SUMMARY IAPs
VILANOVA I LA GELTRÚ

November 2025

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CITY PROFILE

Vilanova i la Geltrú, located **50 km southwest of Barcelona**, is a Mediterranean city with around 67,000 inhabitants.

Its strategic position, strong transport links (C-32 highway, railway, and proximity to Barcelona-El Prat Airport), and natural environment (beaches and the Garraf Massif) make it an attractive place to live and work. The city combines a port and maritime tradition, a diverse economy largely made up of **small and medium-sized enterprises**, and a **vibrant cultural scene**, with highlights such as the Vilanova Carnival.

The main economic sectors are **services (78.5% of jobs)**, including tourism, retail, and leisure, which are important but still need modernization and digitalization. The **industrial sector (15%)** remains significant, with activities linked to food processing, textiles, and emerging technologies.

The **Port of Vilanova** is a strategic asset, central to fishing, logistics, and maritime services, and a key driver in the city's ambition to strengthen the **Blue Economy** as a pillar of future growth.

At the same time, the local economy is increasingly shaped by the **digital and creative sectors**, driven by **Neàpolis**, the municipal innovation and entrepreneurship hub, and the **Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) campus**, which together provide strong potential to accelerate digital transformation.
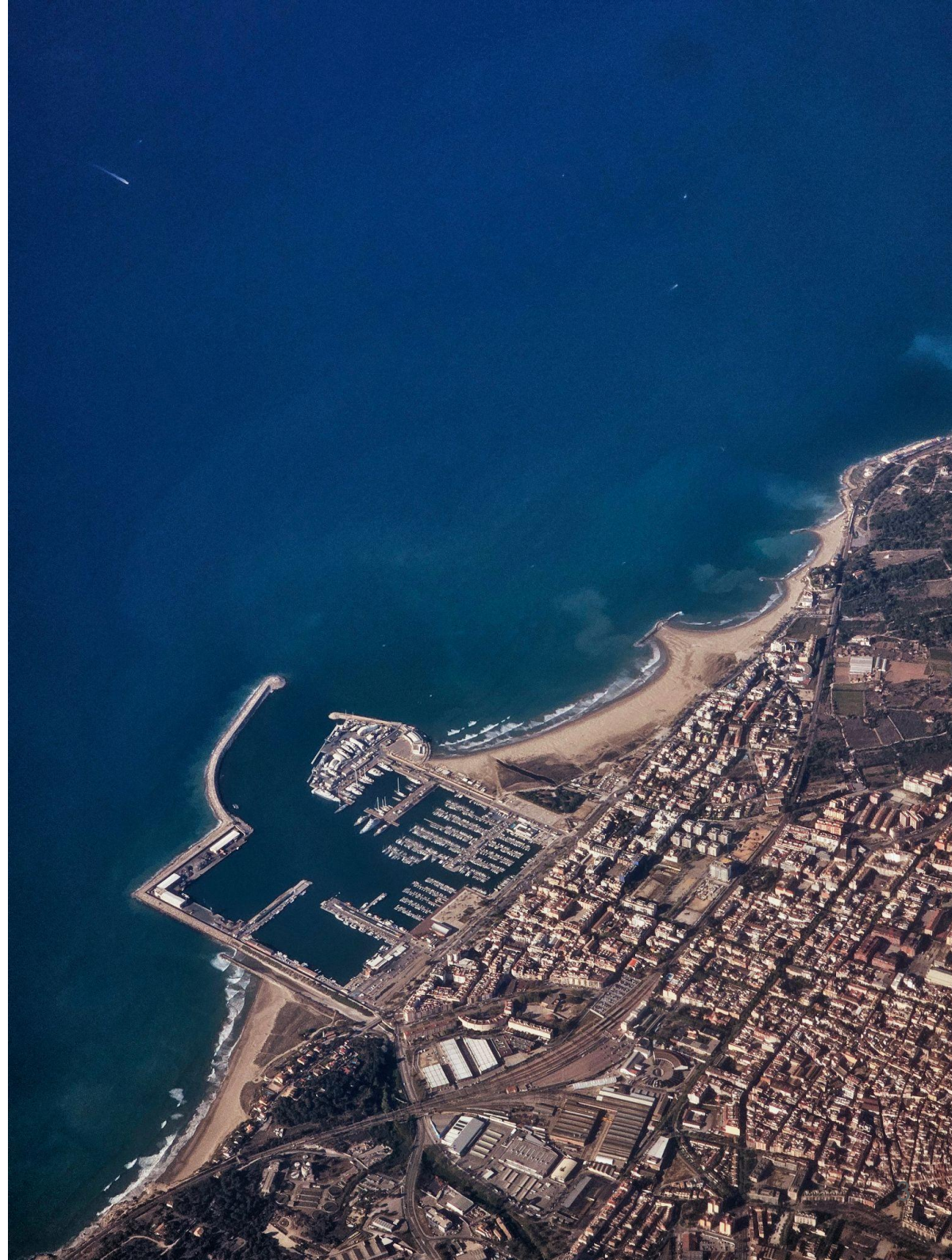
CHALLENGES

Vilanova faces several challenges that limit its ability to attract, develop, and retain digital talent. While broader structural issues, such as housing costs, also play a role, they fall outside the scope of this plan.

Therefore, the analysis focuses on the most relevant and actionable challenges within our area of influence, grouped into three main areas:

Stakeholder Coordination and Service Delivery

- **Fragmented ecosystem**
  There is no formal governance structure connecting the city's key actors, which results in a lack of collaboration, unaligned efforts, and inefficient talent development.
- **Weak feedback loops**
  Entrepreneurs often report confusion about where to find support, as services are perceived as generic and disconnected, which leads to low engagement with the local support system.

Digital Talent and Startups

- **Talent leakage to Barcelona**
  Many graduates relocate to Barcelona in search of better career prospects, as the local economy offers too few high-value digital jobs, creating a skills shortage and reducing competitiveness.
- **Education–industry mismatch**
  Curricula are not aligned with the practical digital skills demanded by companies, making it difficult for employers to hire qualified profiles.
- **Low youth engagement**
  Students show limited participation in innovation activities (e.g. Neàpolis) and lack awareness of opportunities, which weakens the entrepreneurial culture.
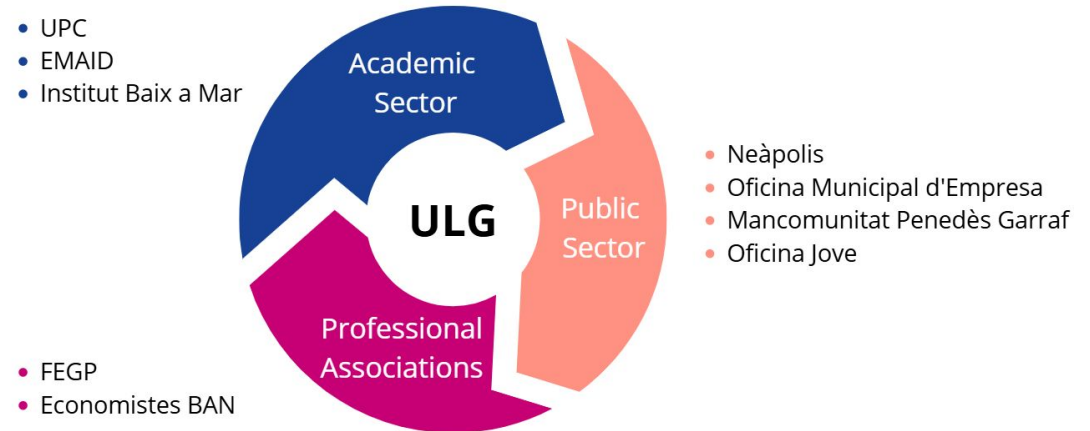
Neàpolis as an Innovation Hub

- **Outdated infrastructure**
  Neàpolis facilities do not meet the needs of digital startups, and its limited incubation capacity represents a missed opportunity to position the hub as a regional tech leader.
- **Weak institutional positioning**
  Neàpolis has an unclear mandate within the City Council, and fragmented strategies with limited funding have led to an underutilized innovation potential.
- **Low visibility and branding**
  Neàpolis suffers from poor recognition among local entrepreneurs and regional actors, and its weak narrative makes it difficult to attract startups, investors, and partners.

4

METHODOLOGY

The Urban Local Group (ULG) of Vilanova i la Geltrú was established within the URBACT programme to bring together key representatives from the public sector, academia, and business. In addition to these members, the IAP process will also actively engage citizens through workshops, focus groups, and other participatory activities, ensuring that proposed actions are relevant, inclusive, and well aligned with local needs.

The ULG's role is to guide the design and implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP), acting as a collaborative platform where stakeholders can define priorities, exchange knowledge, and shape a shared vision for the city's innovation and digital talent ecosystem.

- UPC
- EMAID
- Institut Baix a Mar

Academic Sector

ULG

Public Sector

- Neàpolis
- Oficina Municipal d'Empresa
- Mancomunitat Penedès Garraf
- Oficina Jove

Professional Associations

- FEGP
- Economistes BAN

Working process

The ULG has met regularly since 2023 through workshops, focus groups, and testing sessions. The methodology included:

- **Shared diagnosis** of challenges
- **Co-creation sessions** to define priorities and map actions.
- **Testing and feedback** from entrepreneurs, students, and local institutions.

Vision

Vilanova i la Geltrú becomes a thriving hub of digital talent, innovation, and entrepreneurship, with Neàpolis at the heart of a dynamic, sustainable, and connected ecosystem.

INTERVENTION LOGIC

Vilanova i la Geltrú is becoming a thriving hub of digital talent, innovation, and entrepreneurship, with Neàpolis at the heart of a dynamic, sustainable, and connected ecosystem.

Our Goals

Strengthen Stakeholder Cooperation and Coordination of Talent Initiatives

- Actor mapping
- Formal governance model
- Clear feedback channels
- Multi-level collaboration
- Joint pilot projects

Develop, attract, and empower digital talent to build a competitive workforce & a strong startup ecosystem

- Entrepreneurship pathway
- Bootcamps and incubation programs
- Mentoring and personalised support
- Education-business alignment

Consolidate Neàpolis into a High-Impact Innovation Hub

- Upgrade infrastructure
- Strong branding & visibility
- Enhanced services and staffing
- Clear institutional mandate
- Living Lab

ACTION TABLES

Specific objective Intervention AREA 1	Strengthen Stakeholder Cooperation and Coordination of Talent Initiatives			
Action	**Output**	**Intended outcome**	**Responsible organisation**	**Timescale**
1.1 Map key local stakeholders involved in talent development	A comprehensive and up-to-date map of public and private actors in the local talent ecosystem.	Improved visibility of key actors to enable more strategic and coordinated talent development.	Neàpolis, Area de Promoció econòmica- City Council	2026
1.2 Continuity of the Urban Local Group (ULG) with a new mandate to support the implementation and evolution of the local strategy	A stable and committed Urban Local Group with clear roles, regular meetings, and active participation from diverse local stakeholders	Improved alignment between talent development initiatives and local economic needs.	ULG	2026 - ongoing
1.3 Set up shared communication tools and digital collaboration channels	Implement digital platforms and protocols to facilitate smooth, transparent, and inclusive communication among stakeholders and with the wider community	Regular and effective internal and external communication channels.	ULG	2026 - ongoing
1.4 Measure the impact of coordination using shared performance indicators	Set of common KPIs and regular reporting on collaboration effectiveness.	Continuous improvement of stakeholder collaboration based on measurable results, leading to more effective and impactful actions.	Neàpolis, Area de Promoció econòmica- City Council,	2026 - ongoing
1.5 Launch joint pilot initiatives focused on talent development	At least one pilot initiative co-created and launched with active participation from multiple local stakeholders.	Strengthened cooperation and trust through co-designed, scalable talent actions.	ULG	2026 ongoing

ACTION TABLES

Specific objective / intervention AREA 2	Develop, attract, and empower digital talent to build a competitive workforce and a strong startup ecosystem.			
Action	**Output**	**Intended outcome**	**Responsible organisation**	**Timescale**
2.1 The Entrepreneur's Journey	Design and implement a service blueprint tailored to the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Vilanova i la Geltrú. This blueprint will connect and align existing initiatives and services to offer personalized, stage-appropriate support for entrepreneurs, through improved coordination among local actors.	· Entrepreneurs can easily access the right support at any stage of their journey. · Entrepreneurs feel more likely to succeed in launching and growing their ventures. · All local stakeholders collaborate effectively to identify and address the evolving needs of entrepreneurs through coordinated, complementary actions.	ULG	2026 - ongoing
2.2 Practical entrepreneurial courses for high school students	3 practical sessions about entrepreneurship with young students	· Increased interest in entrepreneurship among students. · Enhanced business and digital skills for future careers. · Stronger connections between students and the local startup ecosystem.	ULG	2026 - ongoing
2.3 Young students visit Neàpolis	3 visits / year	· Increased student awareness of entrepreneurship and innovation opportunities. ·Stronger engagement between young talent and Neàpolis. · Inspiration for students to consider startups as a career path.	Neàpolis	2025 - ongoing

ACTION TABLES

Specific objective / intervention AREA 2	Develop, attract, and empower digital talent to build a competitive workforce and a strong startup ecosystem.			
Action	**Output**	**Intended outcome**	**Responsible organisation**	**Timescale**
2.4 Entrepreneurship bootcamp (Acceleration phase - Disruptive Entrepreneurship Program)	1 boot camp / year 6 Early stage entrepreneurs/year	· Stronger entrepreneurial mindset among local talent. · Increased creation of new digital startups in Vilanova.	Neàpolis	2025 - ongoing
2.5 Creation of a structured incubation program with mentorship, training, and workspace. (Incubation phase - Disruptive Entrepreneurship Program)	5 startup / year	· Stronger startup ecosystem with early-stage companies receiving structured support. · Increased survival and growth rates of new businesses in Vilanova. · Enhanced collaboration between entrepreneurs, mentors, and investors	Neàpolis	2025 - ongoing
2.6 Facilitate access to finance. (Funding phase - Disruptive Entrepreneurship Program)	2 annual funding workshops and investor networking events.	· Increased access to capital for local startups, improving growth potential. · Stronger links between entrepreneurs, investors, and funding institutions. · A more sustainable and competitive digital economy in Vilanova.	Neàpolis City council: City projection FEGP, EconomistesBAN - Col·legi d'Economistes de Catalunya, UPC	2025 - ongoing
2.7 Talent connection program: Industry-academia partnerships	5 partnerships between universities, training centers, and local tech businesses	· A seamless transition from education to employment for students.	ULG	2025 - ongoing

ACTION TABLES

Specific objective / intervention AREA 3		Consolidate Neàpolis into a High-Impact Innovation Hub		
Action	**Output**	**Intended outcome**	**Responsible organisation**	**Timescale**
3.1 Neapolis rebranding	A corporate manual	· Stronger and more recognizable identity for Neàpolis as an innovation hub. · Increased attractiveness for startups, tech professionals, and investors.	Neàpolis	2026
3.2 Redesign Neàpolis website	Restructure and update Neapolis website	· Enhanced visibility and accessibility of Neàpolis' services and opportunities. · Improved user experience for entrepreneurs, businesses, and talent engaging with Neàpolis.	Neàpolis	2026
3.3 Create Communication plan and execute	Communication plan	· Clear and consistent messaging to position Neàpolis as a key player in the digital ecosystem. · More effective outreach to startups, investors, and innovation stakeholders.	Neàpolis	2026-ongoing
3.4 Social activities for the Neapolis community	2 working cooperative sessions / month between Neapolis companies	· Strengthened sense of community among startups, entrepreneurs, and tech professionals. · Increased collaboration and networking opportunities, fostering innovation.	Neàpolis	2026-ongoing
3.5 Adapt common spaces to community needs	Redesign and optimize co-working, meeting, and event spaces based on community feedback. Purchase and install necessary furniture and equipment.	· Improved functionality and attractiveness of Neàpolis as a collaborative and innovation-friendly space. · Increased usage of Neàpolis by startups, businesses, and digital professionals.	Neàpolis	2026-2027

ACTION TABLES

Specific objective / intervention AREA 3	Consolidate Neàpolis into a High-Impact Innovation Hub			
Action	**Output**	**Intended outcome**	**Responsible organisation**	**Timescale**
3.6 Add human resources to strengthen Neàpolis services	· Hire 2-3 key staff members (e.g., innovation manager, startup liaison, community coordinator). · Assign dedicated personnel to oversee business support, networking, and program development.	· Enhanced capacity to support startups, businesses, and digital professionals. · More structured and responsive services tailored to the needs of the innovation ecosystem.	Neàpolis	2025-2026
3.7 Identify entrepreneurial needs through surveys, interviews, focus groups, digital feedback tools, and onboarding forms	Consolidated report with key insights and real-time feedback	· Understand and anticipate the evolving needs of entrepreneurs to improve support services	ULG	Q3 2025 (ongoing)
3.8 Build the PAIF (Finance, Actions Plan) according to city policies	Have a PAIF aligned with the city.	Align the resources that Neàpolis mobilizes according to the city council needs	Neàpolis	2026
3.9 KPI's for Neàpolis	Develop the 25 more relevant kpi's that Neàpolis need to accomplish to become a relevant infrastructure to the city council.	Council city members better understand Neàpolis and their added value to the city	Neàpolis	2026
3.10 Establish Neàpolis as a Living Lab for digital experimentation.	Operational framework for Living Lab activities, including open calls, challenge-based innovation, and collaboration protocols with startups, researchers, and public services.	· Neàpolis becomes a real-world testing environment for digital solutions and urban innovation. · Startups and tech teams can pilot AI, IoT, immersive, and civic technologies in collaboration with local stakeholders. · Vilanova gains visibility as a reference city for digital experimentation.	Neàpolis	2025–ongoing

INTEGRATED APPROACH

Type of Integration	Expected Impact	Extent of Challenge	How Addressed
Stakeholder involvement in planning	High – strong ownership and legitimacy of the IAP	Medium – fragmented ecosystem, limited collaboration culture	Creation of the ULG with public sector, businesses, academia, education, and citizens to co-design actions
Stakeholder involvement in implementation	High – effective delivery of actions	Medium – coordination between actors not always smooth	Joint pilot projects, collaborative governance model, regular feedback channels
Multi-level action	High – maximizes impact and funding opportunities	High – requires coordination across city, region, and EU	Actions framed at local, regional (Penedès–Garraf, Catalonia), and European levels
Coherence with existing strategies	High – ensures alignment and resource mobilization	High – multiple local/regional strategies, not always connected	IAP aligned with local economic development plan, Catalonia RIS3, and EU digital/innovation strategies
Complementary types of investment	High – combines infrastructure and human capital	Medium – funding streams not always connected	Balance between infrastructure upgrades at Neàpolis (hard) and training/mentoring programmes (soft)
Mobilizing all available funding	High – ensures sustainability of actions	High – fragmented and competitive funding landscape	Mix of municipal budget, regional programmes, and EU funds.
Integration of cross-cutting aspects	Medium – adds inclusiveness and innovation	Medium – risk of being overlooked in a digital-focused plan	Gender equality, climate awareness, and digitalization mainstreamed into talent and innovation programmes
Sustainable urban development	Medium – mainly economic and social	Low – environmental dimension less central	Focus on digital skills and entrepreneurship; indirect contribution to sustainability
Integration over time	Medium – realistic, phased delivery	Medium – risk of ambition exceeding capacity	Phased roadmap: short-term pilots, mid-term infrastructure, long-term talent retention
Territorial integration	Medium–Low – potential future regional relevance	Currently limited – local ecosystem still consolidating	Priority on strengthening Vilanova's ecosystem first; regional links considered for future steps

GANTT CHART

Actions: Intervention AREA 1

Actions: Intervention AREA 1	2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.1 Map key local stakeholders					X	X														
1.2 Continuity of the ULG					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.3 Set up communication tools							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.4 Shared performance indicators								X	X											
1.5 Launch joint pilot initiatives							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Actions: Intervention AREA 2

Actions: Intervention AREA 2	2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2.1 The Entrepreneur's Journey							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.2 Entrepreneurship workshops for high school students			X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X
2.3 Young students visit Neàpolis					X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X		
2.4 Entrepreneurship bootcamp	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	X			X	X			X	X	
2.5 Incubation program	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	X			X	X			X	X	
2.6 Facilitate access to finance				X				X			X					X				X
2.7 Industry-academia partnerships program	X	X				X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X	

Actions: Intervention AREA 3

Actions: Intervention AREA 3	2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1 Neapolis rebranding					X	X														
3.2 Redesign Neàpolis website					X	X	X													
3.3 Communication plan					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.4 Social activities for the community				X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X
3.5 Adapt common spaces to needs	X	X	X	X	X															
3.6 Add human resources		X			X															
3.7 Identify entrepreneurial needs					X	X														
3.8 PAIF according to city policies				X				X					X			X				X
3.9 KPIs for Neàpolis			X					X					X			X				X
3.10 Living Lab	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

FUNDING

Total budget of the IAP: ~ 1.062.150 €

Main sources of funding:

- **Municipal resources**: Neàpolis own budget (several actions).

- **Regional funds**: Diputació de Barcelona (DIBA), Generalitat de Catalunya (GENCAT).

- **European funds**: ERDF, NextGenerationEU, URBACT.

Approach:

- **Balance between hard investments** (infrastructure upgrades at Neàpolis, spaces, equipment) **and soft** *measures* (training, mentoring, incubation).

- **Co-funding strategy** to reduce dependency on a single source.

- **Financial risk mitigation:** contingency planning, diversification of funding, prioritization of high-impact/low-cost actions.

GOVERNANCE

The implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) will be coordinated by Neàpolis under the strategic oversight of the City Projection Office of Vilanova i la Geltrú City Council. Governance is structured into three complementary levels to ensure coordination, participation, and accountability:

A Steering Committee

Composed of representatives from the City Council, Neàpolis, UPC, FEGP, the Mancomunitat Penedès-Garraf and EMAID. This group meets quarterly to provide strategic direction, ensure alignment with city priorities, and mobilize resources for implementation.

The Urban Local Group (ULG)

Originally created during the planning phase, the ULG will evolve into a multi-stakeholder Implementation Group. It will meet regularly to monitor progress, support partnerships, provide feedback, and help disseminate results, maintaining a participatory and cross-sectoral approach.

A Project Team

A dedicated team within Neàpolis will manage the day-to-day delivery of the IAP. Its responsibilities include coordination of actions, follow-up of indicators, stakeholder engagement, and reporting to the Steering Committee. The team is expected to be strengthened with new staff profiles as foreseen in the plan.

MONITORING

The monitoring system is designed to ensure **transparency, accountability, and learning** throughout the implementation of the IAP. It combines regular reviews, clear indicators, and stakeholder participation.

Structure

- **Lead responsibility:** Neàpolis, in cooperation with the City Projection Office.
- **Steering Committee:** meets quarterly to review progress, risks, and budgets, and to validate adjustments.
- **ULG Implementation Group:** provides feedback from citizens, entrepreneurs, businesses, and education actors.
- **Annual stakeholder review:** open session to present results and gather wider input.
- **Public dashboard:** digital platform hosted by Neàpolis, sharing progress and indicators for transparency

Key indicators

- **Collaboration Index:** 0% (2025); target 70% (2027) of ULG stakeholders reporting effective cooperation.
- **Digital Engagement Index:** baseline 3% (2025); target 8% (2027) of working-age population engaged in digital or entrepreneurial activities.
- **Startup & Entrepreneur Support:** baseline 15 (2025) Neàpolis; target 50 (2027) startups and entrepreneurs supported annually by ULG members.
- **Recognition of Neàpolis:** baseline 24% (2023); target 60% (2027) of ecosystem actors acknowledge Neàpolis as a strategic innovation hub.

Corrective mechanisms

- **Early-warning alerts** in quarterly reviews.
- **Emergency Steering Committee** meetings
- **Reallocation of budget, staff, or timelines.**
- **Consultation** with stakeholders to redesign actions if needed.