Law on Protection from Noise in the Environment 2018: This act establishes measures to prevent or mitigate environmental noise pollution. It defines noise as unwanted or harmful sound resulting from human activity, with traffic identified as the primary source. Key provisions include the mandatory creation of five-year strategic noise maps and the requirement for the Environmental Protection Agency to report traffic noise levels over a five-year period to both the Ministry of Transport and Maritime Affairs and the European Commission.

Rulebook on traffic signage 2024: This rulebook specifies the form, content, dimensions, placement, and methods for traffic signs, traffic control systems, light signals and road signs on roadways and sidewalks. It also details the appearance and technical characteristics of traffic signals.

Rulebook on detailed conditions and methods of adapting facilities for access and movement of persons with reduced mobility and persons with disabilities 2016: This rulebook outlines the conditions and methods for ensuring accessibility for individuals with reduced mobility and disabilities. It specifies how to provide unimpeded access to movement, residence and work, and outlines requirements for adapting

public, residential and commercial buildings to accommodate these needs.

Spatial Plan of Montenegro until 2040: The Spatial Plan is the most important urban planning document of Montenegro. It defines national goals, rules and measures for spatial development in accordance with the country's economic, social, environmental and cultural-historical objectives. This strategic plan provides a framework for the development, organization, use, arrangement and protection of Montenegro's space.

Local documents

Spatial Development Plan (PUP) of the Municipality of Berane: The Spatial Development Plan (PUP) is the primary local urban planning document that guides Berane's urban development and zoning implementation. It defines general land use designations, key transport and utility infrastructure corridors, as well as other crucial elements for future planning and sustainable development. The current plan is undergoing revision. The PUP serves as a framework for lower-level land use plans (DUPs). Berane currently has 35 DUPs, each detailing land use in specific areas within the municipality.

Strategic Development Plan of the Municipality of Berane: The Strategic Development Plan is a fundamental document outlining the current state of development of a municipality. It defines the overall development goal, establishes strategic objectives with priorities and provides measures and guidelines for implementation. The plan also defines indicative resources, funding mechanisms and other important issues related to development. The new Strategic Development Plan for Berane covering the period of 2024-2030 is currently in the approval process.

Decision on traffic regulation in the territory of the Municipality of Berane 2019: This decision governs road traffic in the territory of the Municipality of Berane. It defines priority roads, one-way and two-way streets, road markings, traffic signals, speed limits, pedestrian zones and specific safety measures for pedestrians near educational, healthcare and other institutions.

Decision on municipal order 2023: This decision establishes the general requirements for maintaining public order and the measures for their enforcement in relation to the use, protection and maintenance of public spaces, municipal infrastructure, equipment and resources for performing municipal services in line with the public interest.

Decision on public parking lots and garages in the territory of the Municipality of Berane 2020: This decision governs the method and conditions of organizing and maintaining public parking lots and garages in the territory of the Municipality of Berane.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2028: The Local Biodiversity Plan is a document aimed at protecting biodiversity. It serves as an institutional tool for the local government to meet its obligations concerning the protection of natural resources and the sustainable use of ecosystem services.

EU strategies

European Green Deal: A set of policy initiatives by the European Commission with the aim of making Europe climate neutral in 2050. It outlines a roadmap for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting clean energy and fostering biodiversity. The Green Deal covers all sectors of the economy, including transport, energy, agriculture, construction and industries.

Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy: A policy framework adopted as part of the European Green Deal, aiming to transform the EU's transport sector into a more sustainable, efficient and resilient system. This strategy prioritizes reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport by promoting cleaner vehicles and fuels, enhancing public transportation and encouraging the shift towards environmentally friendly modes such as cycling and walking.

Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans: An initiative aimed at transforming the transport systems in the Western Balkan countries to be more sustainable, efficient and integrated with broader EU goals. This strategy seeks to align the region's mobility sector with the principles of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy.

New Leipzig Charter: A policy framework document for sustainable urban development in Europe. It emphasizes the need for cities to establish and implement integrated and sustainable urban development strategies across all areas, from neighbourhoods to functional regions. The document is strongly aligned with the Cohesion Policy and its framework for sustainable urban development.

Relevant funding programmes:

IPA III (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance): Financial assistance designed to help candidate countries in their efforts to meet accession criteria, align with EU policies and standards and foster socio-economic development.

Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans: This instrument will provide increased financial assistance to Montenegro in exchange for socio-economic and fundamental reforms defined in the Reform Agenda, adopted in 2024.

European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg): A framework for cooperation across borders between national, regional and local actors from different European countries with a view to addressing common challenges and finding joint solutions across the border. Currently, the municipality of Berane is eligible for a total of 10 cooperation programmes.

2

URBACT Local Group

2.1 Stakeholder mapping

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) is a group of a diverse set of local stakeholders who are involved in the co-creation of an Integrated Action Plan (IAP). Engaging different stakeholders who bring their own perspectives on identified challenges is crucial for designing and implementing effective urban policies. Evidence has shown that participatory approaches lead to more relevant, efficient and better designed policies compared to traditional, non-participatory methods. This is particularly important for Berane, which has limited experience with participatory planning, making this process a valuable learning opportunity.

In establishing the ULG, the initial step was to form a core group that would remain engaged throughout the development of the Integrated Action Plan. This core group comprised representatives from various administrative departments, selected for their expertise and knowledge relevant to the plan's objectives. The criteria for stakeholder selection included competencies in sustainable urban mobility and experience in strategic planning. Political support was secured from the outset, with the Mayor of Berane formally signing a decision on the establishment of the ULG. This is expected to increase the likelihood of political support for the outcome of the process.

In addition to the core group, it was decided to involve additional stakeholders from diverse sectors in a wider group. This group was engaged in the co-creation process later in the development stage., contributing specific perspectives from their respective fields.

2.2 Organization of ULG

The core ULG group was established by the Mayor of Berane as an advisory body to the local government for creating, implementing and monitoring sustainable urban policies and initiatives addressing mobility, urbanism and environmental protection challenges. It includes 12 members representing different municipal departments, including the Secretariat for Economy, Development and Investments, Chief City Architect's Office, Secretariat for Municipal and Housing Affairs, Transport and Environmental Protection, Secretariat for Inspection Affairs Manager of the Municipality, as well as representative of a local NGO. The ULG is coordinated by Danka Golubovi of the Secretariat for Economy, Development and Investments.

The co-creation ULG includes members of the core group and other local stakeholders such representatives from schools, the business community, civil society, the local tourism organization, media, cultural institutions, rescue and protection services and other civic actors. The scheme of the core and co-creation ULG is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 2 – Stakeholder scheme

2.3 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Outreach

Our stakeholder engagement strategy was based on the principles of inclusivity, diversity and collaboration. By involving a wide range of stakeholders, we aimed to gather diverse perspectives and feedback from a broader community, enabling the identification of the common ground, challenges and potential solutions. The ultimate goal was to create effective working structures and secure broad support for the process.

To ensure meaningful participation and avoid stakeholder fatigue, involvement was carried out in two stages. First, the core ULG was established, consisting of mainly institutional stakeholders with technical expertise and the ability to ensure continuity throughout the project. Next, a wider stakeholder group was identified to integrate diverse perspectives. These stakeholders were selected based on their expertise or their organization's relevance to the project's four themes. Initially, we conducted one-to-one interviews with members of this group to gather their input on potential challenges and ideas for solutions in line with the project themes. We subsequently brought together most of the previously identified stakeholders to participate in the crucial co-creation phase. Their input was essential for conducting the SWOT analysis, developing the vision and identifying strategic objectives.

2.4 Planning process

Following its establishment by the Mayor, the Berane ULG convened for the first time during the Lead Expert's site visit in July 2023. This initial meeting served as an opportunity to discuss the town's challenges, explore development proposals, and consider potential small-scale actions.

The first formal ULG meeting was held on 29 September 2023. During this session, ULG members conducted a stakeholder mapping exercise and discussed strategies for effective stakeholder engagement.



The second ULG meeting, on 1 December 2023, focused on finalizing the stakeholder list, developing interview questionnaires and planning the interview process. The questionnaire was prepared and subsequently submitted to the Lead Expert for approval. In December 2023, 10 interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders, including representatives of local community units, NGOs, taxi services, the business community, environmental authorities, cultural institutions and schools.



The interviews' findings and emerging topics were analysed during the third ULG meeting on 5 February 2024. This meeting provided an opportunity to review the inputs and integrate them into the ongoing IAP development process.

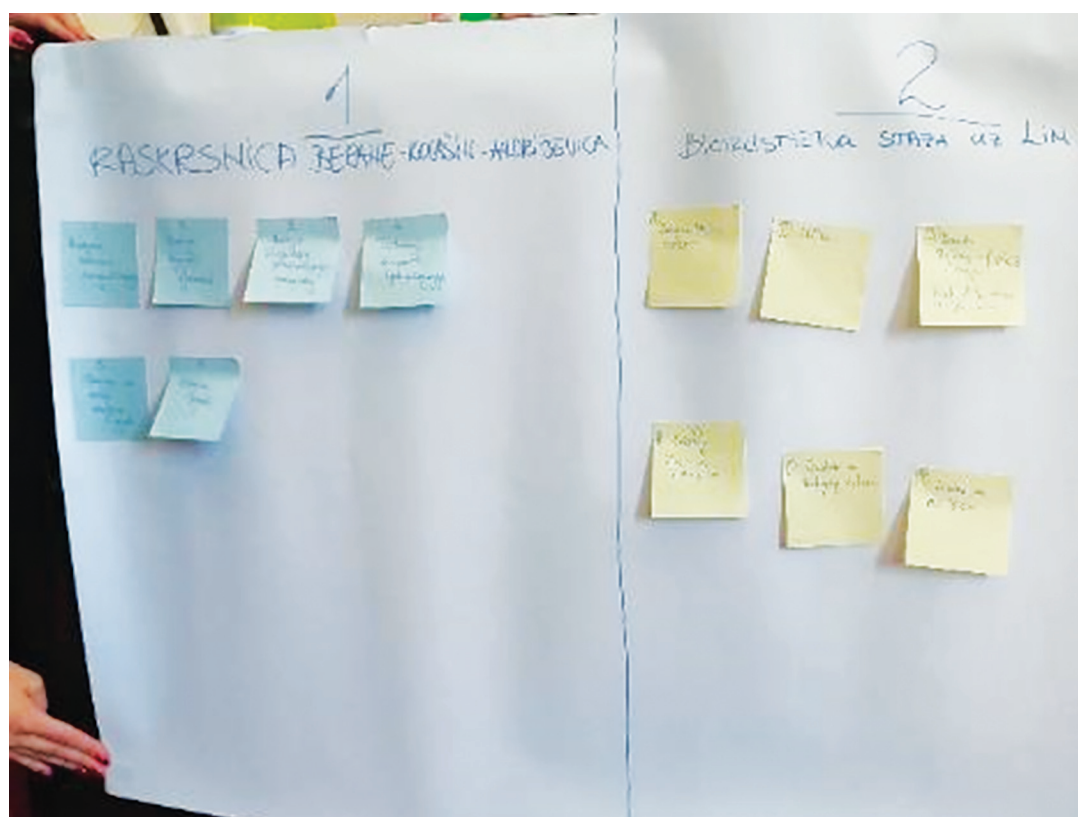
The fourth ULG meeting was held on 22 March, bringing together the wider co-creation ULG group. This session, facilitated by an ad-hoc expert, included an introductory presentation on sustainable mobility planning and an interactive discussion on Berane's strengths and weaknesses. Following the session and based on participant feedback, the expert and core ULG members jointly defined strategic goals and developed a common vision of Berane's urban future.



The subsequent ULG meetings focused the core group's efforts on defining a comprehensive list of potential actions. These were then discussed in detail, evaluated against previously defined objectives and vision. They were gradually narrowed down to a coherent shortlist of meaningful actions, making sure they are integrated. Following the selection of actions, the ULG proceeded to refine them by breaking them down into specific activities. This involved detailed consideration of timescales, expected outputs, necessary resources, possible funding sources and potential risks.



This rigorous process, conducted both on-site and online, resulted in the creation of an action planning table, which provided a clear overview of the entire planning process. Some of the meetings were also attended by the National URBACT Point, who provided valuable contribution to the work of the ULG.



3

The IAP Sites and Analysis

3.1 Description of IAP-Sites

Site characteristics

The main intervention area of the IAP is the urban core of Berane. It covers the five main neighbourhoods of the town: Stari grad, Park, Novo naselje, Lim and Hareme.

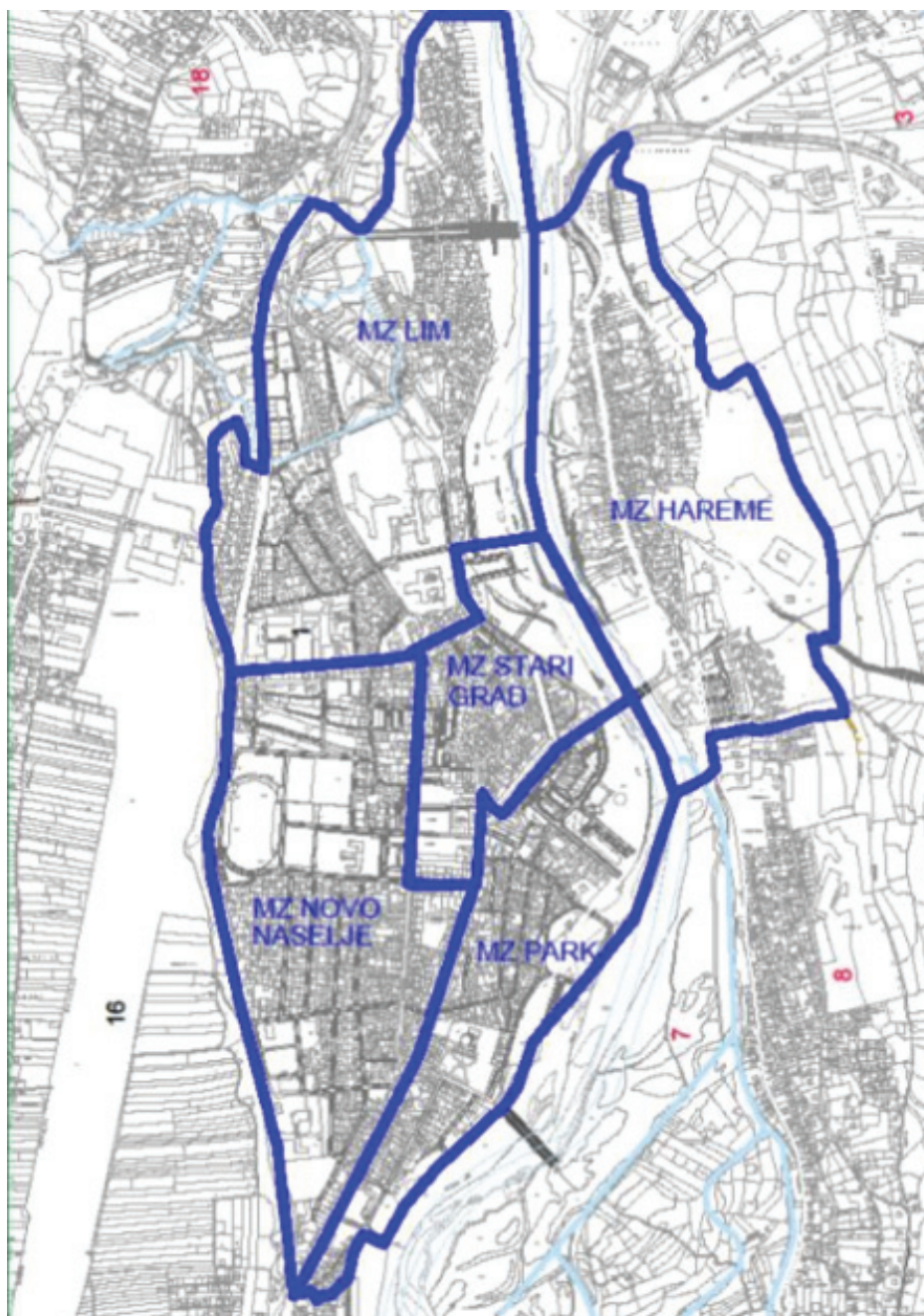


Figure 2 – A map of the urban ore of Berane

Findings from the interviews

The ULG conducted individual interviews with a diverse set of stakeholders in order to gain insights into Berane's urban and rural challenges and opportunities regarding the project themes. A total of 11 stakeholders were interviewed.

The interviewees universally praised Berane's rich cultural and natural assets as its greatest strength. Key attractions in Berane include the Jasikovac Memorial Park, known for its historical and recreational significance, offering panoramic views and the potential for tourism and cultural events. The Đur evi Stupovi Monastery and the Saint Simeon the Myrrh-Blowing Temple are notable spiritual landmarks. Green areas and the Lim River, despite limited access, are valued as natural assets. Proximity to surrounding mountains like Bjelasica with its lakes and hiking trails also positions Berane as a potential hub for rural and eco-tourism. The main street is recognized as a place of gathering and is associated with positive feelings.

Almost all interviewees state that the urban areas of Berane is confronted with traffic congestion, lack of public transport, poorly regulated streets and insufficient parking. These issues are exacerbated by the migration of rural populations to the city, increasing pressure on infrastructure and services. Pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure is lacking, as are accommodations for people with disabilities. Public spaces require modernization, including improved lighting, facade restoration and the development of green zones. Waste management and illegal construction also pose persistent problems.

The interviews revealed that rural settlements face demographic decline, with aging populations and emigration to urban areas or abroad. Poor road infrastructure, lack of public transport and informal dumpsites undermine the quality of life. There is potential for rural tourism, but it is constrained by inadequate support for farmers, poor connectivity and decaying traditional architecture.

Road safety in Berane stands out as a prominent problem, with inadequate traffic regulation, poor road conditions and a lack of bicycle and pedestrian paths. Driving culture and enforcement of traffic laws remain problematic, contributing to numerous black spots across the town.

When it comes to development opportunities, Berane's compact city centre offers potential for sustainable urban development. Investments in road infrastructure could improve connectivity with rural areas and this foster economic growth. Promoting tourism through the restoration of traditional rural homes and better utilization of natural and cultural assets could revitalize the countryside. The interviewers believe that public parking garages, green spaces and expanded pedestrian areas could enhance the city's liveability.

As regards ideas for short-term improvements, the participants emphasized the need for immediate measures to improve the city's infrastructure and aesthetics, many of which require minimal investment. In the urban core, potential short-term solutions include enhancing traffic management through better signage, clearing garbage and addressing illegal parking. Expanding and maintaining green areas, parks and playgrounds were frequently mentioned. In rural areas, ideas revolved around installing basic infrastructure like waste containers, repairing roads and improving water and electricity access. Furthermore, expanding pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, creating access for persons with disabilities and improving public transport options to rural areas are seen as critical for mobility and inclusivity.

In 10 years from now, interviewees imagine Berane as a dynamic, clean and tourist-friendly city, serving as a hub for northern Montenegro. A revitalized city core, with well-maintained streets, modernized facades and vibrant green spaces, together with strong industrial and tourism sectors, is the shared vision. Improved connectivity between urban and rural areas, along with environmentally sustainable practices, is key to realizing this future.

3.2 Emerging Topics (Problem Definition)

3.2.1 SWOT Analysis

In order to define emerging topics, we conducted a SWOT analysis with our stakeholders during a co-creation workshop. In an interactive and collaborative atmosphere, we were able to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats concerning life in Berane. The SWOT analysis is presented in the table below:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Everything being close Pedestrian main street Favourable climate Lim River Health and education services Jasikovac Park Berane Culture Summer Cultural heritage Cultural institutions Prom walk in the main street Nature and parks	Lack of public transport Dysfunctional bus station Inadequate walking infrastructure Lack of pedestrian zones Traffic congestion (esp. around schools and kindergartens) Lack of parking Traffic behaviour (illegal parking, etc) Lack of green spaces Condition and maintenance of parks Lack of playgrounds for children Lack of outdoor sports facilities (Accessibility for people with disabilities Lack of year-round cultural events Lack of information for tourists Institutional governance and responsiveness Rural infrastructure Poorly developed economy Litter and waste management Lack of cycling infrastructure Traffic regulation Financial resources
Opportunities	Threats
Tourism Local cuisine Northern transport hub Airport Health, educational and trading centre Cultural and entertainment centre Rural tourism (katuns, Bjelasica, hiking) Camping destination Walkability and cyclability EU funds	Political instability Lack of institutional collaboration Emigration Illegal construction

Strengths and opportunities

Berane's compact urban form is one of its most significant strengths. Most points of interest, including healthcare, education and cultural institutions and businesses, are located within walking distance. The pedestrianized main street exemplifies this potential, serving as the core of social and commercial activity. This reflects great potential for sustainable urban mobility.

The municipality also boasts natural and cultural assets. The Lim River provides not only scenic beauty but also recreational potential for swimming, flyfishing and riverside promenades. Nearby, Jasikovac Park and other nature-rich areas offer opportunities to expand green infrastructure and outdoor activities. Furthermore, Berane's cultural heritage – including historical sites, the annual Berane Culture Summer, and existing cultural institutions – lays the groundwork for tourism and year-round community engagement.

The town's favourable climate is conducive to outdoor activities and contributes to its potential as a rural tourism destination. The proximity to the Bjelasica mountain range and traditional katuns (shepherd villages) could position Berane as a hub for eco-tourism, hiking and camping.

Additionally, as a regional healthcare and educational centre, Berane attracts visitors and students, creating opportunities to capitalize on its role as a northern hub. EU funding provides a great opportunity for improving citizens' quality of life with sustainable solutions such as cycling infrastructure, public transport and green urban development.

Weaknesses

Despite its advantages, Berane faces a lot of challenges that undermine its full potential. A lack of public transportation and a dysfunctional bus station make mobility within the municipality and connections to rural areas difficult. While the town is walkable, its walking infrastructure is inadequate, with poorly maintained pavements, shrinking pedestrian space and road safety issues. These factors discourage sustainable urban mobility and present a barrier to accessibility, particularly for people with disabilities.

Traffic congestion, especially near schools and kindergartens, further exacerbates these issues, with most of complaints being related to poor traffic behaviour such as illegal parking and speeding. Berane also lacks cycling infrastructure, which limits alternative modes of transport and reduces road safety.

Green spaces and recreational areas are insufficient and poorly maintained. Parks, while present, are underfunded, and there are few playgrounds for children or outdoor sports facilities. The absence of comprehensive waste management negatively affects the urban environment.

Institutionally, Berane struggles with poor governance, limited financial resources and insufficient collaboration among municipal authorities. The lack of responsiveness from local institutions contributes to stagnation in implementing necessary improvements, while rural infrastructure remains underdeveloped, leaving rural settlements disconnected and prone to depopulation.

Threats

Berane's challenges are exacerbated by external threats, including political instability and a lack of institutional collaboration, which undermine long-term planning. The municipality also faces an emigration crisis, particularly among young and educated individuals, driven by limited economic opportunities. Illegal construction and weak enforcement of urban regulations further strain the municipality's resources and hinder sustainable development.

3.2.2 Interlinking challenges and potentials

Berane's challenges and potentials are deeply interlinked, creating opportunities for integrated solutions. For instance, the town's walkability, while hindered by poor infrastructure, can be enhanced through targeted investments in sidewalks, pedestrian zones and cycling paths. Not only does this improve mobility but also contributes to reducing traffic congestion, enhancing accessibility, and promoting sustainable urban living.

The underutilized Lim River and existing green spaces like Jasikovac Park could become central to Berane's urban renewal. By enhancing parks, adding playgrounds and creating cycling routes along the riverbanks, Berane can transform these spaces into vibrant community hubs. This approach would address both the lack of recreational facilities and the need for sustainable tourism offerings.

Efforts to promote eco-tourism and rural tourism, leveraging the proximity of the Bjelasica mountains and katuns, could revitalize rural settlements while integrating them into Berane's economic ecosystem. Such initiatives would require improving rural infrastructure and ensuring better connectivity between rural and urban areas through reliable public transport.

Berane's cultural assets – currently revolving around seasonal events like the Berane Culture Summer – could benefit from expanded programme to engage the community year-round. Investments in cultural facilities and better tourist information services would strengthen Berane's appeal as a cultural and entertainment hub.

Governance plays a critical role in realizing these potentials. Improving institutional responsiveness, fostering interdepartmental collaboration, and securing EU funding are essential for implementing the IAP. Addressing governance challenges would also mitigate threats from illegal construction and poor urban regulation, ensuring that development aligns with sustainability goals.

Emerging topics

This section presents the six emerging topics that are aligned with the four main topics of the Action Planning Network (30-minute territories, green communities, accessible and welcoming cities and good governance).

The emerging topics have been defined in a participatory approach by involving stakeholders and citizens. This included interviews with members of the ULG and hosting a co-creation workshop with 20 diverse participants from Berane. The workshop brought together representatives from the municipality, local services, social actors, the business community, students, tourism workers, civil society and the media, ensuring a broad and representative perspective.

Another method of data collection employed was a comprehensive analysis of Berane's functional urban area, focusing on mobility challenges and opportunities. This analysis provided valuable insights into the town's current situation and potential areas for improvement.

The six emerging topics are as follows:

Public transport

The lack of public transport poses a significant obstacle to mobility in Berane, especially for those living in rural areas. Over the past decades, Berane's transport system has steadily declined. The publicly-owned public transport operator went bankrupt in 2004, its subsequent privatization. While privately-owned operator served the town for nearly two decades, it continually reduced services due to financial difficulties. The situation escalated in 2021, when the private operator filed for bankruptcy, leaving citizens without vital public transport connections. Currently, the only public transport option for accessing rural areas is school transport for students and teachers, organized by the Ministry of Education.

Another major problem is the dysfunctional bus station, which has been closed since the bankruptcy of the private operator who owned it. After several unsuccessful attempts to sell the station in public auctions, bus services passing through Berane now stop at a makeshift bus stop across the station, leaving passengers without access to essential amenities such as information service, waiting areas and toilets.

This lack of public transport severely limits the mobility of rural residents, hindering their ability to access to access jobs, education, healthcare and other essential services in Berane without private vehicles. Non-motorized residents often rely on taxis, which can be expensive.

Inter-municipal transport remains inadequate, with fewer than 15 services calling at Berane daily. Moreover, there is no direct transport link to Bijelo Polje, a major transport hub located 36 km away. Additionally, smaller municipalities like Andrijevica and Rožaje rely on infrequent bus services, further adding the region's transport challenges.

Walking and cycling conditions

Berane's mostly flat terrain presents a favourable environment for active mobility, with most points in the town lying within a 2-kilometre radius from the main street or a 20-minute walk at most. Many local journeys to Berane by car could be made on foot or by bicycle, which would reduce car dependency while benefiting the environment, public health and urban mobility. Proximity is highlighted as one of the potentials of the town.

Despite the potential, current conditions for walking and cycling are far from ideal. Many streets lack designated sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk on the road and thus risking their safety. Where sidewalks do exist, they are often obstructed by street signs or lighting poles, too narrow, or in a state of disrepair. Also, sidewalks are frequently blocked by illegally parked cars, which further usurp pedestrian space.

Although cycling is gaining popularity for transport and recreation, Berane lacks dedicated cycling infrastructure and adequate bike parking facilities, which discourages citizens to embrace the bicycle. Still, the proximity of major points makes cycling a viable prospect.

The main pedestrian street is a cherished space for social interaction. Many residents expressed a strong interest in expanding pedestrian zones and developing cycling paths throughout the town.

By addressing these challenges, Berane can significantly improve conditions for walking and cycling.

Green infrastructure and outdoor amenities

Quality urban green spaces play a vital role in creating sustainable and liveable cities. They offer opportunities for physical activity, social interaction and play, enriching the lives of residents of all ages.

Berane boasts a number of parks, including the Jasikovac Park within a walking distance from the city centre. These parks provide valuable green spaces for residents. Still, many parks lack suitable urban furniture and facilities, thus hindering their usability and attractiveness.

A shortage of outdoor sports and recreational amenities has been identified as a challenge. has limited multi-purpose playgrounds for popular sports such as football, basketball and handball. The interviewees also residents expressed a desire for swimming facilities like a public pool.

In addition, the citizens highlighted the need for small-scale urban green infrastructure, such as pocket parks, which would enhance Berane's appeal and liveability.

By strategically upgrading its green infrastructure, Berane can create a network of inviting and functional green spaces that cater to the diverse needs of its residents.

Motorized traffic

Despite Berane's compact and walkable layout, many residents choose to drive short distances within the urban area, contributing to unnecessary traffic congestion. Current transport planning prioritizes infrastructure for motor vehicles at the expense of sustainable modes like walking, cycling, and public transport. This reinforces car dependency and prevents the development of a more balanced transport system.

A high reliance on cars contributes to road safety issues, with car accidents occurring in the urban area, sometimes with fatal outcomes.

The dominance of cars has led to significant parking problems, particularly in the city centre. The lack of designated parking areas results in illegal parking on sidewalks, obstructing pedestrian movement and creating accessibility challenges for people with disabilities, the elderly and parents with children.

Traffic jams often occur around schools and kindergartens during drop-off and pick-up times. This dis-

courages children from walking or cycling to school, thus further adding to car dependency and road safety risks.

While citizens highlighted the lack of parking as a problem, transport solutions should focus on rationalizing the use of private cars in favour of active mobility. In this way, Berane can create a more sustainable transport system that prioritizes safety, health and a more liveable urban environment.

Accessibility for all

People with disabilities and people with reduced mobility in Berane face significant obstacles to accessibility, which is particularly evident in the built environment and infrastructure. As a result, these obstacles restrict their access to essential services such as education, healthcare, employment, government services, and cultural and social activities, limiting their participation in community life.

For example, many streets in Berane do not have ramps at pedestrian crossings, creating difficulties for wheelchair users and parents with prams. As mentioned above, sidewalks are often cluttered with street furniture, lighting poles, illegally parked cars, or simply too narrow for wheelchairs or prams to move through. Poorly maintained sidewalks pose further challenges.

While some progress has been made in recent years, many institutions still lack proper accessibility features, limiting effective participation of persons with reduced mobility and persons with disabilities in society. Removing these barriers would contribute to a more inclusive environment and empower people with disabilities to participate fully in society.

Culture and entertainment

Berane stands as a vibrant cultural hub in the north of Montenegro. From its rich cultural heritage, reputable institutions such as the Museum of Polimlje and Cultural Centre, to annual festivals such as Berane Culture Summer, Berane boasts rich cultural tradition. Yet, the absence of year-round cultural events presents both a challenge and an opportunity for growth.

Interviewees highlighted the need for more events such as concerts, festivals and performances, which would contribute to a building stronger community. Also, some cherished traditions such as the prom walk along the main street stand as a unique trademark of the town, fostering its cultural identity.

Culture can have a transformative power for Berane, as it could serve as a tool for bringing people together and building a harmonious community. In addition, diverse cultural events can attract more visitors seeking authentic cultural experiences, which could contribute to Berane's economic development.

Tourism and nature

Berane possesses immense potential to grow into a thriving tourism destination. Rural tourism in particular stands as a great prospect thanks to the town's surrounding natural beauty, cultural heritage and local cuisine.

Berane's surroundings offer a haven for nature lovers. The Bjelasica mountain provides opportunities for hiking and exploration. The katuns, traditional seasonal settlements used by mountain farmers for summer grazing, hold the potential for unique and authentic tourist experiences.

Berane's rich cultural heritage, including archaeological sites dating back to the Bronze Age and religious objects including the 13th century Orthodox Đur evi Stupovi Monastery, presents a valuable asset for sustainable tourism development. Also, showcasing Berane's local cuisine at food markets has been identified as a tool for both community building and tourism.

In addition, the Lim River offers possibilities for activities such as kayaking and flyfishing, which could diversify Berane's tourism offering.

Active citizenship

Berane's potential can be fully unlocked through active citizen participation. However, several challenges have been identified in this regard. Low levels of civic activism hinder citizen involvement in shaping the city's future. Also, political divisions, weak institutional collaboration and limited responsiveness create barriers to citizen participation. As a desired future, Berane should promote transparent participatory planning, enhance institutional collaboration and communication and encourage civic engagement.





4

Strategy, Vision and Goals

4.1 Project Vision

The overall goal of the project is to **enhance the quality of life in Berane by promoting sustainable urban mobility, enhancing green spaces, fostering accessibility and inclusivity and ensuring good governance.**

Following an analysis of the current situation, interviews with stakeholders and inputs from the co-creation workshop, the ULG developed a common vision of the desired urban future for Berane. This was achieved through in-depth consultation with a variety of stakeholders, through open dialogue and co-creation activities.

The common vision of Berane is as follows:

Berane is a vibrant social, economic and cultural centre of the north of Montenegro. Standing out as an oasis of tranquillity, our town is as a place where people come rather than leave. Embracing green and smart solutions, Berane leads the way in energy efficiency, sustainability and innovation, serving as an example of prosperity in the country and beyond.

Our citizens thrive in an environment that prioritizes citizens' well-being, thus making them happy, healthy and fulfilled. From the youngest to the oldest, everyone has a sense of belonging to our inclusive community.

The pedestrian zones and dedicated cycling paths encourage active lifestyles, with the car-free city centre serving as the vibrant heart of social activity. The town boasts quality green places and attractive amenities, including the clean Lim River as the central point of interest. Drawing visitors from all around the world, Berane's diverse tourism and cultural offerings enhance its appeal, thus strengthening the town's economy.

4.2 Project Goals

The IAP rests on a set of 6 strategic objectives addressing the integrated vision of the project and the four main topics of the Action Planning Network (30-minute territories, green communities, accessible and welcoming cities and good governance). The strategic objectives are as follows:

Strategic objective 1: Promote sustainable mobility and accessibility

This objective focuses on transforming Berane into a town that prioritizes healthy lifestyles and reduces reliance on cars. To improve walkability and bikeability, the Municipality will work on improving conditions for walking and cycling, including pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, dedicated cycle paths and road safety interventions. Additionally, efforts will be made to ensure access to public transport services in both urban and rural areas, with a focus on enabling easier accessibility for those living in rural areas of the municipality.

Strategic objective 2: Expand green infrastructure

This objective refers to making Berane a town with plenty of opportunities for outdoor recreation and access to green spaces, to enhance inhabitants' physical and mental health. The Municipality will seek to expand green areas in the town, such as parks, gardens and squares. It will also create dedicated areas for children's play, sports and leisure activities.

Strategic objective 3: Improve Berane's tourism profile

This objective aims to enhance Berane's tourism offerings to attract tourists, with a special focus on rural and cultural experiences. This involves support for the promotion of cultural and historical heritage, natural beauty, events, etc. Additionally, efforts will be made to create a welcoming and accessible environment for visitors, ensuring that infrastructure, services and information are tailored to the diverse needs of tourists.

Strategic objective 4: Foster an inclusive community

This objective focuses on creating an inclusive social environment for all citizens, regardless of their ability. Special emphasis will be dedicated to making streets welcoming places to spend time. It will also ensure that all inhabitants feel welcome and empowered to participate in the town's life, thus promoting a strong sense of community and belonging.

Strategic objective 5: Enhance Berane's cultural life

This objective aims to enrich Berane's its cultural life through the development and support of diverse all-year-round events, cultural events, including concerts, festivals and performances. Also, in view of Berane's rich cultural heritage, the Municipality will seek to promote and preserve local cultural heritage and traditions, while attracting visitors and strengthening the local identity.

Strategic objective 6: Encourage citizen participation in planning processes

This objective emphasizes citizen participation as an essential tool in ensuring transparent and effective planning processes. It encourages the Municipality of Berane to consult and engage citizens early in planning, especially when it comes to infrastructure. It seeks to foster a dialogue-based planning culture based on open communication and collaboration with citizens, as well as co-design policy as an innovative policy making mechanism.

4.3 Integration Challenges

Strategic efforts of the Berane IAP focus on revitalizing public transport, enhancing green infrastructure, unlocking tourism potential, inclusive and accessible design and ensuring good governance and citizen engagement. These areas resonate with the overall goal of improving Berane's liveability and align well with URBACT's cross-cutting priorities. Such an approach works towards a better quality of life for all residents.

To align with the overall goal of the IAP, the following areas require strategic focus:

Revitalizing public transport

Establishing a public transport system, ensuring decent inter-municipal connectivity and improving rural-urban links would reduce reliance on private cars. This aligns with Strategic Objective 1. Investments in sidewalks, cycling paths and pedestrian-friendly zones would complement these efforts, enhancing accessibility and inclusivity.

Enhancing green infrastructure

Expanding and upgrading green spaces like parks, playgrounds and outdoor sports facilities is essential for improving residents' physical and mental well-being. This supports Strategic Objective 2. Improving recreational facilities along the Lim River and introducing urban green solutions like pocket parks would strengthen Berane's liveability.

Unlocking tourism potential

Berane's underexploited cultural and natural assets present significant tourism potential. Strengthening eco-tourism, rural tourism and year-round cultural programming is in line with Strategic Objectives 3 and 5. By enhancing visitor infrastructure and promoting events linked to local traditions, Berane can attract tourists and boost the local economy.

Inclusive and accessible urban design

Making infrastructure accessible to all, particularly for individuals with disabilities, ensures equality and inclusivity. Prioritizing accessibility in street design, public spaces and public buildings addresses Strategic Objective 4 and contributes to Berane's commitment to being welcoming for all residents and visitors.

Good governance and citizen engagement

Transparent governance and participatory planning are integral to achieving the project vision. Encouraging active citizenship through co-design mechanisms and institutional collaboration aligns with Strategic Objective 6. Empowering communities to participate increase trust in institutions and ensures citizen-oriented urban development.

URBACT cross-cutting principles: digital, green and gender-equal policymaking are mainstreamed in the following manner:

Gender: Ensuring inclusive design practices will benefit all genders, especially women, who may rely more on public transport or walking. By addressing mobility challenges and improving accessibility to services, Berane integrates gender-sensitive approaches into its strategic planning processes.

Green: By promoting sustainable mobility, expanding urban greenery and supporting eco-tourism, the Berane LAP aligns with green policymaking. Cycling paths, green public spaces and the Lim River revitalization reinforce Berane's position as a green community.

Digital: Introducing platforms for citizen engagement ensures citizen engagement and transparency. For example, apps for reporting communal issues could increase responsiveness of institutions and strengthen citizen trust in the local government. Also, tourism offering could benefit from a promotion via a dedicated website of the local tourism organization or digital campaigns.

4.4 Logical Framework

Our logical framework builds on the identified emerging topics, strategic objectives and a long list of integrated actions that have been proposed during the co-creation process. The logical framework is presented below.

INTEGRATED ACTIONS & STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



5

Small-Scale Actions

5.1 Small-Scale Action 1:

Tree-planting and park revitalization

In September 2024, the Municipality of Berane undertook a small-scale action focused on tree-planting and park revitalization along the main bypass road near the Lim River and in the adjacent Lim Park.

This action involved the planting of trees along the bypass, chosen in consultation with experts. The addition of these trees will enhance the local environment and offer both shade and protection from the weather, thereby improving the visual appeal and comfort of this area just outside the city centre.

Simultaneously, efforts were made to revitalize the nearby Lim Park. This included the installation of new benches and trash cans, designed to make the park a more pleasant and functional space for residents seeking relaxation and recreation.

The activities, carried out with the involvement of local municipal staff and volunteers, effectively increased green areas and contributed to the overall improvement of the urban environment in these specific locations. This effort demonstrates a commitment to enhancing public spaces in Berane.





5.2 Small-Scale Action 2: Earth Day celebration

In commemoration of Earth Day, 22 April 2025 the Municipality of Berane organized a series of events a focused on environmental protection, education and the promotion of sustainable transport. The activities kicked off on Earth Day itself, with a transformation of a derelict area in front of Vukašin Radunovi Primary School into a pocket park. This initiative included planting new trees, conducting a thorough cleanup and litter removal, painting of a green island and installation of paving stones to enhance the site's usability and appearance. This collaborative action actively engaged staff from relevant municipal secretariats, representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency of Montenegro and students of the above-mentioned school, who all contributed to creating a more attractive and functional urban green space.

In collaboration with the local police department, on 24 April 2025 the municipality also organized an interactive workshop on traffic safety at Vukadin Vukadinovi Secondary Vocational School. On the same day, an environmental protection workshop was organized at Vukašin Radunovi Primary School, where Environmental Protection Agency staff gave a lecture with the aim of raising awareness and knowledge about environmental issues among younger students.

The series of Earth Day events culminated on 26 April 2025, when Berane hosted the first-ever Critical Mass bicycle ride. Promoted under the slogan "Ride with Us – Nature, Energy, Community," the event brought together more than 50 citizens, including children, who collectively rode through the streets of Berane, experiencing the urban environment in a different way than usual. The ride was organized both to promote the bicycle as a sustainable and healthy mode of transport and to highlight the need for creating conditions that ensure safe and convenient cycling in Berane. This enjoyable event was organized by the Municipality of Berane, with valuable support from the Berane Tourism Organization and Biciklo.me NGO from Podgorica. Despite unsettled weather, citizens eagerly participated in this leisurely ride along a pre-determined route through the city streets. The route was securely managed by the local police, assisted by volunteers from the NGO, ensuring the safety of all participants. This successful bicycle ride effectively concluded the Municipality's Earth Day celebration, its commitment to green initiatives and fostering community engagement, in line with the CONNECTING project.







6

Integrated Actions

Integrated Actions

This section outlines the integrated actions that form the core of this Integrated Action Plan. These actions were developed in close consultation with the ULG, whose members provided crucial inputs to identify, refine and select actions from the long-list of actions. Each action has been defined to ensure alignment with the strategic goals of the plan and relevance to the four project themes.

A key characteristic of these actions is their integrated design. Each action addresses at least one of the four project themes, contributes to achieving the identified strategic goals of the plan, and is designed to build upon others. Furthermore, all integrated actions explicitly incorporate the URBACT cross-cutting themes of digital, green and gender equal.

A total of sixteen integrated actions have been identified and are presented herein. Each action description includes a brief overview of the current situation and challenges, followed by the action's specific goals, proposed activities, implementation timeframe, designated lead agency, required budget and resources, potential funding sources and associated risks.

The locations of the integrated actions are visually represented in the graph below. A detailed presentation of each action follows below.

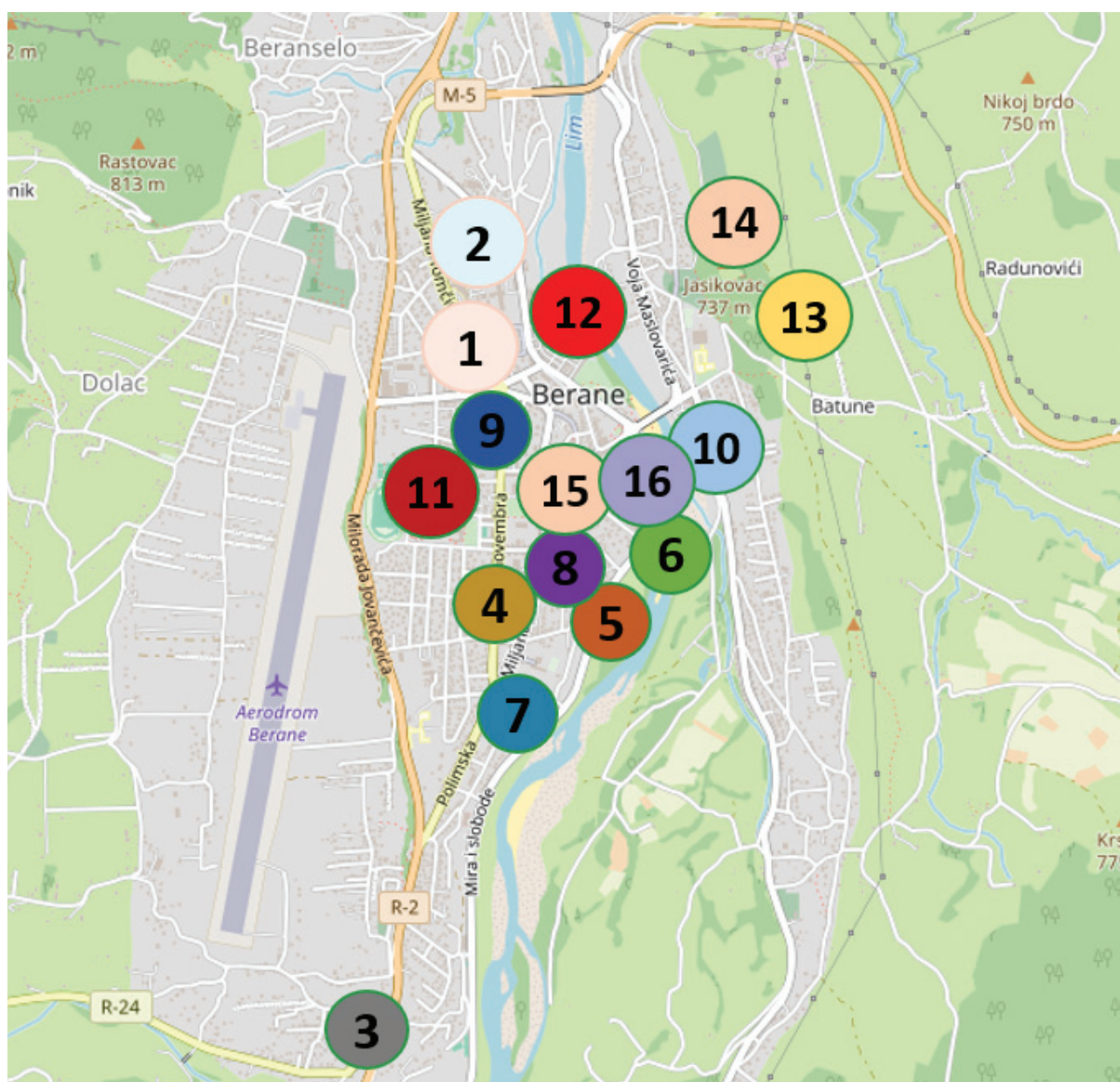


Illustration 1: A map of locations of integrated actions

6.1 Integrated Action 1

Title of the action: Reactivation of the bus station

Current situation:

Berane's bus station has been closed for over four years following the bankruptcy of its private owner, the Simon Voyage transport company. This has resulted in buses using a makeshift stop nearby, creating congestion and safety issues. The station is a major hub for local, intercity and international routes, including those linking Montenegro with Serbia. The absence of passenger amenities like waiting areas, toilets and information desks has further diminished service quality.

Goals: Restore and modernize Berane's bus station for improved accessibility and passenger convenience. The reopened bus station will act as a central mobility hub, making the city more accessible for residents and visitors and facilitating connectivity with other regions in Montenegro and beyond.

Activities:

- Acquire the station from private owners through negotiation or purchase
- Engage a company to manage the station (model to be defined)
- Renovate the station by upgrading facilities, ensuring accessibility and adding essential passenger services
- Incorporate additional amenities such as a café, convenience store, newsstand, bike parking, waiting areas, digital displays, etc. to encourage its use as a welcoming public space
- Fully relaunch the bus station to serve all major transport routes

Timeframe for implementation: 1-3 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane, Ministry of Transport

Budget and resources: EUR 1 million

Potential funding sources: Municipal budget, state capital budget, IPA III

Risks: Lack of financial resources



6.2 Integrated Action 2

Title of the action: Introduction of local bus routes

Current situation:

Berane lacks a municipal public transport system, leaving urban and rural residents with limited mobility options. Rural residents face challenges in accessing education, jobs and essential services in the urban core. The absence of local bus routes has increased reliance on private vehicles and taxis, which are costly and unsustainable. Attempts to involve private operators have been hindered by low profitability on less populated routes.

Goals: Establish local bus routes connecting urban and rural areas to improve mobility and accessibility. New local bus routes will reduce inequalities within the municipality, while contributing to efforts to reduce depopulation of rural areas. The new bus routes complement other integrated actions, such as improving pedestrian areas, safe routes to schools and strengthening tourism offerings, contributing to Berane's overall appeal and quality of life.

Activities:

- Conduct a feasibility study to assess demand and determine viable urban-rural routes (lines and model to be defined based on the study)
- Organize a competitive process to select transport providers for urban and suburban lines or on-demand transport solutions
- Provide subsidies or financial incentives to ensure the sustainability of routes with lower passenger volumes
- Devise and implement a public transport promotional campaign, with emphasis on social media
- Establish a digital platform for planning, booking and paying for public transport

Timeframe for implementation: 5 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane (Department of Public Utilities and Transport)

Budget and resources: EUR 100,000

Potential funding sources: Municipal budget, IPA III

Risks: Insufficient funds, political instability, low transport provider interest



6.3 Integrated Action 3

Title of the action: Improving safety at the intersection on the road to Kolašin and Andrijević

Current situation:

This high-traffic intersection connects major state roads but has a poor design, leading to frequent accidents. A lack of pedestrian infrastructure and traffic-calming measures adds to safety risks for road users. The intersection has become a bottleneck for both local and regional traffic.

Goals: Reduce traffic accidents and enhance safety at the intersection for vehicles and pedestrians.

Activities:

- Submit a proposal to the Road Administration for safety upgrades.
- Conduct a detailed analysis of current traffic patterns and accident data.
- Develop a design incorporating pedestrian crossings, traffic-calming measures, and improved signage.
- Implement construction upgrades and oversee compliance through regular supervision.

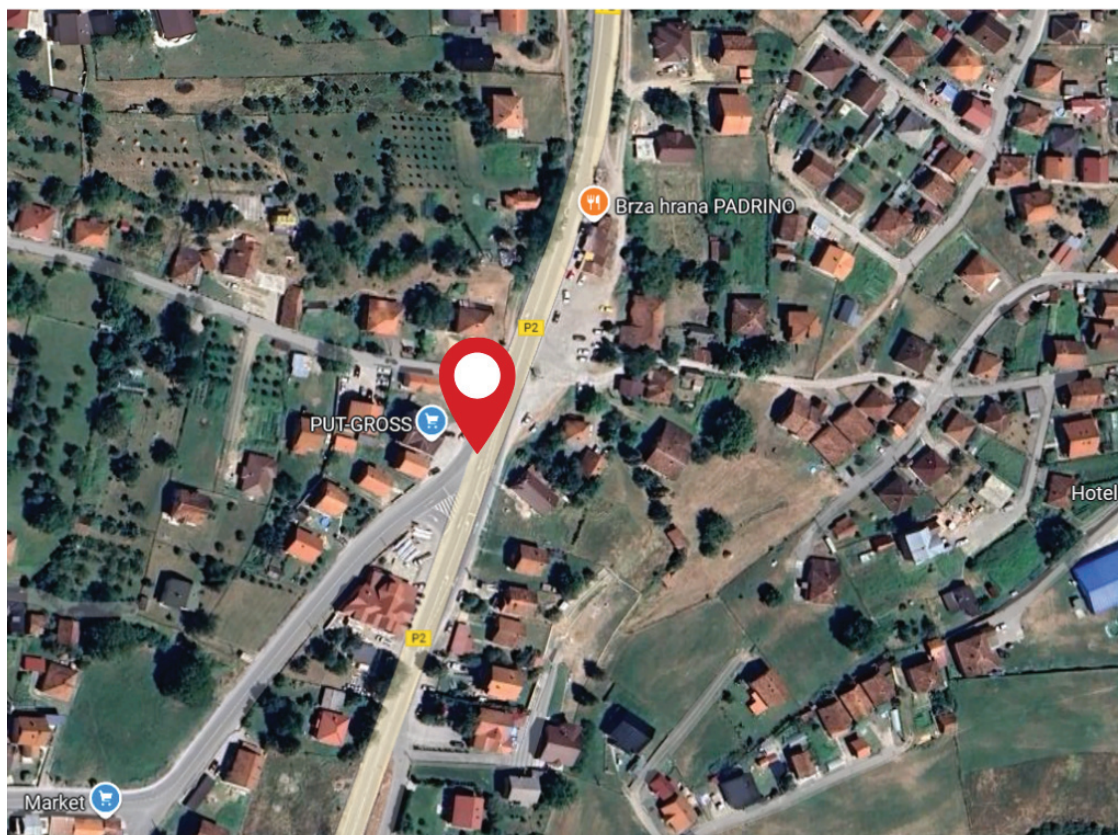
Timeframe for implementation: 3 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane, Ministry of Transport, Road Transport Administration, Monteput

Budget and resources: EUR 200,000

Potential funding sources: State capital budget, UN Road Safety Fund

Risks: Lack of financial resources



6.4 Integrated Action 4

Title of the action: Traffic calming in 29. novembar and Polimska streets

Current situation:

Increasing traffic volumes in Berane's urban core, especially in 29. novembar and Polimska streets, contribute to unsafe streets and frequent road accidents. Drivers often exceed speed limits, especially in residential zones and near schools. The lack of traffic-calming infrastructure like speed bumps or pedestrian-friendly crossings creates unsafe conditions for vulnerable road users.

Goals: Improve safety and reduce vehicle speeds in 29. novembar and Polimska streets

Activities:

- Analyse traffic patterns and identify high-risk areas in 29. novembar and Polimska streets
- Develop and adopt a new traffic regulation plan emphasizing reduced speed zones in these streets
- Install physical traffic-calming features such as speed bumps and raised crossings
- Conduct evaluation of implemented measures

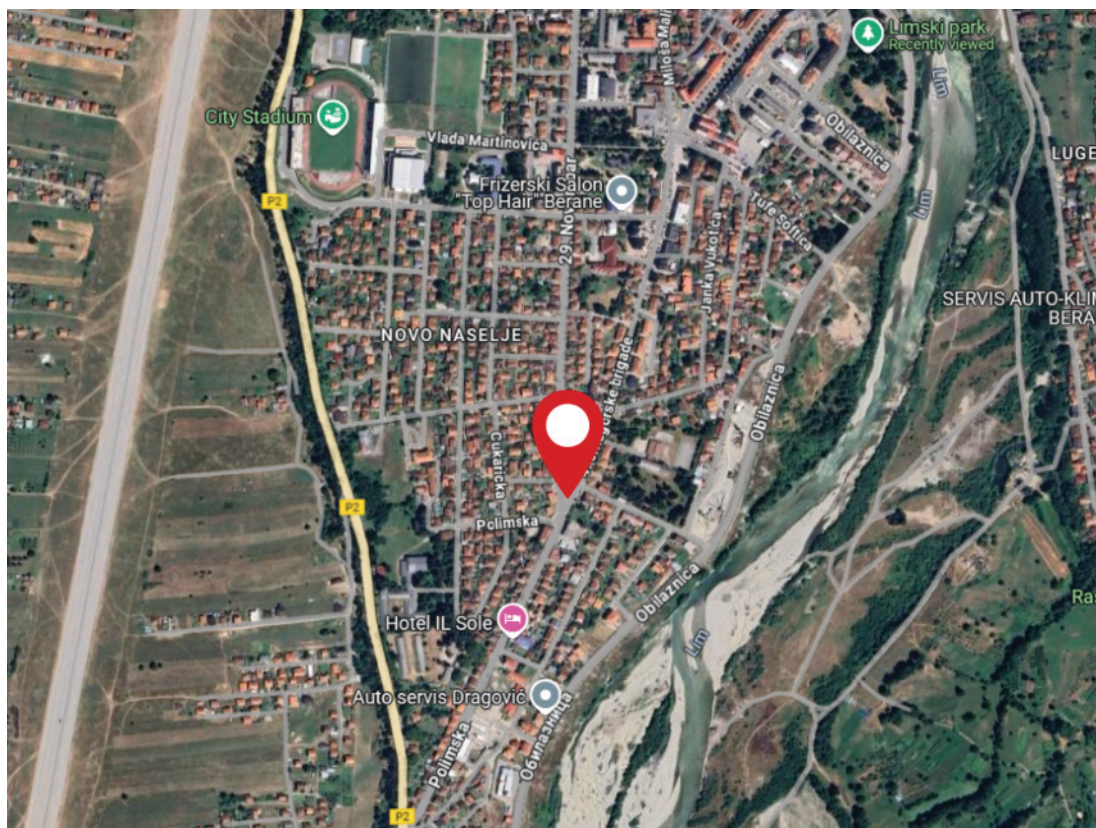
Timeframe for implementation: 2 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane (Department of Public Utilities and Transport)

Budget and resources: EUR 50,000

Potential funding sources: Municipal budget, EU-funded programmes, UN Road Safety Fund

Risks: Resistance to change, traditional transport planning practices.



6.5 Integrated Action 5

Title of the action: Construction of a cycling path along the Lim River

Current situation:

Berane lacks a dedicated urban cycling path, which limits safe mobility options for cyclists. Increased interest in cycling for both transport and recreation underlines the need for proper infrastructure. The riverfront remains underutilized, offering potential for both connectivity and recreation.

Goals: Provide a safe, attractive cycling path to enhance mobility and recreational opportunities.

Activities:

- Identify a viable route along the Lim River, potentially collaborating with neighbouring municipalities for a unified 'Lim Bike' network
- Integrate the path into local planning documents
- Develop conceptual and detailed designs for the cycling path
- Select contractors for construction and supervision through a transparent tendering process
- Build the cycling path and promote its use through community events

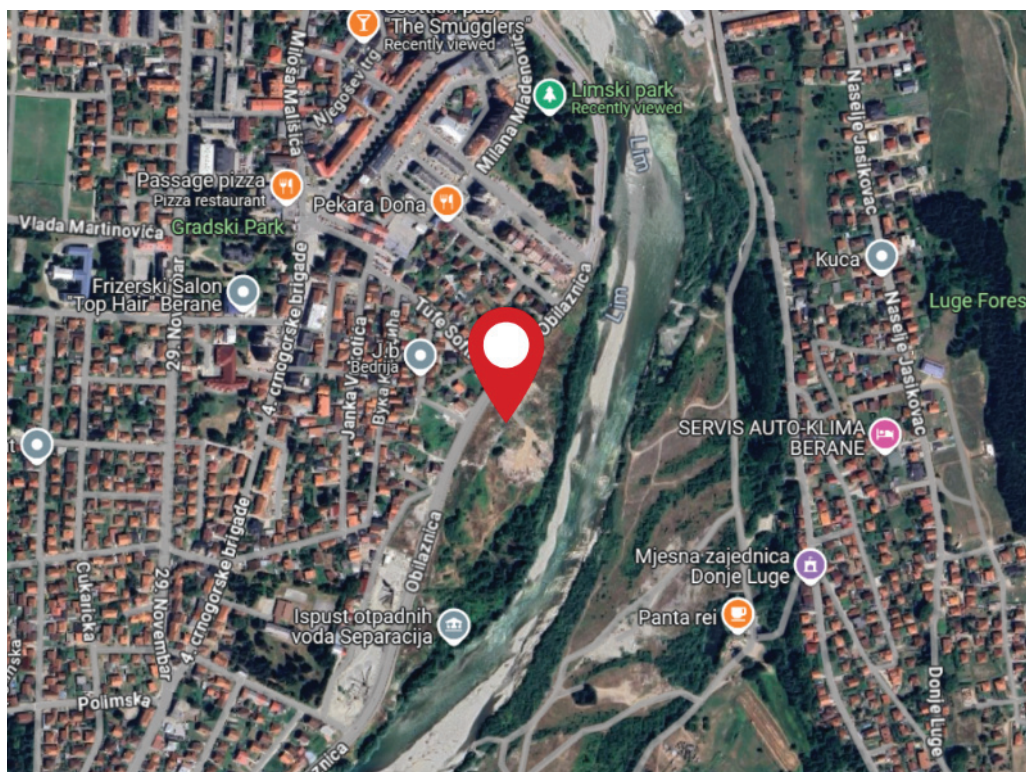
Timeframe for implementation: 3 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane (Department of Public Utilities and Transport), neighbouring municipalities

Budget and resources: EUR 400,000

Potential funding sources: Municipal budget, state capital budget, IPA III, EU-funded programmes (e.g. LIFE), Eco-Fund

Risks: Land use planning issues, financial constraints



6.6 Integrated Action 6

Title of the action: Revitalization of Lim Park

Current situation:

Lim Park, situated near the town's main street, is underutilized due to its neglected condition. The park lacks sufficient green space maintenance, proper pedestrian paths and modern amenities such as playgrounds and seating areas. Residents have expressed a need for improved recreational facilities in the central part of Berane.

Goals: Transform Lim Park into an attractive, vibrant and functional space for recreation and social interaction.

Activities:

- Develop a comprehensive design plan for the park's reconstruction, incorporating citizen feedback
- Tender and oversee construction works
- Add urban furniture, such as benches, tables, trash bins and water fountains to improve usability
- Plant new trees, shrubs and ground cover to enhance biodiversity
- Construct modern playgrounds for children
- Install LED lighting along pathways to ensure usability and improve safety at night
- Incorporate ramps and other accessibility features to make the park inclusive for PwDs
- Design and construct an open-air space for cultural events and community gatherings.
- Install street workout equipment

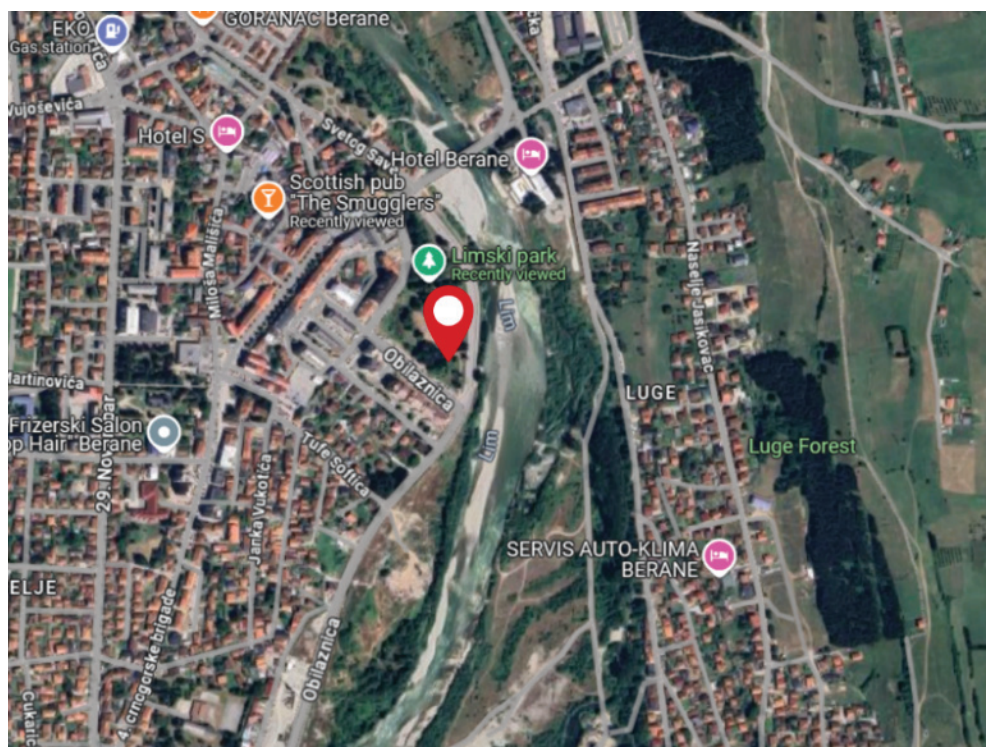
Timeframe for implementation: 3 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane (Department of Public Utilities and Transport), Berane Investment and Development Agency

Budget and resources: EUR 300,000

Potential funding sources: Municipal budget, state capital budget, EU-funded programmes (e.g. LIFE), Eco-Fund

Risks: Lack of financial resources



6.7 Integrated Action 7

Title of the action: Beautification of micro-locations in urban and rural areas

Current situation:

Various neighbourhoods and community spaces, especially in rural areas, are poorly maintained and lack aesthetic appeal. Public spaces near schools, community centres and other key facilities have untapped potential for becoming pocket parks.

Goals: Revitalize neglected spaces to enhance aesthetic and functional value for community use.

Activities:

- Identify neglected micro-locations for targeted improvement in both urban and rural areas
- Consult with citizens on revitalization measures using various forms (public forums, focus groups, surveys)
- Install urban furniture, outdoor workout equipment, and landscaping elements such as trees and shrubs
- Develop a community activation programme such as open-air art displays and local gatherings
- Partner with local schools and communities for sustained maintenance

Timeframe for implementation: 3 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane, DOO Municipal Services Berane, Berane Investment and Development Agency

Budget and resources: EUR 50,000

Potential funding sources: Municipal budget, Eco-Fund, EU-funded programmes

Risks: Funding shortages



6.8 Integrated Action 8

Title of the action: Sustainable mobility promotion

Current situation:

Sustainable mobility campaigns and events in Berane are infrequent and lack consistent planning. There is limited infrastructure to support walking and cycling, discouraging residents from adopting these modes of transport. By implementing a small-scale action on Earth Day, the Municipality of Berane showcased the potential for promoting sustainable urban mobility in a direct and attractive manner, effectively engaging citizens and demonstrating practical solutions.

Goals: Encourage walking, cycling and other sustainable transport modes through regular promotion and community activities.

Activities:

- Participate regularly in European Mobility Week
- Organize regular cycling/walking events such as Critical Mass, Car-Free Sundays, walking bus, etc. on important dates
- Install bike parking facilities across the town
- Experiment with street transformation
- Provide subsidies to residents for bicycle purchase
- Conduct regular social media campaigns on sustainable mobility promotion
- Encourage NGOs to conduct and participate in mobility awareness campaigns

Timeframe for implementation: Every year

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane, schools, NGOs

Budget and resources: EUR 10,000 per year

Potential funding sources: Municipal budget, EU-funded programmes

Risks: Political instability, lack of human resources



6.9 Integrated Action 9

Title of the action: Improvement of pedestrian infrastructure in streets

Current situation:

Suburban areas lack dedicated pedestrian pathways, forcing residents to share roads with vehicles. In urban areas, existing sidewalks are narrow, poorly maintained or inaccessible for people with disabilities. Also, illegally parked cars on sidewalks cause mobility problems for those on foot or in wheelchairs alike. In addition, many pedestrian areas lack ramps for people with disabilities or impaired mobility.

Goals: Create a safe, accessible pedestrian network connecting key locations in Berane.

Activities:

- Map areas requiring pedestrian infrastructure upgrades, including suburban roads
- Build or renovate sidewalks, ensuring compliance with accessibility standards for people with disabilities
- Install ramps and tactile pathways for the visually impaired and accessible sidewalks in public areas
- Enforce parking regulations to deter illegal parking in accessible spaces
- Collaborate with urban planners to integrate pedestrian safety features

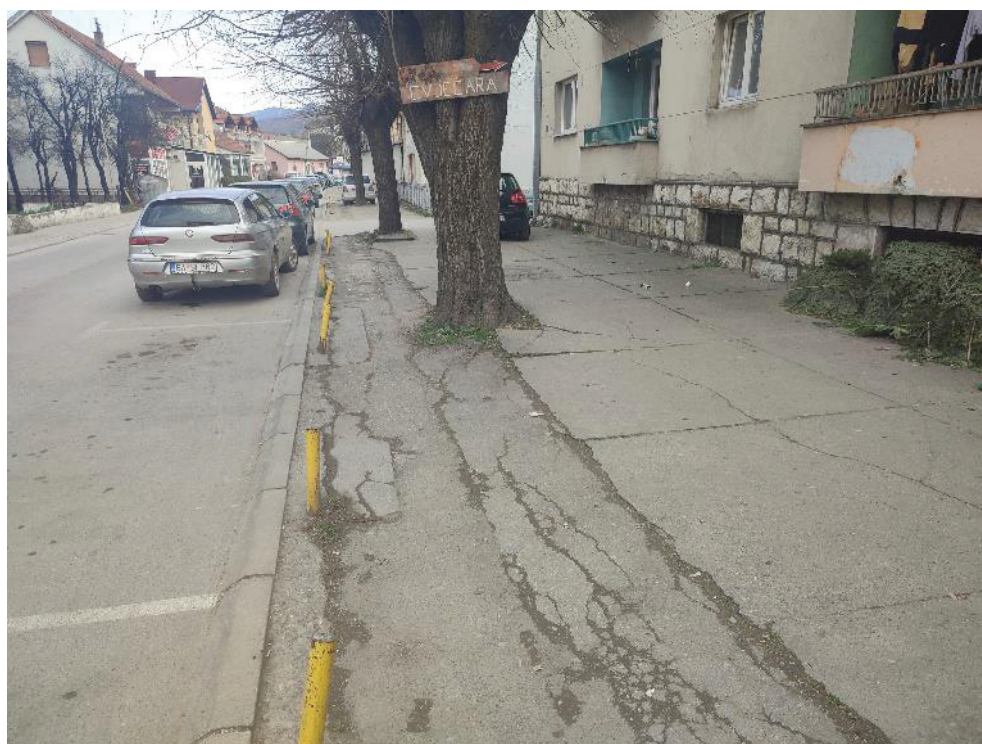
Timeframe for implementation: 3 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane, Berane Investment and Development Agency

Budget and resources: EUR 50,000 per year

Potential funding sources: Municipal budget, state capital budget, IPA III

Risks: Land acquisition challenges, technical infeasibility



6.10 Integrated Action 10

Title of the action: Lim Embankment Rehabilitation

Current situation:

The Lim Riverbank is neglected, with overgrown vegetation and limited infrastructure for public use or recreation. The riverfront holds significant potential for ecological and recreational enhancement.

Goals: Develop the Lim Riverbank into a vibrant, functional, and ecologically sustainable area for residents and visitors.

Activities:

- Construct reinforcements to prevent erosion and regulate the riverbank
- Develop a riverside promenade with seating, trees, and pathways for pedestrians and cyclists
- Refurbish the town beach area to increase its usability for residents

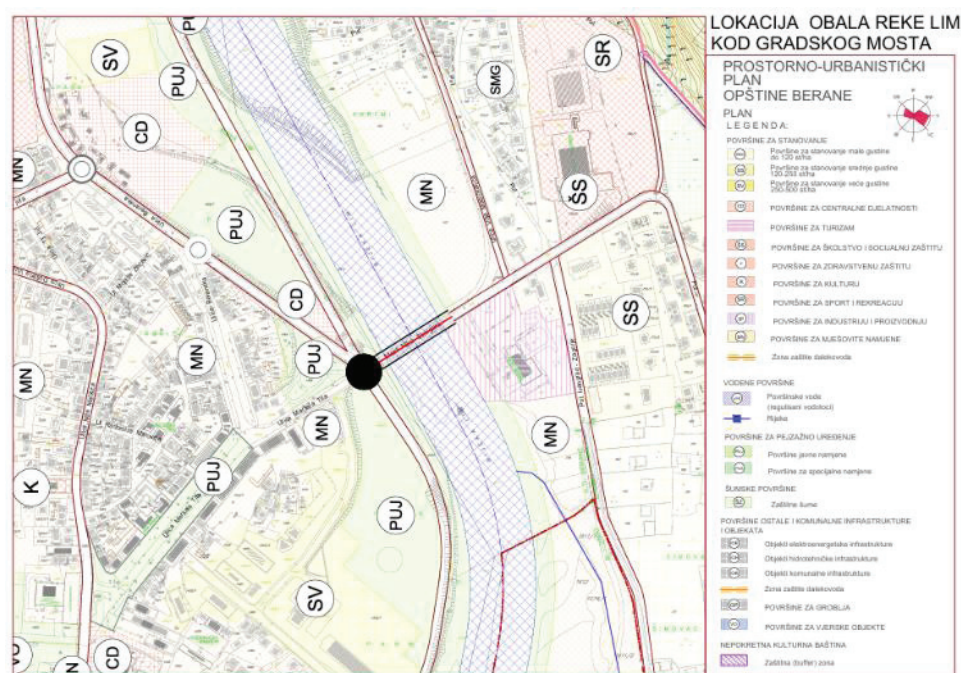
Timeframe for implementation: 5 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane, Ministry of Spatial Planning, Urbanism and State Property

Budget and resources: Riverbank reinforcement: EUR 4 million; Improvement works: EUR 20,000

Potential funding sources: State capital budget, World Bank

Risks: Cost overruns, unsuccessful tenders



6.11 Integrated action 11

Title of the action: Introduction of traffic calming zones near primary schools

Current situation:

School zone signage is outdated or poorly visible, and crosswalks are not compliant with safety standards. Streets near schools experience heavy traffic, creating hazardous conditions for children, especially during drop-off and pick-up times. Lack of adequate sidewalks near schools further jeopardizes pedestrian safety.

Goals: Enhance safety for children around schools through effective traffic-calming measures.

Activities:

- Renew horizontal and vertical signage, construct new sidewalks, and install access ramps near primary school and kindergarten entrances
- Introduce automatic barriers and build protective fencing along busy streets near primary schools.
- Ensure compliance with school zone standards through regular monitoring and enforcement.

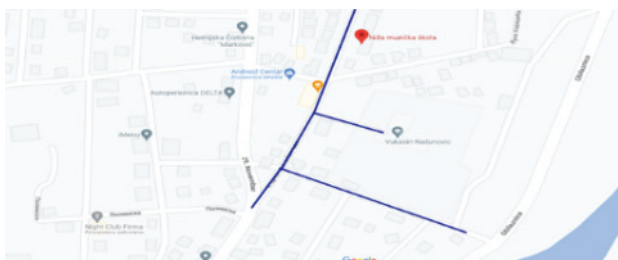
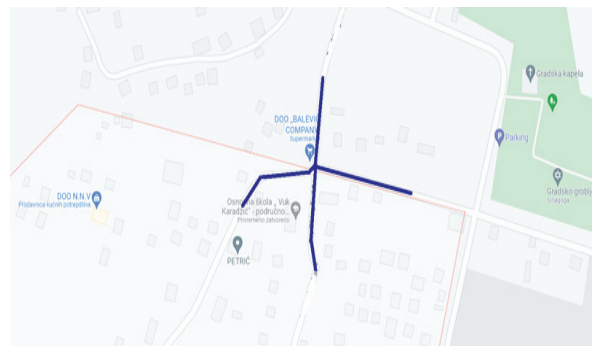
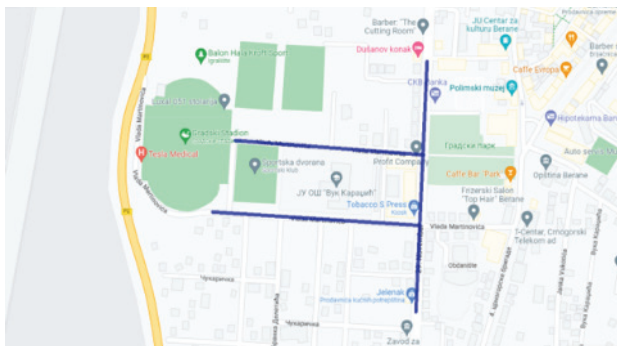
Timeframe for implementation: 2 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane

Budget and resources: EUR 90,000

Potential funding sources: State capital budget

Risks: Coordination issues, funding shortages



6.12 Integrated Action 12

Title of the action: Ensuring safe routes to high schools

Current situation:

Key intersections near high schools do not prioritize non-motorized users, leading to unsafe conditions for students. There is insufficient infrastructure for pedestrian crossings or traffic calming in these areas. Also, many high school students live in suburban areas, crossing busy roads on their way to school.

Goals: Increase safety for students and staff traveling to and from high schools.

Activities:

- Engage consultants to analyze current traffic conditions and recommend appropriate safety improvements.
- Implement traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps, improved signage and raised pedestrian crossings near high schools

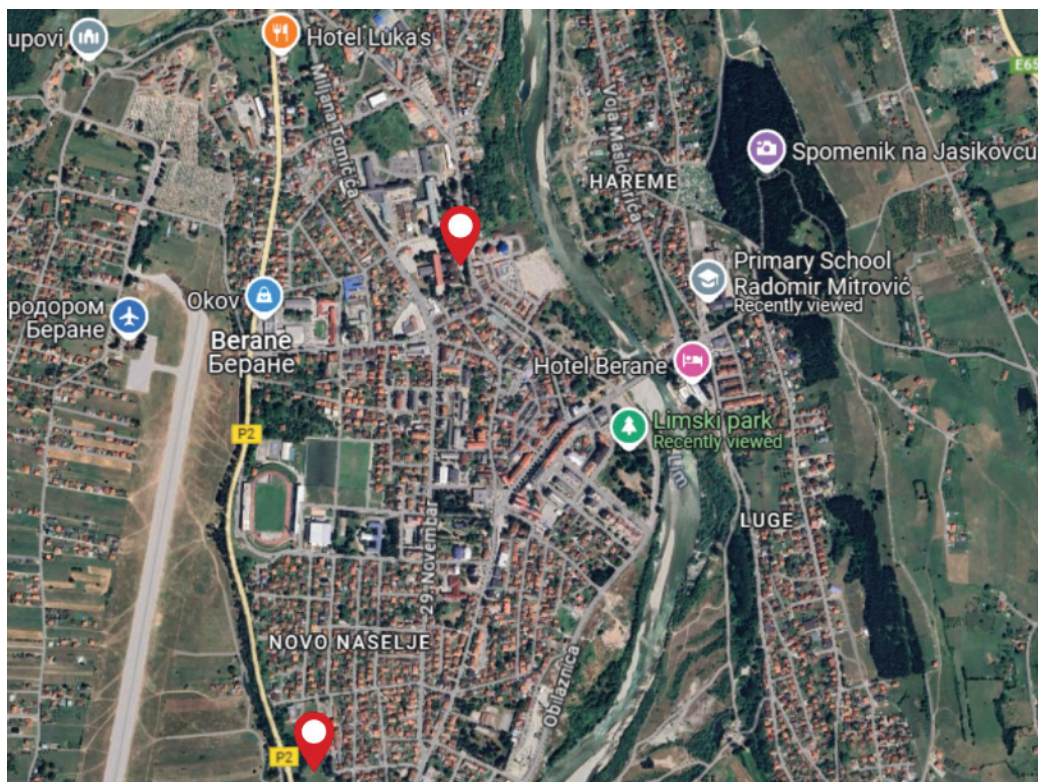
Timeframe for implementation: 2 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane

Budget and resources: EUR 40,000

Potential funding sources: State capital budget, IPA III, municipal budget

Risks: Coordination challenges, financial constraints



6.13 Integrated Action 13

Title of the action: Strengthening tourism offering

Current situation:

Despite Berane's natural beauty and cultural assets, its potential for active tourism is underutilized. There are limited marked trails, lookouts and facilities to support hiking, cycling and other outdoor activities. Marketing efforts for active tourism are currently not at a satisfactory level. Also, Berane's rich cultural heritage is not fully exploited for tourism.

Goals: Establish Berane as a distinctive tourism destination

Activities:

- Develop a dedicated local tourism website
- Mark 25 km of trails for hiking and cycling in rural area
- Install lookout points, signage and amenities along trails, fishing spots and recreational areas
- Organize cultural events, exhibitions and performances to promote local traditions
- Develop multilingual promotional materials
- Promote Berane's rural offerings through digital campaigns and collaboration with tour agencies
- Partner with schools and NGOs to encourage participation in cultural heritage preservation projects
- Promote rural and agritourism, including local gastronomy and traditional pastoral settlements (katuns)

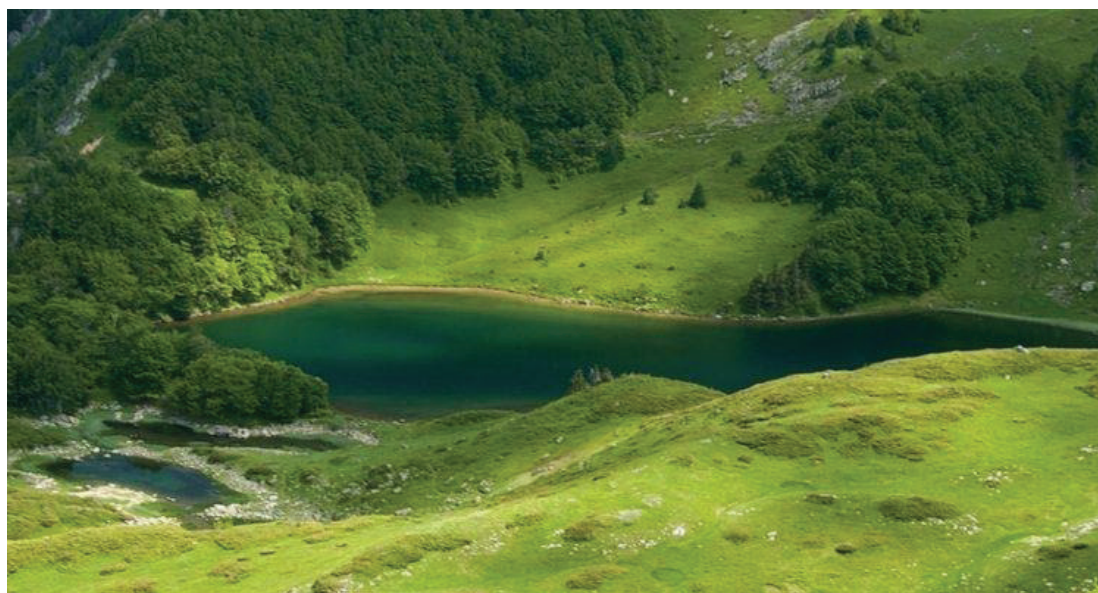
Timeframe for implementation: 2 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane Tourism Organization, Ministry of Spatial Planning

Budget and resources: EUR 100,000

Potential funding sources: Municipal budget, EU-funded programmes (esp. Interreg & CBC), IPARD

Risks: Low awareness of Berane's tourism potential



6.14 Integrated Action 14

Title of the action: Revitalization of the Jasikovac Forest Park

Current situation:

Jasikovac Park, a historically significant and culturally protected site, is home to the Freedom Monument, symbolizing Berane's resistance during World War II. However, its current state is inadequate, with poor maintenance and inaccessible pathways limiting its potential as a recreational and cultural hub. The last major maintenance was conducted in 2015. Residents have prioritized its revitalization as part of broader green infrastructure improvements.

Goals: Protect Jasikovac and transform it into vibrant hub for outdoor activities and cultural events.

Activities:

- Rehabilitate walking paths, add lighting, improve seating areas and place trash bins
- Plant new trees and flowering plants
- Install educational and cultural signage to highlight the park's history and significance of the Freedom Monument
- Set up a video surveillance system to ensure safety and prevent vandalism
- Develop spaces for recreational activities, including outdoor exercise and play areas

Timeframe for implementation: 3 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane, Berane Investment and Development Agency

Budget and resources: EUR 300,000

Potential funding sources: State capital budget, municipal budget, EU-funded programmes (e.g. Creative Europe)

Risks: Limited resources, insufficient community engagement



6.15 Integrated Action 15

Title of the action: Construction of a Parking Garage

Current situation:

The urban core of Berane faces significant urban challenges related to parking. The current deficit of proper parking spaces in the city centre results in a valuable urban realm being increasingly occupied and dominated by cars. The Municipality of Berane has identified and designated a strategic location near Limski Park for the construction of a multi-level parking garage. This planned development is envisioned as a crucial component in a broader effort to revitalize the city centre.

Goals: Address the shortage of vehicle parking within the city centre area.

Activities:

- Prepare all relevant project documentation;
- Issue a call for tenders, selecting a contractor and award the contract;
- Perform the works/procurement and installation;
- Technical acceptance of works and issuance of a certificate of occupancy

Timeframe for implementation: 3 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane, Berane Investment and Development Agency

Budget and resources: EUR 1,000,000

Potential funding sources: Municipal budget

Risks: Limited resources



6.16 Integrated Action 16

Title of the action: Reconstruction of 21 July Square

Current situation: 21 July Square is positioned at the intersection of Main Street, City Park and City Hall. Currently, it functions as an area open to car traffic and a taxi hub, failing to capitalize on its potential to unify key city centre landmarks within a single pedestrian zone. Repurposing the square would create a more organized, efficient, and regulated public space, in alignment with urban development plans. By diverting motorized traffic from the city centre, this project would establish a revitalized area capable of hosting various events, exhibitions, forums, and artistic expressions, thereby fostering a truly citizen-centric environment.

Goals: Enhance 21 July Square, the area in front of the city hall, in order to connect it with surrounding areas, amenities and infrastructure

Activities:

- Publicize a public competition for the development of a conceptual design of 21 July Square.
- Prepare all relevant technical documentation.
- Secure financial resources.
- Issue a call for tenders and select a contractor.
- Perform reconstruction works

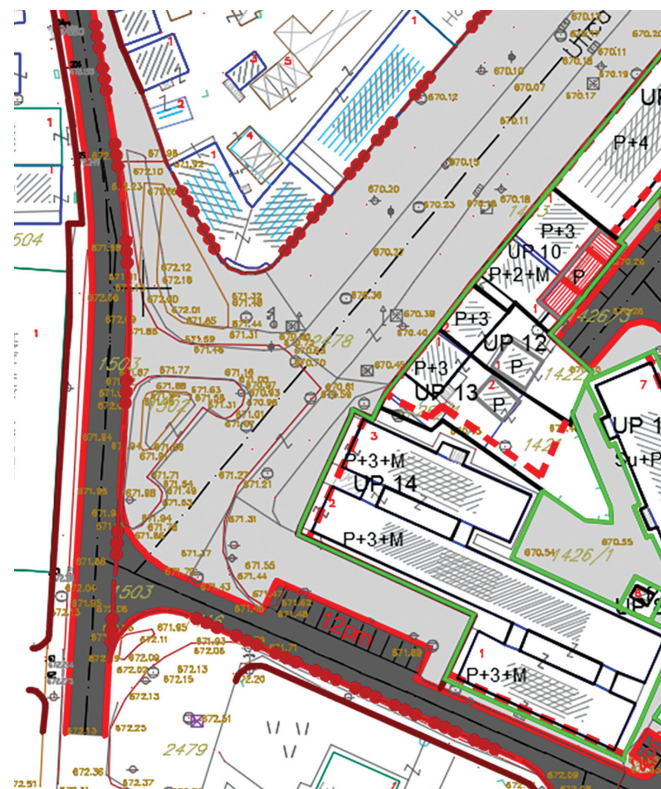
Timeframe for implementation: 4 years

Lead Agency: Municipality of Berane and Government of Montenegro

Budget and resources: EUR 2,000,000

Potential funding sources: State capital budget, municipal budget, EU-funded programmes

Risks: Limited resources, insufficient community engagement







7

Implementation Strategy

7.1 Implementation Strategy

This section outlines an overall framework for implementing the IAP once it has been formally adopted by the relevant bodies of the Municipality of Berane. Effective implementation requires a structured approach to ensure the set objectives and outcomes are achieved. This involves establishing appropriate management and oversight mechanisms, involving clear governance structures, active coordination among all relevant actors, proactive risk management and consistent communication between the ULG and those responsible for execution. It is important to understand that the IAP is a dynamic document that will evolve through ongoing engagement between stakeholders, rather than a fixed project plan.

The key elements of this implementation strategy include:

- **Governance framework:** defining the roles and responsibilities for overseeing the implementation process, including the future structure and function of the ULG or a successor entity.
- **Action prioritization:** establishing a clear sequence for implementing actions based on strategic relevance, impact and feasibility.
- **Cost estimation and funding strategy:** identifying the cost and potential funding sources and mechanisms required to support the implementation planned actions.
- **Overall timeline:** presenting a Gantt chart to illustrate the overall schedule for the IAP's execution phases.
- **General risk assessment:** identifying potential barriers to implementation
- **Indicators:** defining how progress and success will be measured, including the selection of relevant indicators.

Governance framework

Effective governance is fundamental to the successful implementation of the IAP. The ultimate responsibility for the execution of the IAP rests with the relevant bodies of the Municipality of Berane. This framework will be formally established through a decision accompanying the IAP when it is presented to the local parliament. This decision will clearly define the specific responsibilities for implementation, monitoring and reporting.

The lead role for the coordination and implementation of IAP actions will be assigned to the Department for Economy, Development and Investment within the Municipality of Berane. This department will be responsible for coordinating action implementation across municipal departments, monitoring progress against planned activities, identifying and pursuing funding opportunities, ensuring the integration of IAP actions into the city's broader strategic development plan, and engaging and informing stakeholders to maximize the plan's impact.

The ULG will transition into a consultative body. Its primary function will be to monitor the overall implementation progress, provide insights and recommend contingency activities if actions deviate from the plan. The ULG will meet quarterly to discuss implementation status and maintain an informed overview. Its composition may be expanded to include additional relevant actors or experts where appropriate.

To ensure accountability, transparency, and political ownership, the local parliament's decision will also specify the designated body responsible for formal reporting on the IAP's implementation and define reporting schedules.

In line with the IAP's nature as a living document, the ULG commits to periodically evaluating the plan's effectiveness and suggesting necessary revisions to targets or corrective actions for implementation where required.

7.2 Action Prioritization

Action prioritization was conducted by the ULG. Members of the ULG evaluated the projects based on predefined criteria. They rated each project on a scale of 1 to 5 for its contribution to the four project themes, as well as for its potential impact and feasibility. To determine a final score, these ratings were weighted: alignment with the four themes comprised 50% of the score, while impact and feasibility each accounted for 25%. The final project score was calculated using this weighted approach.

The following table presents the weighted score for each project, aggregated from the ratings provided by the ULG members.

Action	Rating
Construction of a Parking Garage	3,42
Revitalization of the Lim Riverbank	3,44
Revitalization of the Jasikovac Forest Park	3,50
Introduction of local bus routes	3,52
Improving safety at the intersection on the road to Kolašin and Andrijevića	3,54
Beautification of micro-locations in urban and rural areas	3,67
Promotion of sustainable mobility	3,67
Construction of a cycling path along the Lim River	3,71
Strengthening tourism offering	3,71
Ensuring safe routes to high schools	3,79
Traffic calming in 29. novembar and Polimska streets	3,83
Reconstruction of 21 July Square	3,96
Reactivation of the bus station	3,98
Revitalization of Lim Park	4,00
Introduction of traffic calming zones near primary schools	4,10
Improvement of pedestrian infrastructure in streets	4,13

The graph below shows the projects ranked by their weighted score.



7.3 Cost estimation and funding strategy

Effective implementation of IAP requires a clear understanding of costs and funding strategies. Below is a detailed cost breakdown for each project. This section outlines estimated financial requirements and timeframes to ensure timely and successful completion. The total estimated cost for all integrated actions is EUR 10,250,000.

Integrated Action	Total Cost (EUR)	Timeframe
1. Reactivation of the bus station	1,000,000	1–3 years
2. Introduction of local bus routes	100,000 / year	5 years
3. Improving safety at the intersection on the road to Kolašin and Andrijević	200,000	3 years
4. Traffic calming in 29. novembar and Polimska streets	50,000	2 years
5. Construction of a cycling path along the Lim River	400,000	3 years
6. Revitalization of Lim Park	300,000	3 years
7. Beautification of micro-locations in urban and rural areas	50,000	3 years
8. Promotion of sustainable mobility	50,000 (10,000/year)	5 years
9. Improvement of pedestrian infrastructure in streets	150,000 (50,000/year)	3 years
10. Lim embankment rehabilitation	4,020,000	5 years
11. Introduction of traffic calming zones near primary schools and kindergartens	90,000	2 years
12. Ensuring safe routes to high schools	40,000	2 years
13. Strengthening tourism offering	100,000	2 years
14. Revitalization of the Jasikovac Forest Park	300,000	3 years
15. Reconstruction of 21 July Square	2,000,000	5 years
16. Construction of a parking garage	1,000,000	3 years
Grand Total Estimated Cost		EUR 10,250,000

Funding mechanisms

This IAP focuses on identifying a broad spectrum of potential funding mechanisms, thus maximizing the opportunities for implementation and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the planned actions. By exploring a variety of financing options, including international programmes, donor contributions, partnerships with financial institutions, and national and local budgetary allocations, we aim to create a resilient financial framework. The following sections detail the diverse funding mechanisms that will be pursued to bring the objectives of this action plan to fruition.

EU programmes

European Territorial Cooperation programmes
Urban Innovative Actions
LIFE Programme
Horizon Europe

Pre-accession and post-accession mechanisms

IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance)
European Regional Development Fund
Cohesion Fund
Just Transition Fund
Creative Europe

Donor funds:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Agence Française de Développement (AFD)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
UNECE
UN Habitat
UN Road Safety Fund

Financial institutions

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
European Investment Bank
World Bank
Development Bank of Montenegro

Local/national funding mechanisms:

Local budget
Capital Budget of Montenegro
Eco Fund

Funding table:

Action	Estimated budget (€)	Recommended funding sources	Rationale
IA 1. Bus station reactivation	1,000,000	State capital budget, municipal budget, IPA III	Acts as an urban mobility hub; aligns with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (sustainable transport)
IA 2. Local bus routes	100,000 / year	Municipal budget, IPA III	Promotes rural-urban connectivity and accessibility access, reduces depopulation of rural areas, supports SDG 11 (sustainable cities)
IA 3. BA-KL Intersection safety upgrade	200,000	State capital budget, UN Road Safety Fund	Improves road safety at a critical junction
IA 4. Urban traffic calming	50,000	Municipal budget, EU-funded programmes, UN Road Safety Fund	Enhances road safety in the urban core, improves conditions for active mobility and promotes emissions reduction
IA 5. Lim River cycling path	400,000	Municipal budget, EU-funded programmes (e.g. LIFE), Eco-Fund	Promotes active mobility, health and emissions reduction; boosts the town's tourism offering and attractiveness
IA 6. Lim Park revitalization	300,000	Municipal budget, IPA III, LIFE Programme, Eco-Fund	Promotes welcoming public spaces, public health, urban biodiversity and climate adaptation
IA 7. Micro-location beautification	50,000	Municipal budget, EU-funded programmes, Eco-Fund	Low-cost enhancement of public spaces and the environment
IA 8. Sustainable mobility promotion	10,000/year	Municipal budget, EU-funded programmes	Easy to implement and effective awareness campaigns to promote mobility shift, especially active travel
IA 9. Pedestrian infrastructure improvement	50,000/year	Municipal budget, state capital budget, IPA III	Improves walkability and promotes accessibility, inclusion and safety
IA 10. Lim embankment rehabilitation	4,020,000	State capital budget, World Bank	Enables flood control and land stabilization, while providing recreational opportunities
IA 11. Primary school traffic calming zones	90,000	State capital budget	Improves children's safety and promotes safe routes to schools

IA 12. Safe routes to high schools	40,000	State capital budget, IPA III, municipal budget	Improves children's safety and promotes safe routes to schools
IA 13. Strengthening tourism offering	100,000	Municipal budget, EU-funded programmes (esp. Interreg & CBC), IPARD	Promotes Berane as an attractive and distinctive tourism destination
IA 14. Jasikovac Park revitalization	300,000	State capital budget, municipal budget, EU-funded programmes (e.g. Creative Europe)	Ensures heritage conservation and protection from deterioration, while promoting local cultural heritage and supporting tourism development
IA 15. Parking garage construction	1,000,000	Municipal budget	Aims to improve communal order and optimize public space utilization by relocating street parking
IA 16. 21 July Square reconstruction	2,000,000	State capital budget, municipal budget, EU funded programmes	Improves walkability and road safety, while reclaiming public space from cars and creating a more welcoming city centre

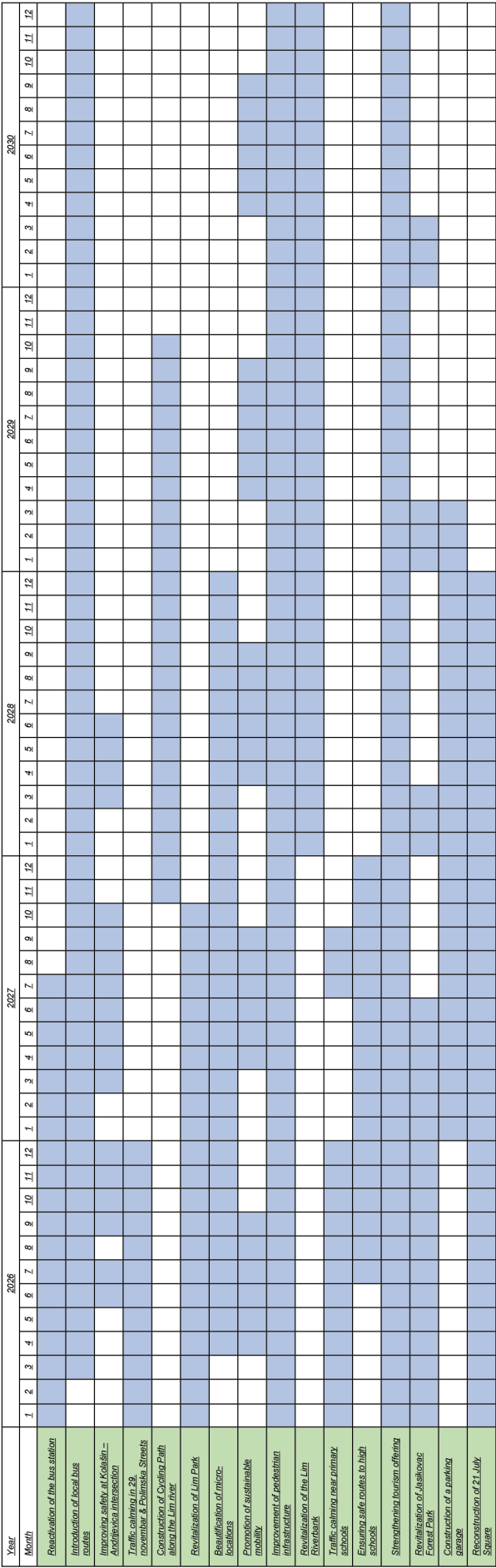
Integrated action packages

To maximize the impact of the proposed actions and improve their funding potential, complementary actions have been bundled into packages, grouped according to the four project themes. This approach will create synergies among the actions and help overcome implementation barriers, ensuring that the actions contribute effectively to the IAP strategic objectives.

Theme	Included Actions	Potential funding source
Sustainable Mobility	IA1, IA2, IA3, IA4, IA11, IA12, IA 15	IPA III – Sustainable Connectivity, Western Balkans Growth Plan, World Bank, UN Road Safety Fund
Green Community	IA5, IA6, IA10, IA14	IPA III, LIFE Programme, Creative Europe, Interreg & CBC, Eco Fund
Accessible and welcoming environment	IA7, IA 9, IA13, IA 16	IPA III, IPARD, LIFE Programme, Interreg & CBC
Good Governance	IA 8, IA13, IA 14	IPA III, Interreg & CBC

7.4 Overall timeline

Gantt chart



7.5 General Risk Assessment

Based on the risks identified within the individual integrated actions, a general risk assessment for this action plan highlights several key areas of potential concern that could impact the successful implementation and achievement of its objectives. These risks can be categorized as follows:

Financial viability:

Limited financial resources are the most prominent risk to the implementation of the IAP. Delays in securing funding or budget cuts could pose a threat to progress. Diversifying funding sources, including the state budget and EU projects, is crucial for mitigating this risk.

Coordination challenges:

Effective collaboration between the bodies of the Municipality of Berane, as well as cooperation with other stakeholders is vital for successful implementation. Clear roles, regular communication and resilient governance structures are a way to address these risks.

Technical challenges:

Actions involving infrastructure development may face technical feasibility issues, including land acquisition through expropriation and complex engineering requirements. The possibility of unsuccessful tenders also presents a risk to project timelines and procurement processes. Early-stage studies and expert consultations can help minimize such risks.

Stakeholder engagement:

Some actions depend on community support and stakeholder participation to a large extent. Resistance to change or insufficient engagement could reduce the plan's impact. Public awareness campaigns and participatory planning processes are essential for fostering support.

Environmental and regulatory risks:

Projects affecting natural resources, such as the Lim Riverbank or Lim Park, must comply with environmental regulations. Non-compliance could lead to delays or legal challenges. Early environmental assessments are therefore essential.

By addressing these risks proactively, the plan can achieve its goals effectively, benefiting the citizens and enhancing sustainable development.

An overview of the identified risks for each integrated action is outlined in the table below.

Integrated Action	Title	Risks
IA 1	Reactivation of the bus station	Lack of financial resources
IA 2	Introduction of local bus routes	Insufficient funds, political instability, low transport provider interest
IA 3	Improving safety at the intersection on the road to Kolašin and Andrijević	Lack of financial resources
IA 4	Traffic calming in 29. novembar and Polimska streets	Resistance to change, traditional transport planning practices
IA 5	Construction of a cycling path along the Lim River	Land use planning issues, financial constraints
IA 6	Revitalization of Lim Park	Lack of financial resources
IA 7	Beautification of micro-locations	Funding shortages
IA 8	Sustainable mobility promotion	Political instability, lack of human resources
IA 9	Improvement of pedestrian infrastructure in streets	Land acquisition challenges, technical infeasibility
IA 10	Lim embankment rehabilitation	Cost overruns, unsuccessful tenders
IA 11	Introduction of traffic calming zones near primary schools	Coordination issues, funding shortages
IA 12	Ensuring safe routes to high schools	Coordination challenges, financial constraints
IA 13	Strengthening tourism offering	Low awareness of Berane's tourism potential
IA 14	Revitalization of the Jasikovac Forest Park	Limited resources, insufficient community engagement
IA 15	Construction of a Parking Garage	Limited resources
IA 16	Reconstruction of 21 July Square	Limited resources, insufficient community engagement

7.6 Indicators

This section outlines the key indicators and timeline established for each action identified. To measure progress and assess the impact of these actions, a specific indicator has been selected for each. As previously noted, every action is linked to one or more of the ECONNECTING project's core themes: promoting sustainable mobility, establishing green communities, creating an accessible and welcoming environment for both residents and visitors, and ensuring good governance. The table below details these indicators, presenting their baseline value for 2024 and the targeted achievement level for 2030, thus providing a clear timeline for monitoring and evaluating success.

ECONNECTING Theme	Action	Indicator	Value 2024	Target 2030
Sustainable mobility Accessible and welcoming environment	Reactivation of the bus station	Bus station status	Bus station closed	Bus station fully operational
Sustainable mobility Accessible and welcoming environment	Introduction of local bus routes	Number of local bus lines	0	2
Sustainable mobility	Improving safety at the intersection on the road to Kolašin and Andrijevića	Number of road accidents with serious injuries or fatalities	?	0
Sustainable mobility	Traffic calming in 29. novembar and Polimska streets	Number of traffic calming measures implemented	0	10
Sustainable mobility	Construction of a cycling path along the Lim River	Number of kilometres of cycling infrastructure built along the Lim river	0	2
Green communities Accessible and welcoming environment	Revitalization of Lim Park	Reconstruction of the park	Park in its original state	Park fully reconstructed and equipped
Green communities	Beautification of micro-locations in urban and rural areas	Number of micro-locations (pocket parks) created	0	5
Sustainable mobility	Promotion of sustainable mobility	Number of activities during European Mobility Week	0	3 every year
Accessible and welcoming environment Sustainable mobility	Improvement of pedestrian infrastructure in streets	Number of new sidewalk curb ramps implemented	0	20
		Number of metres of sidewalks constructed or reconstructed	0	2000
Green communities	Revitalization of the Lim Riverbank	Number of public beaches on the Lim river revitalized	0	1
Sustainable mobility	Introduction of traffic calming zones near primary schools and kindergartens	Number of primary school zones established with accompanying measures	0	3
Sustainable mobility	Ensuring safe routes to high schools	Number of secondary school zones established with accompanying measures	0	2
Accessible and welcoming environment Good governance	Strengthening tourism offering	Tourism organization website operational	No website	Website fully operational
Green communities Good governance	Revitalization of the Jasikovac Forest Park	Jasikovac Monument Park revitalized	No conservation measures implemented	Fully conserved and equipped
Sustainable mobility Accessible and welcoming environment	Construction of a Parking Garage	Number of parking spaces in a public garage in the city centre	0	100
Accessible and welcoming environment Sustainable mobility	Reconstruction of 21 July Square	Number of square meters of 21 July Square Pedestrianized	0	1800

Communication and engagement strategy

Effective communication is essential throughout all stages of the IAP implementation, as the success of each action is contingent on proactive engagement with the public and stakeholders. Continuous and transparent communication will keep citizens informed of progress, ensuring broader support and creating ownership of transformative changes shaping their community. This two-way dialogue allows stakeholders to provide constructive feedback for fine-tuning the actions, while demonstrating to the wider public how the plan concretely improves their quality of life. For example, pedestrianizing 21 July Square requires clear and careful explanation of the benefits of reclaiming public space, as this will enhance understanding and acceptance. Conversely, if actions are not communicated well and in a timely manner, there is a risk of resistance among the public and/or stakeholders, reducing the sustainability and transformative potential of an action.

To ensure good communication and engagement, the following strategic principles should be applied:

Engage early: Initiate dialogue with affected citizens and stakeholders from the earliest planning stages, addressing potential concerns and negative reactions, recognizing that initial resistance is a normal part of change.

Communicate benefits clearly: Explain the advantages of each measure clearly and honestly, with a special focus on direct benefits for vulnerable groups, such as children and persons with disabilities.

Visualize the future: Use visualizations, such as renders of planned interventions, to build understanding and create early engagement.

Mitigate negative impacts: Identify potential negative impacts of actions and propose solutions to minimize disruption during implementation.

Keep the public informed: Provide regular updates to the public about the progress of each action's implementation through various channels, such as the institutional website, social media and local media (e.g. Radio Berane, Berane Online)

Conduct information and visibility campaigns: promote integrated actions in engaging ways and find creative ways to assist residents with any novelties (e.g. teaching how to use a public transport platforms)

Conduct information and visibility campaigns: Promote the integrated actions through engaging, easy-to-understand communication. Use creative approaches to help residents adapt to new changes – for example, providing simple guides or on navigate new mobility services.

Create ownership: Empower citizens to take ownership of projects by involving them directly in the implementation process, inviting them to contribute ideas and participate creatively in activities (e.g. tree planting in Lim Park or joint revitalization of micro-locations)

Build strategic partnerships: Establish collaboration with key community stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, schools, sports clubs and the media, to co-implement specific actions.

Engage local influencers: Identify and partner with local influencers and community leaders to help promote the actions and their benefits.

Make use of digital tools: Improve and promote digital platforms like 'System 48', enabling citizens to easily report urban issues and follow solutions provided by competent authorities.

Promote results: Organize public events to celebrate results with the community.

Ensure accountability: Provide an annual update on the IAP's implementation status to the local parliament to enhance transparency and maintain political support.

Digitalize reporting on KPIs: Develop a digital dashboard to reflect current implementation status and track progress on KPIs, making it accessible to stakeholders and the public.

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