



Final Report

Integrated Action Plan

Hannut



LE CHAMP
DES POSSIBLES

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Introduction

URBACT is a cooperation programme that enables European cities to exchange experiences, ideas, and good practices related to urban development through thematic and transnational networks.

The purpose of these networks is to jointly design collective responses to shared challenges, while adapting the proposed solutions to each city's local specificities.

URBACT offers three types of networks for cities across the European Union wishing to exchange ideas and develop integrated local urban policies with the support of peers, local stakeholders, and URBACT experts:

- Action Planning Networks: aimed at producing an integrated action plan around a shared theme, enabling innovative solutions through collaborative work among European partners.
- Good Practice Transfer Networks: designed to build a transfer plan based on an approved good practice developed by a municipality.
- Innovation Transfer Networks: focused on developing a financing plan for a set of innovative actions originating from the European Urban Initiative.

In summary, these networks help understand a practice, adapt it to local challenges, and reuse it effectively.

In addition, the value of the URBACT programme lies in the methodology it proposes.

The URBACT method is based on three key pillars:

- Integration across all dimensions of cooperation (vertical and horizontal);
- Participation through citizen engagement and multi-level dialogue;
- Action learning, fostered through peer-to-peer work.

To help practitioners understand and apply the URBACT method, several tools are provided:

- The Toolbox, which brings together a set of guidelines, methods, explanations, and templates to support municipalities in designing and implementing integrated actions;
- The Knowledge Hub, which gathers knowledge, ideas, analyses, and initiatives launched by URBACT networks across all urban themes.

More specifically, the UR Impact project in which the City of Hannut participated focuses on the social impact of urban regeneration.

Section – U.R. Impact

U.R. Impact – Prioritising Social Impact in Urban Regeneration

U.R. Impact, co-funded by the European URBACT IV programme, is led by the Municipality of Cinisello Balsamo. Its main objective is to develop an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) enabling the evaluation of the social impact of urban revitalisation initiatives.

By emphasising social impact and community engagement, this project seeks to rethink urban renewal actions. This involves reorienting interventions so that they place citizens' well-being—addressing social, economic, and environmental needs—at the heart of transformation processes.

Additionally, by fostering a stronger sense of belonging and encouraging civic participation, the initiative aims to reinforce community involvement throughout these processes.

SECTION 1 — CONTEXT, NEEDS AND VISION

1.1. Urban Context and Key Challenges

Hannut, a town of 17,500 inhabitants, historically developed around retail commerce and long served as a regional attraction point, located at the intersection of two major road axes in Wallonia.

However, the city is now facing a *“negative situation”* in which retail activity is no longer the dominant option, as reflected in a commercial vacancy rate reaching 15% at the beginning of 2024.

This decline is driven by changes in consumer behaviour:

- the rise of e-commerce,
- remote working,
- the ageing population and “silver economy”,
- and the growth of the second-hand market.

This situation creates a sense of urgency: new uses must be found and developed in the city centre to preserve its attractiveness and vitality.

1.2. Existing Strategies and Participatory Contributions

The Integrated Action Plan aligns with three major existing strategies:

- the Urban Renovation Plan;
- the Wallonia Cycling Plan, aiming to connect all 17 villages to the city centre;
- the Transversal Strategic Plan, focused on attractiveness and quality of life,
- and the Municipal commercial development plan.

The participatory process, involving the Urban Local Group (ULG), enabled stakeholders to define priorities such as:

- more convivial public spaces,
 - additional green areas,
 - improved connectivity,
 - and the creation of a new economic and cultural hub.
-

1.3. Overall Vision and the Integration Challenge

The vision is for Hannut to become a dynamic regional town, recognised for its quality of life, slow tourism, and cultural opportunities — a benchmark for small towns.

The project “Le Champ des Possibles” is considered a foundational societal project, built on economic attractiveness and social innovation.

The main challenge lies in organising and reconciling the diverse expectations of stakeholders — investors seeking profitability, retailers seeking customers, cultural actors requesting a performance hall, and citizens demanding pleasant green spaces — into a coherent and integrated strategy.

1.4. Visual Overview: Theory of Change

The following documents illustrate the Theory of Change, which served as the starting point for developing the integrated action plan.

It begins with an exploration of the potential of the long-awaited multipurpose hall project:

It quickly becomes clear that this project can become a major lever for regional attractiveness and support for city-centre commerce.

The URBACT UR Impact methodology enables the full potential of this ambition to be deployed.

SECTION 2 — OVERALL LOGIC AND INTEGRATED APPROACH

2.1. Ambitious and Revised S.M.A.R.T Objectives

To achieve deeper transformation than initially anticipated, the objectives have been strengthened to become more specific, measurable, and demanding, in response to the challenges identified.

The needs of the City of Hannut are now clearly defined — as are the assets the city can offer.

The search for private partners to finance the project is underway. A first round of partner consultations was organised during the summer of 2025.

Potential investors will be met again in autumn 2025 to prepare the development of the specifications in early 2026. The partner will be selected by the end of 2026.

Initial S.M.A.R.T Objectives vs. More Ambitious Objectives

S1 – Infrastructure & Economy

- Initial objective: Start construction of a multipurpose centre + library + cultural centre + housing by 2028.
- Ambitious objective: Deliver the multipurpose complex (Business Centre, Cultural Centre, Library, Housing) by Q4 2030, and attract at least 5 new non-commercial businesses and 20 FTE to the city centre by 2032.

S2 – Mobility & Connectivity

- Initial objective: Create a pedestrian/cycling path crossing the city by 2027.
- Ambitious objective: Complete and activate the soft mobility network connecting the 17 villages to the city centre and the new hub by Q4 2027, leading to a 15% increase in pedestrian/cycling traffic between the complex and the historic centre by 2028.

S3 – Commercial Vitality & Engagement

- Initial objective: Involve 50% of retailers in the communication of major events.
- Ambitious objective: Achieve continuous participation from 50% of city-centre retailers (measured semi-annually) in promotional and cultural actions that reinforce the “Hannut Destination City” brand by 2028.

S4 – Public Spaces

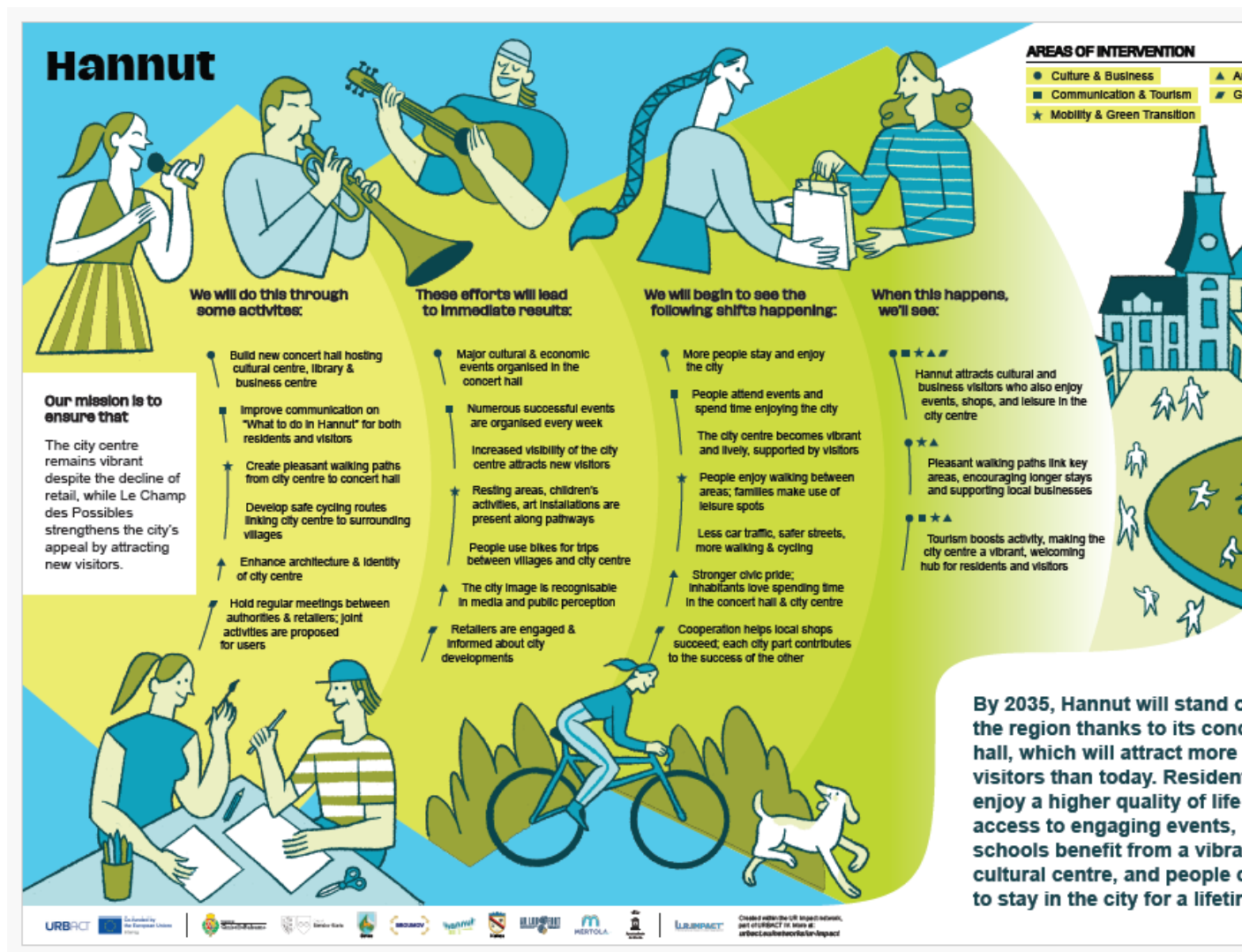
- Initial objective: Develop public spaces in the city centre.
- Ambitious objective: Improve public spaces, organise temporary events there, and enhance pedestrian comfort, particularly toward the Champ des Possibles.

S5 – Attractiveness

- Initial objective: Strengthen the attractiveness of the city centre.
- Ambitious objective: Position Hannut as a destination city by reducing the commercial vacancy rate from 15% to below 10%, and increasing the average visit duration by 20% through the renovation and activation of key public spaces by 2029.

2.2. Integrated Areas of Intervention

Theory of change in one glance :



The plan focuses on six interdependent areas:

1. Culture & Business

Using the multipurpose complex as a primary lever for attracting investors and national/international artists.

2. Mobility & Green Transition

Soft mobility connecting all 17 villages; integration of green infrastructure in the city centre.

3. Communication

Targeting external audiences (beyond postal code 4280), notably through LinkedIn.

4. Tourism

Formalising Hannut's tourism strategy and installing infrastructure such as electrical equipment in parks.

5. Architecture

Ensuring high-quality architectural standards, with the complex reflecting the city's identity (dynamism, efficiency, friendliness).

6. Governance

Continuing the participatory process inspired by the URBACT methodology and ensuring strong public–private cooperation.

2.3. Defined Actions (Summary Tables)

The plan presents detailed tables outlining:

- Areas of intervention
- Actions to be implemented
- Expected results
- Anticipated impacts
- Lead stakeholders
- Timeline
- Funding sources
- Monitoring indicators
- Risk mitigation

Link with S.M.A.R.T objectives

Professional Optimised Table

Legend

- **Lead Actor** = Main responsible body
- **Monitoring** = Monitoring indicators
- **Data Source** = Who provides / holds the data
- **Risk Mitigation** = Measures ensuring feasibility
- **SG** = SMART Goal reference

1. Business & Culture

Action	Expected Results	Impact	Lead Actor	Timeline	Funding	Monitoring	Data Source	Risk Mitigation	SG
Define partner needs	Define city needs; enable investor discussions	Align vision with stakeholder expectations	City of Hannut (Municipal Executive)	Q4 2025	N/A	Executive meeting minutes	City of Hannut	Biannual follow-up; PST integration	S1
Second round of investor meetings	Identify serious candidates	Clarify project through partner selection	City of Hannut	Q4 2025	N/A	Meeting records	City of Hannut	Council evaluation; monitoring committee	S1
Involve cultural partners	Ensure multipurpose uses	Reassure cultural stakeholders	City of Hannut	2025–2027	N/A	Needs validated in specs	City of Hannut	Cultural Advisory Council	S1

2. Communication Outside 4280

Action	Expected Results	Impact	Lead Actor	Timeline	Funding	Monitoring	Data Source	Risk Mitigation	SG
Customer Weekend participation	Promote Hannut beyond 4280	Strengthen destination branding	City Centre Mgmt	Oct 2025	€25,000	Committee review	Visitor data + retailer feedback	Bi-monthly meetings	S5
Enhance signage at Covered Market	Identify POIs; extend visitor stay	Boost city-centre attractiveness	City of Hannut	H1 2026	€5,000	No. of signs installed	Economic Affairs	Intervention approval	S4
LED event information	Link Champ des Possibles & centre	Systematic zone connection	City of Hannut	Jun 2026	€750/yr	Footfall data	City of Hannut	PST	S5
Flyers for market visitors	Strengthen zone linkage	Systematic connection	City + Centre Mgmt	Dec 2025	€500	Footfall data	City of Hannut	Mgmt Office records	S5
Public info via Plazas (Summer–Winter)	Promote activities in Hannut	Increase attendance in both zones	City Centre Mgmt	Dec 2025	N/A	Footfall data	City of Hannut	Mgmt Office records	S5
Reach non-resident workers	Transmit resident pride	Strengthen community tie-in	City of Hannut	H1 2026	€1,000	Event attendance	City of Hannut	PST	S5
Virtual Shopping Days	Position Hannut as dynamic city	Enhance shopping destination image	City Centre Mgmt	Nov 2025	N/A	Footfall + stores involved	Centre Mgmt	Mgmt Office records	S3

3. Mobility & Public Space Development

Action	Expected Results	Impact	Lead Actor	Timeline	Funding	Monitoring	Risk Mitigation	SG
Cycling–pedestrian links	Multiply access routes	Channel flows to city centre	Walloon Region + Hannut	Dec 2026	Regional budgets	Km of new tracks	PST	S2
Expand mural circuit	Add murals to art route	Improve pedestrian experience	Cultural Centre	2025	Centre budget	No. of murals	Cultural Council	S4
Path by athletics track	Connect users to Grand-Place	Encourage trips to city centre	City of Hannut	2027	City budget	Satisfaction surveys	Mgmt Office	S4

4. Tourism

Action	Expected Results	Impact	Lead Actor	Timeline	Funding	Monitoring	Risk Mitigation	SG
Promote cycling–pedestrian network	Bring guests to centre	Strengthen destination image	Tourism Office	Q1 2026	N/A	No. of publications	Tourism Office	Action Plan
Promote murals	Encourage city tours	Improve visitor experience	Tourism Office	Q1 2026	N/A	No. of publications	Tourism Office	Action Plan
Temporary events at Parc Hallette	Attract visitors to key space	Make park a must-see	Tourism + Centre Mgmt	2026	€15,000	No. of events	Tourism + Mgmt	Dual action plans
Electrify Parc Hallette	Expand event options	Year-round attractiveness	City of Hannut	2028	€25,000	Equipment installation	Budget 2028	S4
Install benches	Improve comfort	Promote soft mobility	City of Hannut	2026	€7,500	No. of benches	PST	S4

5. Architecture

Action	Expected Results	Impact	Lead Actor	Timeline	Monitoring	Risk Mitigation	SG
Specify architectural quality in specs	Reflect dynamism	Ensure recognisable identity	City of Hannut	Q4 2026	Inclusion in specs	URBACT committee	S4

6. Governance

Action	Expected Results	Impact	Lead Actor	Timeline	Monitoring	Data Source / Mitigation	SG
Extend URBACT monitoring committee	Make business centre an attractiveness lever	Stakeholder ownership	City of Hannut	2026–2027	PST indicators	Cultural Advisory Council	S1
Dialogue on public/private hall use	Align public & private interests	Daily/evening use of venue	City of Hannut	Q1 2027	Partner selection	Cultural Advisory Council	S1

Action	Expected Results	Impact	Lead Actor	Timeline	Monitoring	Data Source / Mitigation	SG
Inform retailers of progress	Make retailers project allies	Win-win strategy	City + Centre Mgmt	2026–2028	Meeting minutes	Centre Mgmt records	S3
Participation in Formactions	Support retailers' digital development	Strengthen shopping destination	City + Centre Mgmt	Nov 2025 & Jun 2026	No. of supported stores	Forem evaluation	S5

SECTION 3 — ACTION PLAN DETAILS

3.1. Priority Actions

To ensure the success of the project, the following actions are considered decisive.

3.1.1. Selection of the Private Partner

January – August 2025:

First meetings with investors who expressed interest.

September – November 2025:

Second round of interviews to confirm investor interest.

January – June 2026:

Development of the specifications.

July – December 2026:

Selection of the partner.

Cost: None

Monitoring indicator:

- Number of interviews in round 1 and round 2
- Justification of interest
- Concrete collaboration proposals

Risk mitigation:

- Maintaining dialogue
- Regular follow-ups

- Addressing questions raised by both parties

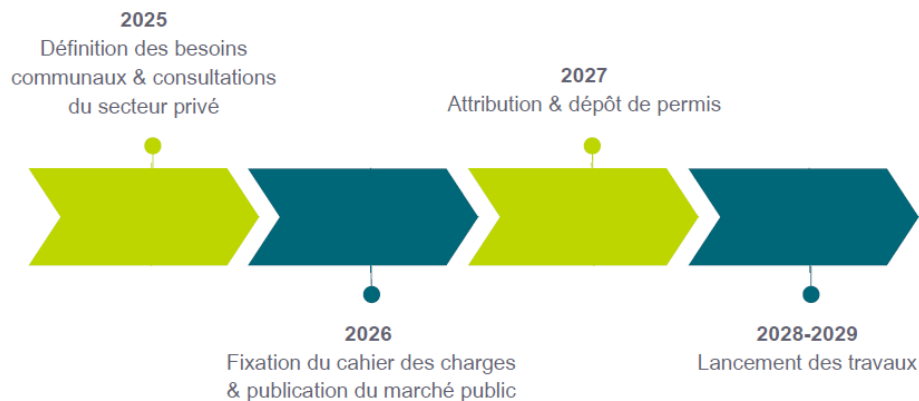
Expected result:

Define the needs of the City of Hannut to enable discussions with investors and identify the final partner.

Impact:

Concretise the project's vision through the selection of the private partner.

TIMELINE



3.1.2. Encouraging Visitor Movement Between the Champ des Possibles, the City Centre, and the Grand-Place

Actions:

- Use of *town criers* during 5–7 December to inform the public about activities organised in the three sites
- Distribution of flyers promoting the activities scheduled across the three zones throughout December

Cost: €6,000 (URBACT funding)

Monitoring indicators:

- Analysis of attendance data held by the City of Hannut

Risk mitigation:

- Fully planned action
- Contractually confirmed tasks

Expected result:
Identify points of interest.

Impact:
Establish Hannut as a destination city and increase the duration of visits to the city centre.

3.1.4. Pedestrian Pathway Development

November – December 2025:
Temporary winter decoration in Parc de la Halette.

Spring 2026:
New summer-style temporary
activation in Parc de la Halette.

Spring 2026:
Installation of signage between the
city centre and the Champ des
Possibles, including within Parc de la Halette.

Spring 2026:
Satisfaction analysis of the pedestrian path along the athletics track — an
alternative to rue de Landen for connecting the Grand-Place to the Champ des
Possibles.



Cost: €10,000 (City of

Monitoring indicators:

- Footfall data for the involved in these

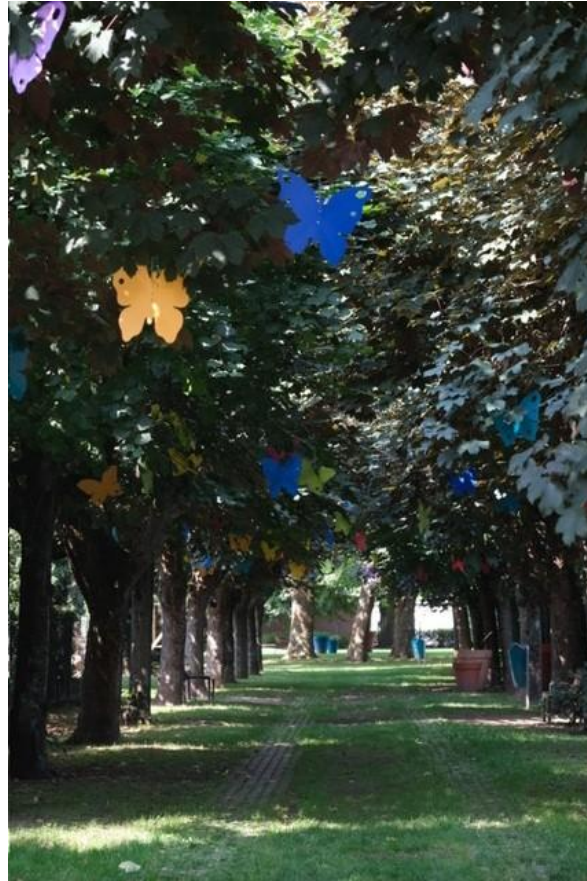
Risk mitigation:

- Inclusion of the in the 2026 action

Expected result:
visitors toward various
interest.

Impact:
Strengthen Hannut's
as a destination city.

The whole plan will have a
+- 15 millions euros for the public sector in situ. The private amount will
depend on the private partner and its definite project.



Hannut)

streets
actions

project
plan

Guide
points of

position

cost of

Conclusion – Summary

Hannut: From Commercial Decline to a “Field of Possibilities”

The City of Hannut, dynamic and home to approximately 18,000 residents, long thrived thanks to its markets and local shops.

However, the 21st century brought new challenges: changing consumption habits, remote working, and the rise of e-commerce.

The result: a 15% commercial vacancy rate in 2024.

Faced with this turning point, Hannut chose to reinvent its future through participation in the URBACT IV – UR Impact network.

At the heart of this transformation lies the Champ des Possibles, a bold complex combining a library, cultural centre, performance hall, business incubator, and housing.

More than a building, it represents a collective vision aiming to reconnect residents, places, and opportunities in the historic core of the city.

To bring this vision to life, the city developed an integrated strategy structured around six priority axes, including mobility and the green transition.

By 2030, a soft mobility network will connect all 17 villages to the city centre, fostering encounters and sustainable travel.



The Urban Local Group (ULG)—made up of citizens, associations, and public authorities—co-constructed this strategy using the Theory of Change and the expertise of European partners.

Their participatory approach inspired experiments such as the *Little Thumb Stones* (butterflies or picture boards), designed to make public spaces more attractive.

Communication efforts, co-funded by the Department of Tourism, will showcase progress through brochures and short videos, illustrating how the project mobilises local resources and partnerships.

Beyond URBACT, the Economic Affairs Department will lead implementation, supported by a task force derived from the ULG.

The plan will be included in the upcoming PST, ensuring six years of continuity.

Stakeholder participation will remain organised and structured:

- monthly or quarterly meetings with aldermen and local partners,
- annual meetings with the Region.

Beyond URBACT, the Economic Affairs Department will lead implementation, supported by a task force derived from the ULG.

The plan will be included in the upcoming PST, ensuring six years of continuity.

Stakeholder participation will remain organised and structured:

- monthly or quarterly meetings with aldermen and local partners,
- annual meetings with the Region.

Progress will be monitored using indicators such as visit frequency and the sense of belonging and pride, reflecting Hannut's central ambitions: to improve daily well-being and revive a shared collective identity.

The Economic Affairs Department is confirmed as the lead implementation entity, supported by a task force derived from the ULG. Crucially, the plan will be included in the upcoming Transversal Strategic Plan (PST), ensuring six years of continuity.

The ongoing role of the Urban Local Group is addressed, the monitoring committee will continue beyond Urbact funding and be integrated in this Strategic plan as in the next one, making sure the objectives are reached.

So far it is impossible to give an estimation of the cost of the whole project as the private part is not determined. We can only say local authorities are currently working on the budget to support it when it's time to do so. Different strategies are being analysed to hold on the public part of it in the coming years. Amounts estimated around 15 millions euros are in the city estimation made so far.

Section 2 provides funding per area. The overall funding strategy is not consolidated in one place within the main report, but potential sources are noted (Regional budgets, City budget, Tourism, URBACT). The plan specifically mentions the aim of mobilising all available funding.

A graphical timeline showing key faces (2025 Needs definition, 2026 Specification and public tender, 2027 Attribution and permit, 2028-2029 Launch of works) is included which serves the visual function of a high-level timeline.

The plan outlines the use of PST indicators and mentions monitoring indicators such as visit frequency and the measurement of belonging or pride via surveys and social media.

Risk mitigation is included in the detailed tables included in this document to keep them in mind all along the project. Monitoring dialogues and risk assessment are included in the guide.

Everybody in Hannut is looking forward to getting a little bit older to go in the Champ des Possibles.



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