GreenPlace Let’s do it together!

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

VILA NOVA DE POIARES

PORTUGAL

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1. Few words from our Political Leadership…

Since joining the URBACT IV Program in summer 2023, Vila Nova de Poiares has seized the opportunity to explore innovative strategies for revitalizing green spaces and tackling environmental issues. The "GreenPlace" project aims to transform a key green area between the city center and the industrial zone. This site, severely impacted by the 2017 fires and prone to flooding, presents both challenges and opportunities for creating a sustainable urban landscape.

Currently, the area consists of unmanaged forest and scattered agricultural plots suffering from invasive species and poor land management. Our goal is to convert this space into a vibrant park that will act as a buffer between residential and industrial areas, offering both environmental benefits and recreational spaces for residents and workers.

The project focuses on removing invasive vegetation, reforesting with native species, and designing pedestrian and cycling paths to encourage sustainable mobility. These efforts will integrate the park into daily life, promote eco-friendly practices, and improve the environment by mitigating pollution from nearby industries.

Collaboration is central to this project. Vila Nova de Poiares municipal departments - environmental, urban planning, civil protection, and sports - work together in a collective effort to revitalize the green zone. Community involvement through participatory budgeting ensures the park reflects local needs and aspirations.

The "GreenPlace" project also facilitates connections with other European cities facing similar challenges, enabling the exchange of best practices through the URBACT network. We draw inspiration from advanced projects in areas like water management, green infrastructure, and invasive species control while sharing our own innovative solutions.

This Integrated Action Plan serves as a flexible roadmap for ongoing development, adapting to new insights and challenges. We are enthusiastic about the project's potential to enhance the sustainability and vibrancy of Vila Nova de Poiares and look forward to providing updates as the project progresses.

Thank you for your interest and support!

2. GREENPLACE. Let's do it together!

GreenPlace is a URBACT network consisting of nine partners (including the Lead Partner) who aim at developing a set of activities for "recycling" unused urban areas, using social participation tools. The project takes into account not only the regional specificities and conditions of each of the partners but also introduces greenery as a key factor in limiting climate change in urban areas. It runs from July 2023 to December 2025.

It is led by the City of Wroclaw (Poland) and is composed of 8 project partners:

- Boulogne-sur-Mer Développment Côte d'Opale - France
- Bucharest Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association - Romania
- Limerick - Ireland
- Löbau - Germany
- Nitra - Slovakia
- Onda - Spain
- Quarto d'Altino - Italy
- **Vila Nova de Poiares - Portugal**

3. Why an Integrated Action Plan?

A URBACT Integrated Action Plan (IAP) is a key element of the URBACT methodology. It is a city-level output that defines actions to be implemented within the city in order to respond to a specific urban policy challenge - reflecting the lessons learned from local stakeholders, transnational partners and the testing of actions at local level.

IAPs thus provide both a focal point and end goal of the action planning journey that cities undertake within their URBACT Action Planning Network (APN). IAPs help to ensure that both local-level discussions (within the URBACT Local Group) and transnational exchange (between the network partners) have a practical focus on planning a coherent set of actions to address the local policy challenge in each participating city, embedding an integrated and participative approach.

IAPs are future oriented setting out the actions that cities will implement beyond the life cycle of the URBACT network. For this reason, each IAP not only sets out what the city intends to do on its specific topic, but also has a strong implementation focus, for example through the identification of specific funding opportunities, governance structures and timelines for how the actions will be implemented and monitored.

The IAP links with the overall URBACT Action Planning Cycle.

4. Context, Needs and Vision

4.1. Context

The climate crisis and the ecological transition represent some of the greatest challenges faced by local communities across Europe today. Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns, the growing frequency of extreme weather events, and the degradation of natural ecosystems are placing increasing pressure on territories and on the capacity of municipalities to respond effectively.

The Municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares, located in the Central Region of Portugal and part of the Intermunicipality Community of the Coimbra Region (CIM-RC), is a territory that, due to its topography, land use, and geographical position, experiences the consequences of this climatic instability in a particularly severe way. The combination of prolonged droughts, intense rainfall events, and recurrent forest fires poses a direct threat to environmental balance, population safety, and local economic activity.

At the same time, Vila Nova de Poiares faces the typical challenges of a municipality situated between urban and rural environments: pressures on land use, agricultural abandonment, forest fragmentation, and the need to reconcile industrial activity with the protection of natural resources.

In this context, the GreenPlace, Vila Nova de Poiares Project emerges as an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) developed within the framework of the URBACT programme, under the GreenPlace Network, which brings together European cities committed to green transition and ecological regeneration. The project's main goal is to strengthen local climate resilience through sustainable management of water resources, enhancement of biodiversity, and the creation of multifunctional urban green infrastructure that serves simultaneously as an ecological buffer, public space, and connector between city and nature.

The wildfires of 2017, which devastated large parts of the municipal territory, marked a tragic but transformative moment. These events exposed the ecological and social vulnerability of Vila Nova de Poiares, a municipality prone to biodiversity loss, soil erosion, and infrastructure damage. The GreenPlace project was conceived as a strategic response to that reality, proposing a comprehensive requalification of the transition zone between the urban core and the industrial area, a site of significant ecological and strategic value that had become degraded and underused.

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) presents a multidimensional and integrated vision, bringing together environmental, urban, social, and educational dimensions to promote a sustainable transformation of the territory. The ambition is not only to mitigate environmental impacts, but also to create new opportunities for local development, providing the population with more sustainable, healthy, and inclusive living conditions, while reinforcing the ecological identity of Vila Nova de Poiares as a municipality committed to Europe's green future.

The elaboration of this plan followed a participatory and co-creation process, involving the main local stakeholders: The Municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares, educational institutions (from primary schools to universities), environmental and cultural associations, industrial sector companies, non-governmental organizations, and citizen volunteers. This collaborative methodology, inspired by the URBACT Local Group (ULG) model, ensured that GreenPlace was not designed as an imposed project, but rather as a collective process shared, inclusive, and aligned with the real needs of the community.

The plan was developed between 2023 and 2025, within the URBACT GreenPlace network, and is designed for progressive implementation until 2030, in close alignment with local and regional planning instruments namely the Municipal Master Plan (PDM), the Municipal Climate Adaptation Plan, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In financial terms, the GreenPlace IAP is supported by a diversified funding strategy combining European and national instruments, including the Centro 2030 Regional Programme, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the Next Generation EU mechanism. This approach ensures the feasibility of priority actions and long-term sustainability.

Ultimately, GreenPlace Vila Nova de Poiares is more than an environmental rehabilitation project, it is a vision for the future: a model of shared governance, ecological education, and regenerative urban transformation. It places the environment at the heart of local development strategy, and embodies the motto “Let’s do it together!”, symbolizing the collective commitment to a greener, more resilient, and human-centred territory.

5. City Profile

5.1. General Characterization

Vila Nova de Poiares is located in the district of Coimbra, in the Central Region of Portugal, covering an area of approximately 85 km² and home to around 7,000 inhabitants distributed across four parishes. The territory displays a landscape predominantly forested and agroforestry-based, interspersed with river valleys and small urban areas, creating a clear gradient between the rural hinterland and the municipal urban core.
Its proximity to Coimbra (about 25 km) and connection to major regional road networks reinforce the municipality's strategic role as an urban–rural interface, facilitating commuter flows, logistics, and the circulation of goods and services. This location enables Vila Nova de Poiares to benefit from regional synergies, particularly in access to specialized services, higher education, healthcare, and supply chains.
Functionally, the territory integrates three complementary components:

- a compact urban core with administrative, commercial, and service functions;
- the Industrial Zone of Vila Nova de Poiares, acting as a driver of employment and investment;
- a continuous agroforestry landscape that structures the territory and supports key ecosystem services (water regulation, thermal control, and carbon sequestration).

Demographically, the municipality shows a stable but aging population, characteristic of low-density regions. This reinforces the need for policies to attract and retain young residents, enhance public spaces, and ensure proximity access to facilities and green areas, priorities that align directly with the objectives of the GreenPlace Project.

5.2. Territorial and Environmental Structure

The GreenPlace intervention area is located at the transition between the consolidated urban fabric and the industrial zone, covering roughly 6 hectares of land with high ecological sensitivity. The area forms a heterogeneous environmental mosaic composed of:

- mixed forest stands and riparian vegetation corridors;
- agricultural parcels, including olive groves and small crop fields;
- watercourses the Ribeira de Poiares and the Ribeiro de S. Miguel which converge downstream before joining the Mondego River.

This natural structure plays several essential roles:

- acting as an ecological and drainage corridor, enhancing habitat connectivity;
- serving as a buffer zone between residential and industrial uses, reducing noise, dust, and urban heat;
- providing a diffuse flood retention area, helping absorb heavy rainfall and mitigating runoff peaks.

However, the site faces multiple environmental pressures, including invasive species (*Acacia sp.*, *Arundo donax*, *Robinia pseudoacacia*), sedimentation and blockages in watercourses, erosion on slopes, and abandoned farmland. Seasonal flooding and fire risk are also present due to continuous vegetation cover and combustible biomass.
The GreenPlace strategy for this area focuses on:

- hydrological management and ecological restoration, including channel cleaning, construction of retention ponds, and reinforcement of riparian vegetation;
- control of invasive species and planting of native species to stabilize soils and enhance biodiversity;
- development of a multifunctional green infrastructure integrating pedestrian and cycling paths, recreational areas, and environmental education spaces, merging nature, leisure, soft mobility, and climate adaptation.

5.3. Economic and Social Structure

Vila Nova de Poiares maintains a strong community identity, supported by an active network of associations, local schools, and regular cultural programming focused on sustainability and civic participation. The industrial sector remains one of the main economic pillars, with specialization in wood and furniture, ceramics, light metalworking, and agri-food production, concentrated in the Industrial Zone of Vila Nova de Poiares. The area benefits from proximity to Coimbra for qualified labor, research and development partnerships, and supply chain integration.
Family farming and forestry continue to play an important role in the local economy and landscape management, contributing to short food supply chains, rural employment, and the preservation of ecosystem services. Meanwhile, the tertiary sector is expanding, with growth in local commerce, catering, nature tourism, and recreational services. The municipality's natural landscape and riverside areas offer strong potential for eco-tourism and active tourism, particularly through walking and cycling routes and environmental learning experiences opportunities the GreenPlace Project seeks to enhance.
Socially, the municipality faces challenges typical of small rural territories:

- population aging, requiring proximity-based social and healthcare services;
- pockets of long-term unemployment, which call for upskilling and green job creation;
- unequal access to services in more dispersed rural areas, to be mitigated through soft mobility networks and qualified public space.

Given the industrial zone's proximity to forested and riparian areas, sustainable urban planning solutions are essential: controlling diffuse emissions, managing storm water, introducing permeable pavements, tree shading, and ensuring safe pedestrian and cycling connections.
In this sense, the GreenPlace Project functions as a catalyst for the green transition, aligning economic competitiveness with environmental preservation and community well-being. It represents a territorial approach where the landscape becomes both an ecological infrastructure and a driver of local identity and resilience.

6. Challenges

The integrated and participatory diagnosis conducted under the GreenPlace initiative identified a set of structural challenges that constrain sustainable development in both the project area and the wider municipality. These challenges are organized into three main dimensions environmental, territorial, and governance recognizing the interdependence between ecological systems, urban dynamics, and models of public management.
The analysis reinforced the need for an integrated planning approach that combines nature-based solutions, public space requalification, and mechanisms for continuous civic participation. These challenges form the strategic foundation for the definition of the GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan's priority actions.

6.1. Environmental Challenges

Water resources management and flood risk

The watercourses crossing the intervention area show signs of siltation, blockages caused by debris, bank erosion, and proliferation of invasive species, reducing drainage capacity and increasing flood risk during heavy rainfall events. Creating natural retention and infiltration systems, supported by regular maintenance, is a top priority.

Soil erosion and land degradation

Slope fragility, combined with historic deforestation and unregulated land use, has led to physical instability and a decline in soil fertility. Surface erosion and sediment transport affect both water quality and the ecological balance of the area.

Biodiversity loss and invasive species pressure

Exotic invasive plants such as Acacia sp., Arundo donax, and Robinia pseudoacacia outcompete native vegetation, disrupting riparian ecosystems and reducing available habitats for wildlife and bird species. Ecological restoration requires systematic eradication efforts and the reintroduction of native species.

Climate change impacts
The growing intensity of heatwaves, prolonged droughts, and torrential rainfall heightens local ecological and social vulnerability. Implementing nature-based solutions to regulate microclimates, improve infiltration, and strengthen landscape resilience is increasingly urgent.

6.2. Governance Challenges

Fragmentation of the urban–rural green structure
The absence of continuous ecological corridors limits connectivity between urban green areas, farmland, and forest zones, reducing ecological performance and recreational value. The current green structure is discontinuous and lacks functionality.

Deficit of sustainable accessibility and active mobility
The area lacks safe and continuous pedestrian and cycling paths connecting the town center, the industrial zone, and natural spaces. This gap discourages daily use of the area and limits public access to leisure and environmental spaces.

Underqualified and low-attractiveness public space
The existing public space is poorly equipped, with a lack of street furniture, recreational areas, and educational facilities, reducing its potential as a place for community interaction, well-being, and outdoor activity.

Weak territorial identity
The area is currently perceived as a “transitional space” rather than a destination, reflecting the absence of a strong territorial narrative or visual identity. Developing a local ecological brand and cultural identity is essential to encourage community engagement and a sense of place.

6.3. Territorial Challenges

Interinstitutional and interdepartmental coordination
Effective implementation of the plan requires close coordination among municipal departments, environmental authorities, local associations, educational institutions, and the private sector. Building synergies across different competencies and political agendas is critical for success.

Participatory governance and shared management
Long-term sustainability depends on establishing permanent mechanisms for civic participation, ensuring collaborative governance that involves residents, technical experts, decision-makers, and institutional partners. The Urban Local Group (ULG) plays a key role in enabling this structure.

Technical, operational, and financial capacity
The phased implementation of structural interventions demands rigorous planning, optimization of municipal resources, and effective mobilization of structural funds. Strengthening local technical capacity through professional training, partnerships with universities, and Intermunicipality cooperation is vital to ensure the plan's continuity and effectiveness.

7. Methodology

The GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan (IAP) was developed in accordance with the URBACT methodology, which prioritizes collaborative work, cross-sectoral learning, and exchange of good practices among European cities. This approach enabled Vila Nova de Poiares to design an integrated strategy grounded in technical knowledge, empirical evidence, and active community participation.
The methodological process combined technical planning with local territorial intelligence, emphasizing the direct involvement of citizens, associations, experts, and policymakers through a model of co-creation and shared governance.

7.1. Participatory Approach

The participatory dimension formed the core structure of GreenPlace's methodology. The Municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares established an Urban Local Group (ULG), following URBACT's guidelines, bringing together a broad range of key local stakeholders:

- Municipal departments in the areas of environment, urban planning, public works, education, and culture;
- Educational institutions, from primary and secondary schools to the University of Coimbra and the Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra;
- Environmental and cultural associations, experienced in ecological volunteering, environmental education, and green space management;
- Local businesses, particularly those from the industrial area, interested in transitioning to more sustainable practices;
- Community representatives, including youth, seniors, and neighborhood leaders.

The ULG played a central role throughout the process, acting as a laboratory for ideas and dialogue, ensuring that the plan reflected the real needs and priorities of the community. Through regular meetings, thematic workshops, and public consultations, the group actively contributed to identifying key environmental and territorial challenges, defining priorities, and validating proposed actions.
This participatory approach fostered trust, transparency, and co-responsibility, transforming GreenPlace into a collective process of territorial transformation, rather than a purely technical planning exercise.

7.2. Process Stages

The development of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) took place between 2023 and 2025, through four sequential and complementary stages:

Shared Diagnosis (2023)

- Detailed collection of environmental, hydrological, urban, and social data;
- Preparation of thematic cartography covering land use, vegetation, and risk areas;
- Participatory field visits and collaborative mapping sessions;
- Identification of opportunities for ecological rehabilitation and areas of environmental conflict.

Co-Creation of Solutions (2024)

- Organization of participatory workshops using design thinking and collaborative planning tools;
- Definition of strategic objectives, priority action lines, and pilot actions;
- Integration of technical and community inputs through detailed Action Sheets.

Technical Design of Interventions (2024–2025)

- Preparation of execution projects corresponding to Phases 1, 2, and 3;
- Assessment of technical, environmental, and financial feasibility;
- Public consultation and interdepartmental validation within municipal services.

Institutional Validation and Coordination (2025)

- Final consolidation of the IAP document;
- Definition of implementation and monitoring mechanisms;
- Alignment with higher-level planning instruments (Municipal Master Plan, Regional Strategy, Climate Action Plan);
- Identification of funding sources (ERDF, Centro 2030, Recovery and Resilience Plan, Environmental Fund).

Each stage included communication and dissemination activities, reinforcing public awareness and environmental literacy among local residents.

7.3. Guiding Principles

The GreenPlace IAP was guided by a set of cross-cutting principles, ensuring coherence between environmental, social, and economic objectives:

- **Environmental sustainability:** all actions must contribute to the improvement of local ecosystems, promoting Nature-Based Solutions and minimizing environmental impact.
- **Territorial integration:** GreenPlace serves as a link between the urban core and the industrial area, reconciling ecological, productive, and urban functions.
- **Social inclusion and equity:** the project aims to benefit the entire community by creating accessible, safe, and educational public spaces, with attention to vulnerable groups.
- **Collaborative governance:** promotes shared responsibility among the municipality, partners, and citizens, ensuring long-term ownership and continuity.
- **Climate resilience:** each intervention contributes to reducing flood, fire, and heatwave risks, strengthening the territory's adaptive capacity.
- **Innovation and replicability:** GreenPlace is conceived as a pilot project with the potential to be replicated in other municipal or regional contexts.
- **Transparency and monitoring:** decisions and results are shared openly with the community, fostering accountability and open governance.

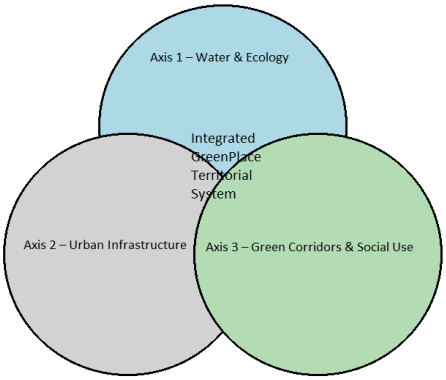
7.4. Tools and Methods Used

The methodology combined technical territorial diagnostic tools with participatory and collective learning methods, ensuring both scientific rigor and social legitimacy:

- Thematic mapping (land use, water resources, vegetation, biodiversity, and environmental risk);
- Use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for spatial analysis and scenario modelling;
- Structured interviews and questionnaires conducted with residents, municipal technicians, and institutional partners;
- Participatory workshops and "walkshops" (guided field visits) that enabled observation and discussion directly on-site;
- Collective prioritization sessions to assess the cost, impact, and feasibility of proposed actions;
- ULG plenary meetings for final validation and integration of contributions;
- Benchlearning exchanges with other URBACT cities to compare methodologies and outcomes.

This combination of approaches ensured technical accuracy, social legitimacy, and strategic alignment, turning GreenPlace into not only a physical project but also a process of institutional and community transformation.

8. Core Structure of the IAP



The GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan – Vila Nova de Poiares is structured around three interdependent Axes of Intervention, corresponding to the three technical implementation phases detailed in Phases 1, 2, and 3. Each axis addresses a set of challenges identified during the diagnostic stage, translating them into concrete actions with defined objectives, expected results, responsible entities, and implementation schedules. The articulation among the axes ensures an integrated, systemic, and scalable approach, maintaining coherence between the environmental, urban, and social dimensions of GreenPlace.

AXIS 1 – Water Resources Management and Ecological Rehabilitation (Phase 1)

This first axis represents the ecological foundation of the plan. It focuses on restoring and protecting the local hydrological system, which is essential for natural flow regulation, biodiversity enhancement, and landscape balance. Main Objective: Restore the ecological functioning of local watercourses and strengthen the territory's hydrological and ecological resilience.

Main Components:

- **Cleaning, unblocking, and ecological restoration of watercourses** (Ribeiro de S. Miguel and Ribeira de Poiares), including bank stabilization and waste removal;
- **Creation of an artificial lake with a sluice-gate system** for flow retention and regulation during periods of heavy rainfall, preventing downstream flooding;
- **Construction of retention basins and natural flood zones** functioning as buffer areas and aquifer recharge systems;
- **Control of invasive species** and **reinforcement of riparian vegetation** with native species (*Alnus glutinosa*, *Salix alba*, *Fraxinus angustifolia*, *Quercus robur*, among others);
- **Seeding of wet meadows ("Mix Várzea")** to stabilize soil, increase infiltration, and reduce erosion;
- **Creation of wetland areas** with ecological and educational functions, integrated into environmental learning paths.

Expected Results:

- ✓ Significant reduction of flood and soil erosion risks;
- ✓ Improvement in water quality and natural habitats;
- ✓ Increase in local biodiversity and ecological connectivity;
- ✓ Establishment of multifunctional natural infrastructures with environmental, educational, and recreational value.

This axis provides the ecological base upon which the remaining interventions build, ensuring environmental sustainability across all project components.

AXIS 2 – Qualification and Expansion of Sustainable Urban Infrastructures (Phase 2)

The second axis focuses on the urban and infrastructural dimension, targeting the Industrial Zone of Vila Nova de Poiares, a strategic area where economic activity meets environmental responsibility. Its goal is to transform a space of high anthropogenic pressure into a model of sustainable urban infrastructure, integrating low-impact design and improved public spaces.
Main Objective: Requalify the industrial area through principles of environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, and sustainable mobility.

Main Components:

- **Requalification and expansion of the existing parking area (10,051 m²)**, incorporating green spaces and pedestrian routes;
- Use of **permeable pavements** and **recycled materials**, promoting natural drainage of stormwater;
- **Creation of sidewalks and accessible paths** with tree shading, ensuring comfort and universal accessibility;
- **Installation of sustainable urban furniture** (benches, tables, bins, drinking fountains, bicycle racks) made from recycled or locally sourced materials;
- **Electric vehicle charging stations** and facilities supporting **active mobility** (bicycles and e-mobility);
- **Energy-efficient LED lighting** and **natural wooden bollards**, reducing energy consumption and light pollution;
- Creation of **urban green areas** with native species, reinforcing the urban ecological corridor.

Expected Results:

- ✓ Improved functionality and visual quality of public and industrial spaces;
- ✓ Promotion of active mobility and universal accessibility;
- ✓ Reduced ecological footprint of the industrial zone;
- ✓ Adoption of circular economy and energy efficiency practices;
- ✓ Harmonious integration between urban infrastructure and ecological structure.

Axis 2 represents the transition element between the natural ecological system (Axis 1) and the network of public and recreational spaces (Axis 3), bridging environmental sustainability and economic vitality.

AXIS 3 – Green Corridors and Urban Ecological Structure (Phase 3)

The third axis embodies the territorial and social expression of the GreenPlace vision. It is here that ecological rehabilitation and sustainable infrastructures are translated into tangible benefits for the community, creating accessible, attractive, and educational public spaces.
Main Objective: Establish a continuous network of urban green corridors connecting the town center, industrial area, and riparian ecosystems, fostering contact between people and nature.

Main Components:

- **Development of pedestrian and cycling routes** in compacted soil and stabilized gravel, connecting the different areas of GreenPlace;
- **Construction of playgrounds, picnic areas, and contemplative spaces**, promoting recreational and social uses;
- **Installation of educational panels, ecological signage, and interpretation equipment**;
- **Integration of recycled urban furniture** and **leisure equipment** within the landscape;
- **Reinforcement of native vegetation** and **ongoing control of invasive species**;
- **Functional integration** with the hydrological system (Axis 1) and urban infrastructures (Axis 2), creating a unified and resilient system.

Expected Results:

- ✓ Creation of a continuous urban green network, linking city, river, and forest;
- ✓ Landscape enhancement and strengthening of the ecological identity of Vila Nova de Poiares;
- ✓ Promotion of environmental education and community engagement;
- ✓ Increased climate resilience and improved quality of urban life;
- ✓ Consolidation of GreenPlace as a symbolic space of sustainability and active citizenship.

8.1. Logic of Intervention

GreenPlace follows an integrated and incremental logic of intervention, structured in interrelated levels of action:

Level	Description	Expected Results
Vision	Vila Nova de Poiares becomes a resilient, green, and connected territory, where nature, industry, and community coexist in sustainable balance.	A city better adapted to climate change, with improved environmental quality and social well-being.
Global Objective	Strengthen the urban green structure and protect natural resources, promoting environmental sustainability and social cohesion.	Creation of a replicable model of territorial regeneration applicable in other areas of the municipality.
Strategic Axes	Axis 1 – Water and biodiversity; Axis 2 – Public space and sustainable mobility; Axis 3 – Leisure, environmental education, and ecological connectivity.	Efficient water management, sustainable infrastructures, new recreational and educational spaces.
Priority Actions	A set of structural interventions in hydrological, urban, and landscape domains.	Physical and functional implementation of the GreenPlace concept.
Operational Results	Monitoring, institutional capacity-building, and community engagement.	Long-term sustainability and citizen ownership of public space.

This structure ensures that each axis contributes simultaneously to environmental, social, and economic objectives, promoting a participatory, scalable, and replicable model of territorial regeneration.

8.2. Structure of the Axes

The Intervention Axes of GreenPlace constitute the operational core of the Integrated Action Plan. Each axis responds to challenges identified during the diagnostic phase and translates the municipal territorial strategy into concrete and measurable projects that simultaneously strengthen climate resilience, environmental quality, and community well-being.
The three axes are not designed to function independently; rather, they operate as complementary layers of a continuous urban ecological structure, where natural, urban, and social systems interact toward a single goal reconnecting the city with nature.

AXIS 1 – Water Resources Management and Ecological Rehabilitation (Phase 1)

Context and Objectives: Based on *Phase 1 Technical Report*, this axis serves as the ecological foundation of GreenPlace. Its purpose is to restore the natural functioning of the hydrological system and to establish a balance between water drainage, biodiversity, and urban occupation. The recovery of watercourses and adjacent wetlands is considered essential for climate adaptation and for enhancing the environmental safety of the territory.
Technical Approach: This axis applies principles of bioengineering and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), replacing rigid, artificial infrastructure with multifunctional ecological systems capable of filtering pollutants, retaining stormwater, and improving infiltration capacity.

Main Components:

- **Cleaning, unblocking, and ecological rehabilitation** of the watercourses (Ribeiro de S. Miguel and Ribeira de Poiares), including gentle re-profiling of riverbanks and stabilization with riparian species;
- **Creation of an artificial lake** equipped with a sluice-gate system for regulating and retaining water flow, serving both as an ecological reservoir and an educational resource;
- **Construction of retention basins and natural flood zones** to buffer runoff peaks and reduce flood risk downstream;
- **Active control of invasive species** and **reforestation with native vegetation**, strengthening ecological continuity and natural regeneration capacity;
- **Seeding of wet meadow areas ("Mix Várzea")** to stabilize soil, enhance carbon sequestration, and promote infiltration;
- **Creation of educational wetlands**, integrated into interpretative trails focused on biodiversity and the water cycle.

Expected Results:

- ✓ Reduced flood and soil erosion risk through natural retention and bank stabilization;
- ✓ Improved water quality and self-purification capacity of the watercourses;
- ✓ Enhanced local biodiversity, including the return of native flora and bird species;
- ✓ Ecological and landscape valorization of the urban–industrial transition zone;
- ✓ Establishment of natural infrastructure with educational and recreational value, transforming the hydrological system into an open-air environmental classroom.

AXIS 2 – Qualification and Expansion of Sustainable Urban Infrastructures (Phase 2)

Context and Objectives: Based on *Phase 2 Technical Report*, this axis focuses on the Industrial Zone of Vila Nova de Poiares, consolidating the link between ecological rehabilitation and the productive fabric. Its objective is to promote urban sustainability and environmental efficiency through green mobility, sustainable drainage, and circular economy solutions.
Technical Approach: The intervention is guided by the concept of integrated green-grey infrastructure, where urban elements (pavements, furniture, lighting) are designed according to criteria of energy efficiency, permeability, and low environmental impact.

Main Components:

- **Requalification and expansion of the existing parking area (10,051 m²)**, reorganizing traffic flow and integrating shaded areas and vegetation;
- **Use of permeable pavements and recycled materials**, allowing infiltration and aquifer recharge;
- **Creation of pedestrian pathways and green corridors** linking the industrial area with ecological routes and the urban core;
- **Installation of sustainable and recycled urban furniture** (benches, tables, bins, fountains, bicycle stands) using certified wood and reclaimed materials;
- **Implementation of an electric vehicle charging station**, promoting clean energy and low-emission mobility;
- **Energy-efficient LED lighting** controlled by motion sensors, and **natural wooden bollards**, harmonized with the environment;
- **Landscape reconfiguration** with native and drought-resistant species, reducing maintenance needs and water consumption.

Expected Results:

- ✓ Improved functionality, image, and comfort of the public and industrial environment;
- ✓ Adoption of sustainable mobility standards and universal accessibility;

- ✓ Reduction of carbon and water footprints in the industrial area;
- ✓ Practical demonstration of circular economy solutions applied to urban infrastructure;
- ✓ Integration of productive spaces into the ecological network, positioning the industrial zone as a model of green transition.

AXIS 3 – Green Corridors and Urban Ecological Structure (Phase 3)

Context and Objectives: Based on *Phase 3 Technical Report*, this axis embodies the integrated vision of GreenPlace, transforming the intervention area into a continuous green network connecting the city, industrial zone, and riparian ecosystem. Axis 3 represents the social, educational, and recreational dimension of the plan, bringing to life the concept of a "city within nature."
Technical Approach: This axis applies principles of ecological urban planning, where green infrastructure is conceived as the structural backbone of territorial organization, providing multiple functions: ecological, recreational, educational, and climatic regulation.

Main Components:

- ❖ **Development of pedestrian and cycling routes** in compacted earth and stabilized gravel, ensuring physical continuity between Axes 1 and 2;
- ❖ **Construction of playgrounds, picnic areas, and contemplative spaces**, encouraging community and intergenerational use;
- ❖ **Installation of interpretative panels and ecological signage**, sharing information on biodiversity and environmental stewardship;
- ❖ **Integration of recycled urban furniture and leisure equipment**, fully harmonized with the landscape;
- ❖ **Reinforcement of native vegetation** and **continuous control of invasive species**, ensuring ecological resilience;
- ❖ **Physical and functional integration** with the hydrological system (Axis 1) and requalified urban spaces (Axis 2), establishing ecological and visual continuity.

Expected Results:

- ✓ Creation of a continuous network of urban green corridors, linking nature, industry, and residential areas;
- ✓ Increased public interaction with nature, encouraging healthy and sustainable lifestyles;
- ✓ Landscape enhancement and strengthening of Vila Nova de Poiares' ecological identity as the "green town of central Portugal";
- ✓ Improved climate resilience, reducing urban heat islands and improving natural ventilation;
- ✓ Enhanced quality of life, supporting civic engagement, eco-tourism, and social appropriation of public space.

8.3. Action Tables

The Action Tables form the operational instrument of the GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan, translating the strategic vision of the Municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares into concrete, time-bound, and monitorable projects.
Each action results from the integration of environmental and territorial diagnostics with the technical proposals detailed in the Phase 1, 2, and 3 Reports. The actions combine green and blue infrastructure measures, sustainable mobility, environmental education, and participatory governance, forming a coherent and integrated system of urban and ecological regeneration.
To ensure coherence and efficiency in implementation, the actions are organized into three Strategic Axes, each with specific objectives and complementary expected results.
In addition, the Plan establishes an annual monitoring framework, coordinated by the municipality in partnership with the Urban Local Group (ULG), ensuring the collection of environmental indicators (biodiversity, water quality, energy efficiency) and social indicators (public space usage, citizen participation, perception of well-being).

AXIS 1 – Water Resources Management and Ecological Rehabilitation

General Objective: restore the ecological balance of the hydrological system and increase the territory's resilience to floods, droughts, and wildfires.

Action	Description / Output	Expected Results	Responsible Entity	Time Frame
1.1 Cleaning and unblocking of watercourses	Maintenance work and removal of debris, rubble, and invasive vegetation along the banks and beds of the Ribeiro de S. Miguel and Ribeira de Poiares.	Increased flow capacity; reduced flood risk; improved water quality.	Municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares / Portuguese Environment Agency (APA)	2025–2026
1.2 Creation of artificial lake with flow control sluices	Construction of a lined artificial lake with wooden sluices for flow regulation and habitat creation.	Natural flow regulation; creation of new wetland ecosystem and environmental education space.	municipality / TUU Building Design Management	2025–2027
1.3 Strengthening of riparian gallery with native species	Planting of native trees and shrubs (*Alnus glutinosa, Salix alba, Quercus robur, Frangula alnus*, among others).	Enhanced biodiversity; bank stabilization; creation of ecological corridors.	municipality / Regional Nurseries / Local Schools	2025–2028
1.4 Control of invasive and exotic species	Mechanical and controlled chemical removal of *Acacia sp.*, *Arundo donax*, *Robinia pseudoacacia*.	Ecological restoration and balance of local flora.	municipality / Civil Protection Teams / Environmental Associations	2025–2028
1.5 Creation of retention basin and natural flood zones	Controlled expansion of the riverbed on the northern margin, enabling temporary retention and infiltration.	Reduction of flow peaks and flood mitigation; ecological enhancement of the area.	municipality / APA	2026–2027
1.6 Seeding of wet meadow ("Mix Várzea")	Application of specialized seed mix adapted to water-retentive soils.	Soil protection and improved infiltration; reinforcement of natural aesthetics.	municipality / Specialized Company	2026

AXIS 2 – Qualification and Expansion of Sustainable Urban Infrastructures

General Objective: requalify the industrial and public spaces, promoting sustainable mobility, energy efficiency, and circular economy practices.

Action	Description / Output	Expected Results	Responsible Entity	Time Frame
2.1 Requalification of existing parking area	Application of permeable pavement using recycled concrete grids with dual-level leveling.	Reduced surface runoff; increased durability and user comfort.	municipality / TUU Building Design Management	2025–2026
2.2 Expansion of parking area	Additional 5,898 m² of permeable pavement and sustainable infrastructure.	Increased capacity and uniform urban appearance.	municipality / Local Contractor	2026
2.3 Pedestrian paving and access paths	Construction of walkways in stabilized gravel with pozzolanic binder.	Improved accessibility and integration with green spaces.	municipality	2026

Action	Description / Output	Expected Results	Responsible Entity	Time Frame
2.4 Installation of recycled urban furniture	Benches, tables, bins, and drinking fountains made from 100% recycled plastic (Floema model).	Comfort and functionality with low environmental impact.	municipality / Certified Suppliers	2026
2.5 Electric vehicle charging station and bicycle parking	Installation of double charging point and metal bicycle stands.	Encouragement of electric and active mobility.	municipality / Energy Provider	2026
2.6 Efficient LED lighting	Relocation and maintenance of existing poles; installation of 50W LED luminaires.	Reduced energy consumption; improved nighttime safety.	municipality / EDP Distribution	2025–2026

AXIS 3 – Green Corridors and Urban Ecological Structure

General Objective: create a continuous network of multifunctional green spaces connecting nature, industry, and community, while promoting leisure, environmental education, and territorial cohesion.

Action	Description / Output	Expected Results	Responsible Entity	Time Frame
3.1 Creation of pedestrian and cycling paths	Construction of trails in compacted soil and stabilized gravel, with signage and associated furniture.	Promotion of active mobility and outdoor recreation.	municipality / TUU / Schools	2026–2027
3.2 Playgrounds and leisure zones	Installation of playgrounds with permeable EPDM flooring and inclusive equipment.	Safe recreational spaces integrated into the landscape.	municipality / Certified Suppliers	2026–2028
3.3 Picnic and contemplation areas	Tables, benches, and seating areas in recycled materials and treated wood.	Social and community spaces fostering social interaction.	municipality / Local Associations	2026–2028
3.4 Fitness trail and educational zones	Outdoor gym equipment, interpretative panels, and environmental education areas.	Promotion of health, knowledge, and contact with nature.	municipality / Schools / Local NGOs	2027
3.5 Ecological and informational signage	Engraved HPL panels and species identification signs.	Increased environmental literacy and ecological identity.	municipality / Educational Partners	2027
3.6 Reinforcement of native vegetation and control of invasives	Annual planting and maintenance of native species.	Ecological continuity and balance of the ecosystem.	municipality / Environmental Volunteers	2026–2030

This section consolidates the operational core of the GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan, demonstrating coherence between objectives, actions, and expected outcomes. Each action contributes to the overall vision of Vila Nova de Poiares as a resilient, green, and inclusive territory, aligned with the goals of the European Green Deal, EU Biodiversity Strategy, and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

9. Integrated Approach

The implementation of GreenPlace – Vila Nova de Poiares is based on a truly integrated approach, articulating environmental, social, economic, and institutional dimensions. More than a set of physical interventions, GreenPlace represents a cross-sectoral territorial regeneration strategy, aimed at transforming the community's relationship with its natural environment, while promoting social cohesion, local innovation, and environmental sustainability.
This integrated approach follows the guiding principles of the URBACT Programme and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land).
The plan is grounded on the idea that no dimension of sustainability operates in isolation: ecological transition requires coordination across policies, governance levels, and economic and social actors. Accordingly, GreenPlace adopts a multi-level governance model that combines technical planning, citizen participation, and institutional cooperation, ensuring coherence, continuity, and replicability.

9.1. Dimensions of Integration

The table below summarizes the main dimensions of integration adopted in the GreenPlace project, highlighting the expected impacts, existing challenges, and the measures implemented to address them:

Type of Integration	Expected Impact	Existing Challenge	How It Is Addressed
Stakeholder engagement	High – ensures legitimacy, diversity of perspectives, and long-term continuity.	Collaborative culture still in consolidation, with low participation beyond formal processes.	Establishment and active maintenance of the Urban Local Group (ULG) involving the municipality, private sector, schools, environmental NGOs, and citizens.
Multi-sectoral coordination	High – guarantees coherence between environmental, urban planning, mobility, and economic actions.	Institutional fragmentation and overlapping competences.	Implementation of an integrated governance structure, with regular interdepartmental meetings and shared technical information.

Type of Integration	Expected Impact	Existing Challenge	How It Is Addressed
Multi-level action	High – aligns local, regional, and European scales, maximizing funding synergies.	Need to harmonize instruments and timelines of different programmes.	Strategic alignment with the Centro 2030 Regional Programme, the European Green Deal, and the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (ENAAC 2030).
Strategic coherence	High – ensures that GreenPlace contributes to existing planning frameworks and goals.	Dispersion of sectoral plans and regulatory overlaps.	Integration with the Municipal Master Plan (PDM), Municipal Climate Action Plan, and Forest Fire Defense Plan.
Investment complementarity	High – optimizes resources by combining physical ("hard") and capacity-building ("soft") measures.	Fragmented funding and isolated project management.	Balance between green infrastructure investments and educational, awareness, and management initiatives.
Social and environmental integration	Medium-high – strengthens community cohesion and environmental awareness.	Limited engagement of residents outside the urban core.	Implementation of environmental education programmes, eco-volunteering, and community events within the GreenPlace framework.
Temporal integration	Medium – ensures continuity between phases and consistent evaluation mechanisms.	Risk of delays due to dependency on external funding.	Annual phasing and biannual progress reviews integrated into the project's monitoring system.
Territorial integration	Medium – creates the potential for replication in other areas of the municipality.	Initial focus limited to the pilot zone between the town and the industrial area.	Definition of GreenPlace as a pilot project for future replication in other riparian and forest zones of Vila Nova de Poiares.
Financial integration	High – ensures long-term financial sustainability and continuity of actions.	Multiplicity of funding sources and regulatory frameworks.	Development of a co-financing strategy combining ERDF, Centro 2030, Next Generation EU, municipal budget, and private partnerships.

9.2. Added Value of the Integrated Approach

The integrated nature of GreenPlace gives it a distinct added value compared to conventional sectoral projects. Rather than operating in isolation, the plan builds bridges between public policies, enhancing the effectiveness of interventions and preventing duplication of resources.
This integration allows the project to:

- **Generate synergies** among different areas (environment, mobility, education, local economy);
- **Strengthen shared governance**, ensuring social ownership of outcomes;
- **Promote financial efficiency**, through the combination of funding sources and programmes;
- **Ensure continuity** across phases and governance levels;
- **Position Vila Nova de Poiares** as a pilot territory for **Nature-Based Solutions** and **small-scale green city models** in central Portugal

10. Implementation

The implementation of the GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan (IAP) – Vila Nova de Poiares will take place between 2025 and 2030, through a phased and adaptive process ensuring coherence between strategic objectives, available financial resources, and local technical capacity.
The implementation structure is designed to guarantee participatory governance, operational efficiency, and financial sustainability, in alignment with the principles of the URBACT programme and the European Union Cohesion Policy.
The Municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares assumes the central coordinating and supervisory role, working in close cooperation with institutional and community partners represented in the Urban Local Group (ULG) — a participatory forum ensuring legitimacy, transparency, and public ownership of the project.
The implementation model is based on a multi-level structure, combining political leadership, technical management, citizen participation, and specialized support, as detailed below.

10.1. Implementation Structure

Level	Entity / Function	Main Responsibilities
Strategic Level	Municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares (Mayor's Office and Executive Council)	- Overall supervision of the Plan and definition of annual priorities; - Approval of investments and validation of contracts; - Coordination with regional and European funding programmes (Centro 2030, ERDF, Next Generation EU); - Institutional representation of the municipality before national and international partners.
Operational Level	Department of Public Works and Urban Planning / Department of Environment	- Technical and administrative coordination of interventions; - Urban and environmental licensing procedures; - Management of works, public tenders, and inspections; - Implementation of environmental monitoring and post-construction maintenance measures.
Participatory Level	Urban Local Group (ULG) – composed of the municipality, APA (Portuguese Environment Agency), schools, companies, environmental associations, and citizens	- Monitoring of project implementation and provision of consultative feedback; - Continuous input on local impacts and community needs; - Organization of communication, awareness, and environmental education activities; - Promotion of eco-volunteering and civic participation.
Specialized Technical Level	TUU Building Design Management (Design Team) and Local Contractors	- Preparation of detailed technical projects and specifications; - Technical support and quality control during implementation; - Field supervision and compliance review with environmental and safety standards;

Level	Entity / Function	Main Responsibilities
		- Transfer of technical know-how to municipal services.
Support and Communication Level	Municipal Communication and Environmental Education Office	- Public dissemination of GreenPlace activities; - Development of educational materials and awareness campaigns; - Organization of technical visits, workshops, and public events; - Management of social media, newsletters, and institutional communication.

10.2. Implementation Phases

The execution of GreenPlace is structured in three main phases, corresponding to the Strategic Axes of Intervention, with a progressive and interconnected timeline:

Phase	Period	Main Focus	Key Expected Results
Phase 1 – Ecological Rehabilitation and Water Management	2025–2027	Restoration of watercourses, control of invasive species, creation of artificial lake and wetland areas.	Improved water quality, increased biodiversity, flood mitigation, and establishment of natural habitats.
Phase 2 – Sustainable Infrastructures and Green Mobility	2026–2028	Requalification of parking area, construction of pedestrian paths, installation of LED lighting and recycled urban furniture.	Reduced carbon footprint, promotion of active mobility, and enhancement of urban image.
Phase 3 – Green Corridors and Urban Ecological Structure	2027–2030	Creation of pedestrian and cycling routes, playgrounds, leisure areas, and reinforcement of native vegetation.	Connection between nature and community, landscape valorization, and improved quality of life.

10.3. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

To ensure transparency and continuous improvement, a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system will be implemented, based on quantitative and qualitative indicators, including:

- **Environmental indicators:** water quality, local biodiversity levels, area of native vegetation, reduction of invasive species;
- **Social indicators:** number of participants in GreenPlace activities, community satisfaction levels, frequency of public space usage;
- **Economic indicators:** total investment mobilized, partnerships established, and maintenance costs;
- **Institutional indicators:** frequency of ULG meetings, number of participating entities, and publication of annual progress reports.

Monitoring will be coordinated by the Department of Environment and reported to both the Municipal Executive and the ULG, with biannual reviews and annual public reports summarizing results and lessons learned.

10.4. Financing and Sustainability

Implementation of the GreenPlace IAP will be supported through a mixed co-financing model, combining:

- European Structural and Investment Funds (ERDF);
- Centro 2030 Regional Programme;
- Recovery and Resilience Facility (Next Generation EU);
- Municipal budget allocations;
- Private partnerships and local sponsorships (companies, foundations, and local investors).

A long-term maintenance and sustainability strategy will be established, integrating local service contracts and involving schools and environmental associations in volunteer-based ecological monitoring and management activities.

10.5. Communication and Public Engagement

Communication is a key pillar of implementation, ensuring transparency, social ownership, and dissemination of results. The main actions include:

- Creation of a distinct GreenPlace visual identity (logo, graphic materials, and official website);
- Environmental education and school awareness campaigns;
- Annual public events such as “GreenPlace Day” and “Sustainability Week”;
- Participation in national and European city networks focused on green transition and climate resilience;
- Publication of progress reports, digital newsletters, and video updates accessible to the public.

11. Timeline (GANTT)

The implementation of the GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan – Vila Nova de Poiares is structured over a five-year horizon (2025–2030), organized by Strategic Axes and corresponding Priority Actions.
The temporal planning adopts a simplified Gantt model, adapted to annual periods, providing a clear visualization of the sequence and overlap of interventions, as well as their coherence across project phases. The timeline reflects the progressive and interdependent nature of GreenPlace where each stage builds upon the results of the previous one, creating a cumulative impact across ecological, social, and urban dimensions.
The scheduling was defined according to:

- The technical readiness and licensing stage of each project;
- Availability of European and national funding (ERDF, Centro 2030, Next Generation EU);
- Local implementation capacity and coordination among partners;
- Seasonal and ecological conditions for interventions (e.g., planting, seeding, invasive species control).

The timeline ensures a balanced distribution of financial and technical efforts, while maintaining continuity of ecological and social processes throughout the implementation period.

11.1. Overall Temporal Structure

AXIS / ACTION	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029–2030
AXIS 1 – Water Management and Ecological Rehabilitation					
1.1 Cleaning and unblocking of watercourses	●●	●			
1.2 Artificial lake and retention basins		●●	●●		
1.3 Riparian gallery (planting and maintenance)		●●	●	●	●
1.4 Control of invasive species	●	●●	●●	●	●
1.5 Wet meadow seeding		●			
AXIS 2 – Sustainable Urban Infrastructures					
2.1 Requalification and expansion of parking area	●	●●			
2.2 Pedestrian pavements and access paths		●●	●		
2.3 Urban furniture and LED lighting		●●	●		
2.4 Electric station and bicycle parking	●	●			
AXIS 3 – Green Corridors and Urban Ecological Structure					
3.1 Pedestrian and cycling routes		●	●●		
3.2 Playgrounds and leisure zones		●●	●●	●	
3.3 Picnic and contemplation areas		●	●●	●	
3.4 Fitness trail and educational zones			●●	●	●
3.5 Ecological signage			●	●●	
3.6 Reinforcement of native vegetation and annual control	●	●●	●●	●●	●●

Legend:

● = **Start / Technical and administrative preparation**

●● = **Main implementation / Construction and monitoring phase** *(Blank space) = maintenance, completion, or transition to subsequent phase*

11.2. Timeline Interpretation

The GreenPlace timeline was designed to integrate functional connections among axes, reflecting a logical progression of ecological and territorial regeneration:

- **AXIS 1 (2025–2027)** forms the **ecological foundation**, ensuring the stabilization of hydrological systems and the control of invasive species before creating new public spaces.
- **AXIS 2 (2025–2028)** focuses on **urban infrastructure and sustainable mobility**, ensuring that the transition zones between the urban core and the industrial area are requalified in an environmentally responsible manner.
- **AXIS 3 (2026–2030)** consolidates the system through **green corridors, leisure and educational areas**, and citizen engagement activities, promoting public use and community ownership of the rehabilitated areas.

The intentional overlap of phases (2026–2028) guarantees continuity between physical implementation and social activation of space, avoiding downtime and optimizing human and financial resources.

11.3. Operational Planning and Annual Monitoring

Each implementation year will include:

❖ **Review of the Action Plan**, based on ULG progress reports;

❖ **Technical and financial evaluation**, adjusting priorities according to funding and progress;

❖ **Update of performance indicators** (environmental, social, economic, and institutional);

❖ **Public follow-up sessions** and transparent communication of results to the community.

The Department of Environment and the Department of Urban Planning and Public Works will be responsible for the biannual update of the timeline, in coordination with ULG partners and the Municipal Executive.

12.Financing

12.1. Estimated Global Budget

The full implementation of the GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan (IAP) is projected to require an estimated investment of €1,250,000, distributed evenly across the three strategic axes, plus management and communication components.
This budget was developed based on the technical estimates contained in *Phases 1, 2, and 3*, and includes direct execution costs, supervision, initial maintenance, and monitoring.

AXIS	Estimated Cost (€)	Percentage
AXIS 1 – Water Management and Ecological Rehabilitation	520,000	41.6%
AXIS 2 – Sustainable Urban Infrastructures	370,000	29.6%
AXIS 3 – Green Corridors and Urban Ecological Structure	280,000	22.4%
Management, Monitoring, and Communication	80,000	6.4%
Total	**1,250,000 €**	**100%**

The largest share of the budget is allocated to Axis 1, reflecting its foundational role and the technical complexity of ecological and hydrological interventions. Axes 2 and 3 represent investments in sustainable mobility, public space improvements, and landscape requalification key to achieving visible and lasting social and environmental impacts.
The management and communication component ensures technical coordination, public awareness campaigns, and post-implementation maintenance, guaranteeing the plan's long-term sustainability.

12.2. Funding Sources

GreenPlace is based on a diversified co-financing model that combines municipal, regional, national, and European resources, leveraging complementary financial instruments to maximize impact and reduce dependency on single funding lines.

Funding Source	Instrument / Programme	Type of Action Funded
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	Centro 2030 Regional Programme	Green infrastructures, urban regeneration, and nature-based solutions.
Next Generation EU / RRP – Recovery and Resilience Plan	Component: "Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Mobility"	Electrical installations, LED lighting, and electric vehicle charging stations.
Municipal Budget	Municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares	Annual maintenance, technical management, and environmental education actions.
Private and Local Partnerships	Industrial companies, business associations, and foundations	Sponsorship of equipment, ecological signage, and environmental volunteering.
Complementary Funds	LIFE Programme / Environmental Fund / Erasmus+ Green	Biodiversity restoration, invasive species control, and environmental education projects.

This combination of sources reduces financial pressure on the municipal budget while ensuring full execution and long-term durability of GreenPlace initiatives.

12.3. Financial Strategy

The financial strategy of GreenPlace is built on four key operational principles:

- **Diversification of funding sources**, minimizing dependency and promoting synergy between European and national funds;
- **Priority to high-impact, low-maintenance actions**, ensuring cost-effectiveness and resilience over time;
- **Phased financial planning**, integrating contingency margins and flexibility to adjust to changing financial contexts;
- **Engagement of public and private partners**, fostering shared responsibility and direct co-financing of infrastructure and educational activities.

The municipality also intends to establish a Local Green Fund, ensuring continuity of monitoring and maintenance activities beyond European funding periods, involving schools, associations, and local companies in co-management.

13. Governance

The governance structure of GreenPlace is designed as a collaborative and multi-level model, combining political leadership, technical management, and community participation. This approach ensures transparency, efficiency, and shared responsibility, aligned with the principles of European good urban governance (vertical and horizontal coordination, participation, accountability, and cross-sectoral integration).

13.1. Governance Structure

The governance system is organized into three complementary levels – strategic, operational, and participatory ensuring consistent coordination, implementation, and public legitimacy throughout the process.

Level	Entity / Body	Main Function
Coordination Committee (Strategic Level)	Chaired by the Mayor of Vila Nova de Poiares, including the Deputy Mayors for Environment and Urban Planning, the Portuguese Environment Agency (APA), and representatives of the Intermunicipal Community of Coimbra Region (CIM RC).	- Approval of annual plans and progress reports; - Validation of budgets and funding applications; - Coordination with regional, national, and European programmes;- Definition of strategic and communication guidelines.
Urban Local Group – ULG (Participatory Level)	Composed of partner entities: schools, environmental associations, local companies, municipal technicians, NGOs, and citizens.	- Quarterly meetings for progress monitoring; - Proposals for improvement and adjustment of activities; - Coordination of awareness-raising and community engagement initiatives; - Acting as a bridge between citizens and local government, ensuring transparency and public ownership.
Technical Implementation Team (Operational Level)	Based within the Municipal Council, supported by TUU Building Design Management and local contractors.	- Execution of physical works and ecological interventions; - Supervision and quality control; - Coordination with contractors, suppliers, and partners; - Ensuring compliance with deadlines, environmental standards, and quality indicators.

13.2. Cross-Sectoral Coordination Functions

In addition to the three main levels, GreenPlace is supported by transversal coordination structures that enhance interdepartmental cooperation:

- **Municipal Office for Communication and Environmental Education** – responsible for dissemination, educational materials, and public outreach;
- **Department of Municipal Planning and Finance** – responsible for financial management, funding applications, and budget control;
- **Technical Advisory Network** (APA, ICNF, University of Coimbra) – providing scientific guidance and environmental monitoring support.

These entities meet semi-annually as a Technical Coordination Committee to assess progress, propose updates, and ensure coherence across actions and funding streams.

13.3. Principles of Good Governance

The GreenPlace governance system adheres to the following guiding principles:

- **Transparency and accountability**, through periodic publication of reports and open-access data;
- **Collaboration and co-decision**, valuing the diversity of local stakeholders and expertise;
- **Administrative efficiency**, promoting procedural simplification and digital management tools;
- **Institutional learning and innovation**, strengthening local government capacity and adaptability;
- **Social and territorial equity**, ensuring that project benefits reach all communities, including rural and peripheral areas.

14. Monitoring

14.1. Monitoring Structure

Monitoring is a core component of the GreenPlace Plan, ensuring transparency, effectiveness, and continuous learning. It allows the tracking of physical and financial progress, assessment of environmental and social impacts, and promotion of institutional and community learning.
The monitoring process will be coordinated by the Municipal Environmental Office of Vila Nova de Poiares, in collaboration with the Urban Local Group (ULG) and the Coordination Committee.
The system follows a multi-level and participatory approach, combining quantitative indicators with qualitative tools such as public perception surveys and narrative reports.

Main monitoring mechanisms:

- **Semi-annual reports** assessing physical progress, financial performance, and environmental outcomes;
- **Quarterly ULG meetings** for discussion, feedback collection, and recommendations for adjustments;
- **Annual public session** to present results and recognize good practices;
- **Digital transparency platform** hosted on the municipal website, displaying updated indicators, timelines, and project status.

This system ensures that GreenPlace remains dynamic, adaptive, and accountable, reinforcing both public trust and institutional credibility.

14.2. Monitoring Indicators

The monitoring framework is designed to ensure coherence between objectives, outputs, and impacts, allowing integrated evaluation of progress toward 2030 targets.

Indicator	Unit / 2030 Target	Monitoring Objective
Local biodiversity index	+25% increase in native species identified	Measure ecological recovery and effectiveness of planting and invasive control actions.
Permeable area created / rehabilitated	+20,000 m²	Evaluate contribution to flood mitigation, infiltration, and hydrological balance.
Number of GreenPlace space users	+2,000 users/year	Assess social impact, frequency, and community appropriation of new public spaces.
Reduction in energy consumption (lighting)	-40% by 2030	Monitor energy efficiency in public infrastructures and alignment with climate goals.
Number of active partnerships in ULG	≥10 entities	Evaluate inter-institutional collaboration and consolidation of collaborative governance.
Environmental education and awareness actions	≥6 per year	Track the community engagement and educational outreach efforts of the project.

These indicators will be complemented by user satisfaction surveys, annual comparative analyses, and on-site monitoring, ensuring a robust and participatory evaluation of results.

14.3. Correction and Learning Mechanisms

The GreenPlace monitoring process integrates a continuous learning system, allowing for adaptive management and proactive correction of deviations.

Main mechanisms:

- **Early warning system** – periodic technical reports identify potential delays, budget deviations, or environmental risks;
- **Extraordinary meetings of the Coordination Committee** – convened when necessary to redefine priorities, reschedule actions, or adjust financial allocations;
- **Annual revision of targets and indicators** – ensuring flexibility and adaptation to evolving climatic, financial, or institutional contexts;
- **Exchange of good practices** – sharing experiences and methodologies with other municipalities and URBACT networks to enhance knowledge transfer and policy innovation.

This approach transforms GreenPlace into a living, evolving process, capable of incorporating innovation and ensuring the sustainability and replicability of results over time.

15. Conclusion

The GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan – Vila Nova de Poiares represents a strategic and transformative vision for the municipality, aligning environmental sustainability, social cohesion, and urban innovation.
Grounded in ecological restoration and public space enhancement, GreenPlace turns a vulnerable and underused area into a model of ecological, economic, and social integration, fully aligned with the European Green Deal, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Municipal Climate Action Plan.
By combining hydrological rehabilitation, green infrastructure, sustainable mobility, and community participation, the project demonstrates that it is possible to unite environmental preservation with local development. More than a set of physical works, GreenPlace represents a cultural transformation: a new way of understanding and living the territory.
The plan embodies Vila Nova de Poiares' ambition to become a resilient, inclusive, and exemplary territory in the climate transition, generating tangible benefits for the environment, the local economy, and citizens' quality of life.
With a long-term vision and the guiding motto "Let's do it together!", GreenPlace reflects the collective strength of a community that believes the future is built together through cooperation, innovation, and environmental awareness.

16. Annexes

ANNEX I – Urban Local Group (ULG)

The Urban Local Group (ULG) was established by the Municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares in accordance with the URBACT methodology and played a central role throughout the development of the GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan.

The ULG functioned as a permanent platform for dialogue, co-creation, and shared decision-making, ensuring that the IAP reflects local needs, technical expertise, and community priorities. The group brought together a diverse range of stakeholders representing public administration, education, civil society, economic actors, and local communities.

ULG Composition

The Urban Local Group included representatives from:

- **Municipal departments**, including environment, urban planning, public works, education, culture, and civil protection;
- **Educational institutions**, from primary and secondary schools to higher education institutions, namely the University of Coimbra and the Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra;
- **Environmental and cultural associations**, with experience in ecological volunteering, environmental education, biodiversity protection, and green space management;
- **Local businesses**, particularly from the Industrial Zone of Vila Nova de Poiares, committed to sustainable practices and green transition;
- **Community representatives**, including youth groups, senior citizens, neighbourhood leaders, and informal civic initiatives.

Role and Contribution

Throughout the Action Planning process, the ULG contributed to:

- Identifying key environmental, territorial, and social challenges;
- Participating in field visits, collaborative mapping, and diagnostic activities;
- Co-defining the vision, strategic axes, and priority actions of the IAP;
- Validating technical proposals and implementation priorities;
- Supporting communication, dissemination, and local engagement activities.

The ULG ensured transparency, inclusiveness, and long-term ownership of the GreenPlace initiative, reinforcing the foundations for collaborative governance during implementation.

ANNEX II – List of Technical and Strategic Documents

The GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan is supported by a set of technical studies, project reports, and strategic reference documents that provided the analytical and operational basis for its development.

Technical Project Reports

- **Phase 1 – Water Resources Management and Ecological Rehabilitation**
  Technical report addressing hydrological systems, flood risk mitigation, ecological restoration, and Nature-Based Solutions.
- **Phase 2 – Qualification and Expansion of Sustainable Urban Infrastructures**
  Technical report focused on the requalification of the Industrial Zone, sustainable mobility, permeable pavements, urban furniture, and energy efficiency.
- **Phase 3 – Green Corridors and Urban Ecological Structure**
  Technical report detailing the design of green corridors, public spaces, recreational areas, and ecological connectivity.

Strategic and Planning Frameworks

- Municipal Master Plan (PDM) of Vila Nova de Poiares
- Regional Strategy for the Centro Region (Centro 2030)
- Municipal Climate Action Plan
- National Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation
- European Green Deal
- EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

These documents ensured strategic alignment, regulatory compliance, and technical robustness of the GreenPlace Integrated Action Plan.

ANNEX III – Abbreviations and Acronyms *(optional but recommended)*

Acronym	Meaning
IAP	Integrated Action Plan
ULG	Urban Local Group
NBS	Nature-Based Solutions
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
APA	Portuguese Environment Agency
CIM-RC	Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
EU	European Union