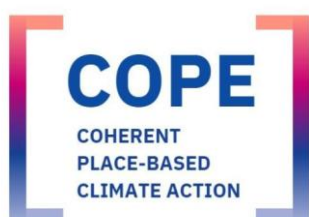




MORE SUSTAINABLE HISTORIC CENTER

Integrated Action Plan



Document submitted for consideration by the municipal chamber on _____ December 2025, having been _____.

For more information about the *Historic Center + Sustainable Plan*, please contact the Municipality of Pombal at (+351) 236 210 500 or by email at geral@cm-pombal.pt.

Message from the Mayor of Pombal

Dear Citizens,

The Historic Center of Pombal is a place of memory, identity, and future. With this Integrated Action Plan, we are taking a firm step toward its sustainable revitalization, promoting a greener, more efficient, and more accessible territory.

This plan was not born in technical offices. It was co-created with the community through the URBACT Local Group (ULG), which brought together citizens, merchants, residents, municipal technicians, associations, and public and academic institutions. The diversity and commitment of this group were fundamental in identifying the real challenges of the territory and proposing concrete and innovative solutions.

Active stakeholder participation — from the Parish Council to the Business Association, environmental NGOs, municipal services, and citizens who live and work in the Historic Center — ensured that this plan reflects the aspirations and needs of the community. Through diagnostic walks, co-creation sessions, pilot actions, and moments of inspiration, we built a shared vision for a Historic Center that is sustainable, vibrant, and inclusive.

On behalf of the Municipality of Pombal, I deeply thank all those who contributed to this process. This plan is an example of how climate action can and should be rooted locally, involving those who know and live in the territory. It is also a commitment to transparency, participation, and the collective construction of solutions to urban challenges.

Together, we are transforming the Historic Center of Pombal into a model of sustainable urban regeneration, where every street tells a story of the future.

Pedro Pimpão

Mayor of Pombal

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1 | CONTEXT, NEEDS, AND VISION



1. General Theme

The green transition of cities is essential to achieving carbon neutrality in Europe by 2050. However, for this to succeed, changes are needed in political institutions, in the way we govern and plan our cities, and in the actions of civil society.

The COPE network (Coherent Place-based Climate Action) is an initiative designed to unlock the green potential of citizen action through a place-based approach, recognizing citizens and local action groups as key stakeholders in accelerating the green transition.

By actively engaging communities that traditionally feel excluded from climate action, the COPE initiative expands the reach and impact of municipal policies. The network aims to change mindsets—both within political institutions and civil society—through co-created actions, deliberative dialogue, and evaluation of actions and governance structures.

COPE applies the ABCD approach (Asset-Based Community Development), which focuses on recognizing and leveraging local resources and aspirations to strengthen communities and promote sustainable actions. This approach requires local authorities to be curious and open to new ideas based on local assets, empowering citizens to take action.

Indeed, open governance is a core concept of the COPE network, emphasizing transparency, inclusion, participation, and collaboration in decision-making processes. The network promotes the integration of specific participatory methods to engage citizens and stakeholders through small-scale green activities that allow people to experience change and participate in impact assessment.

COPE also explores the practice of adaptive leadership, distinguishing between technical problems and adaptive challenges. The network seeks to develop more open governance procedures, bringing decision-making closer to citizens and local stakeholders, and promoting a focus on equality and diversity.

In this way, the COPE network represents an innovative and inclusive approach to addressing climate and biodiversity challenges, fostering citizen action and co-creation of local solutions. By combining open governance, asset-based community development, and adaptive leadership, COPE works toward a fair and sustainable green transition in European cities.

2. Current Situation

The municipality of Pombal, located in the Central Region between Lisbon and Porto, covers a territorial area of approximately 626 km² with good road and rail connections to national and regional urban centres. With around 52,000 inhabitants, the city of Pombal alone accounts for about one-third of the population, while the remaining residents are spread across surrounding parishes.

As in the rest of the country, municipal governance is ensured by the Municipal Assembly and the Mayor, who is directly elected. In Pombal, the executive body consists of seven councillors, including the Mayor, with portfolios such as education, urban planning, and environment. Beyond the electoral process, citizen participation is regularly promoted through surveys and initiatives such as the Participatory Budget, Young Mayor, and the development of the Pombal 2030 Strategy, which broadly involve the community, as well as actions that foster collaboration with schools, associations, local businesses, and citizens in preparing public facilities later distributed throughout the city centre.

The Municipality maintains various communication and awareness channels, including social media, its website, billboards, weekly newsletters, and a monthly cultural agenda to inform citizens about activities implemented by the municipality and the community, contributing to awareness of participation opportunities.

Sustainability is a key theme in Municipal Management. Since 2020, Pombal has been recognized as the most sustainable municipality in the country, promoting environmental education and annual plans co-created with schools and parishes under the ECO-XXI and Blue Flag initiatives. More recently, it established the Local Observatory for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), responsible for monitoring compliance with sustainability objectives and promoting/raising visibility of best practices among municipal departments, companies, institutions, and civil society.

Currently, Pombal's city centre is included within the boundaries of the Urban Rehabilitation Area of the Central Zone of Pombal (Figure 1), which is a strategic urban development initiative aimed at revitalizing and regenerating the city's historic and central area. The main goal of this strategy is to improve the city's core infrastructure and provide operational tools to leverage private actions for building rehabilitation and the revival of local businesses and commerce. In addition to urban rehabilitation of public spaces and buildings (both public and private), this designation offers property owners access to tax benefits for improving their housing and buildings.



Figure 1. Boundary of the Urban Rehabilitation Area of the Central Zone of Pombal (in black dashed lines) and boundary of Pombal's Historic Centre (in blue).

After the delimitation of the Urban Rehabilitation Area (URA), the next step was the development of the Urban Rehabilitation Operation (ORU) for the Central Zone of Pombal, which consists of drafting and implementing an integrated Strategic Urban Rehabilitation Plan. This plan includes a set of key projects and strategic actions aimed at upgrading the urban space, facilities, infrastructure, and both public and private buildings.

Since its implementation, several actions have been carried out within the URA of Pombal's Central Zone, including the restoration of historic buildings, improvement of urban infrastructure, enhancement of public spaces, and promotion of cultural and social activities. These efforts aim to preserve heritage, attract residents and investment, and revitalize the

historic centre. In recent years, public space improvements have stood out, with upgrades to roads, pedestrian networks, and squares, which have encouraged private building rehabilitation. However, challenges remain, such as the persistence of cars in the area, the lack of new businesses and urban dynamics, and the presence of several buildings still requiring intervention.

For these reasons, although the initial COPE network action plan intended to consider the area included within the URA boundaries, it soon became clear that this delimitation encompasses very different contexts. Therefore, the plan was narrowed to focus on the area defined as Pombal's Historic Centre, aiming to promote actions that make it more sustainable.

Pombal's Historic Centre is characterized by narrow streets, old-style buildings with traditional architecture, mostly residential, and a scarcity of services and commerce. With a largely impermeable public space, it presents itself—within the scope of sustainability themes—as a perfect and necessary intervention area.

3. Relevant Strategies and Policies

GLOBAL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDGs provide a global framework to promote balanced, inclusive, and environmentally responsible development, notably through sustainable water management (SDG 6), access to renewable energy and energy efficiency (SDG 7), building sustainable communities and cities (SDG 12), and climate action (SDG 13).

EUROPEAN STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

New European Bauhaus

This initiative introduces an innovative approach by integrating sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion in the transformation of urban spaces. It is interconnected with the EU Urban Agenda and the New Leipzig Charter through a shared vision of sustainable, inclusive, and people-centered cities, adding an aesthetic and cultural dimension to urban transformation and promoting spaces that are not only functional and ecological but also beautiful and inspiring.

European Green Deal

The Green Deal is an ambitious EU strategy aiming to make Europe the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050, promoting a fair and inclusive ecological transition. It covers areas such as clean energy, sustainable mobility, circular economy, biodiversity, and urban renewal, encouraging Member States and municipalities to adopt more sustainable practices. The Municipality of Pombal subscribes to the Covenant of Mayors and, more recently, the principles of the Green Deal, committing to integrate actions that promote environmental sustainability in its local projects and reduce emissions by 40%. By participating in this European effort, Pombal contributes to building more resilient, green, and people-centered cities.

NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

National Housing Strategy

Its goal is to ensure universal access to decent housing, promoting the rehabilitation of existing buildings as an alternative to new construction, aligning with the principles of the New European Bauhaus and the EU Urban Agenda by fostering fairer, more accessible, and resilient urban spaces.

National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP 2030)

This is Portugal's main energy and climate policy instrument. In the context of urban rehabilitation, the plan encourages building renovation with solutions that reduce energy consumption and increase thermal comfort, promoting more sustainable cities prepared for climate challenges, directly aligned with the objectives of the European Green Deal and the New Leipzig Charter.

LOCAL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

Pombal Urban Development Strategic Plan (2015)

This comprehensive initiative aims to promote the revitalization and modernization of the city, focusing on sustainability, social inclusion, and innovation. The plan includes various actions and measures to improve residents' quality of life and attract investment, focusing on key areas such as sustainable urban mobility, public space improvement, and urban regeneration. This was the most significant urban planning change Pombal has experienced in recent years, resulting from the implementation of a set of urban regeneration and revitalization policies, with an investment exceeding €8 million, taking the city to a new level of quality, ambition, and

modernity. This program fostered the “rejuvenation” of Pombal’s centre through the redevelopment of facilities and public spaces, making them modern, active, durable, and inviting. As a continuation, the municipality approved the delimitation of the Urban Rehabilitation Area of Pombal’s Central Zone, initiating a new phase aimed at promoting the recovery of the building stock, revitalizing traditional commerce, attracting new economic activities, and “rehabiting” the urban centre, making the city more friendly and attractive. Additionally, the Urban Regeneration Action Plan (PARU) was developed, setting out the following objectives: building rehabilitation and conservation, enhancement of public space and mobility, revitalization of services and facilities, promotion of the Historic Centre and heritage preservation, and revitalization of the economic fabric. Among the projects listed in this plan was the redevelopment of the public space surrounding the Carmo Convent, located in the heart of the Historic Centre.

Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (2021)

Pombal’s SECAP is an initiative aimed at promoting energy sustainability and climate change adaptation. Aligned with the objectives of the European Union and the Paris Agreement, it focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting a greener, more resilient economy. Pombal’s SECAP includes several strategic measures and actions, such as implementing measures to improve energy efficiency in public and private buildings, including installing insulation systems, LED lighting, and A+ class equipment; promoting the use of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind for energy production; developing a more efficient and sustainable public transport system, encouraging the use of electric vehicles and creating cycling infrastructure; implementing circular economy practices focused on waste prevention and recovery, as well as sludge composting and biogas utilization; adopting measures for efficient water resource management, including reducing water losses and raising awareness for rational water use; and promoting sustainable agroforestry practices that increase carbon retention or capture capacity and contribute to climate resilience.

Development Strategy, Pombal 2030 (2023)

The Municipality of Pombal approved its Strategic Plan, Pombal 2030, which aims to make Pombal:

1. More competitive and digital, based on a dynamic and sustainable transition of the local economy, capable of attracting structural investments;
2. More sustainable and resilient, contributing to a safe and adaptable territory that promotes an energy and climate transition;

3. More cohesive and inclusive, promoting equal access to essential goods and services, social inclusion, and quality of life; and
4. More connected to the territory and people, based on integrated, balanced, and differentiated development.

Within the Pombal 2030 Development Strategy, several actions, measures, and strategic lines will have a direct impact on Pombal's Historic Centre.

One of the envisioned actions is the creation of a commercial leasing program for entrepreneurs. This program aims to encourage the rental of properties for commercial purposes, with the dual objective of stimulating entrepreneurs to create their own businesses and jobs, and revitalizing commercial areas in the municipality.

Another action involves the development and implementation of a municipal program to promote the adoption of practices and measures that reduce energy consumption, particularly in public buildings and facilities, parish council headquarters, companies and industries, public social housing, and private housing—making Pombal more sustainable and resilient.

Specifically, for Pombal's Historic Centre, an integrated revitalization plan will be developed. This plan consists of defining and implementing a strategy to restore the social and economic role of the Historic Centre of Pombal, which in recent years has lost some dynamism in terms of commerce, housing, and services, and to promote its attractiveness for businesses and citizens. In this context, the implementation of dynamics and initiatives aimed at enhancing the cultural and tourist value of the historic centre and boosting its economic potential is proposed, amplifying the appeal of this place of memory, synonymous with local cultural identity.

4. Problems Identified by Local Stakeholders

URBACT Local Group

To design an integrated action plan for the Historic Centre, it is important to include as many stakeholders as possible in the URBACT Local Group (ULG), both as citizens and as representatives of various entities operating in the Historic Centre.

Initially, environmental groups, academics, architects, engineers, and entrepreneurs with sustainable businesses were invited to join the ULG. The goal was to have a broad and diverse group of partners who could bring innovative ideas and act as disseminators of those ideas.

As the intervention area narrowed, the COPE Network sought to attract four types of stakeholders to the ULG: residents, those who own businesses in the area, those who frequent the area, and those who represent entities operating in the area. To this end, invitations were distributed door-to-door, and posters were placed in the Historic Centre inviting people to ULG meetings. Additionally, the invitation was shared on the Municipality's social media channels. These various methods enabled the participation of ordinary men and women interested in improving the Historic Centre (Figure 2).

Furthermore, some municipal services with responsibilities in the Historic Centre (e.g., Municipal Museum, Environment Unit, Urban Cleaning Unit, Roads Unit) were invited to join the group, as well as entities such as the Public Security Police, the Pombal Parish Council, and the Pombal Business Association. Later, the Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the Central Region joined as a funding entity, thus enabling the proposed actions to be leveraged with existing short- or medium-term financing options.

With these various entities involved, meetings were held that allowed the identification of problems in the intervention area.



Figure 2. Poster inviting participation in the URBACT Local Group meeting of the COPE network.

As a result of previous synergies, the URBACT Local Group is composed of citizens, residents, business owners, NGOs, and local and regional public entities that have supported the development of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). The most represented group is business

owners, followed by municipal technicians from Pombal (not allocated to the project) and residents (Figure 3). It is worth noting that, on average, each ULG meeting was attended by 15 people.

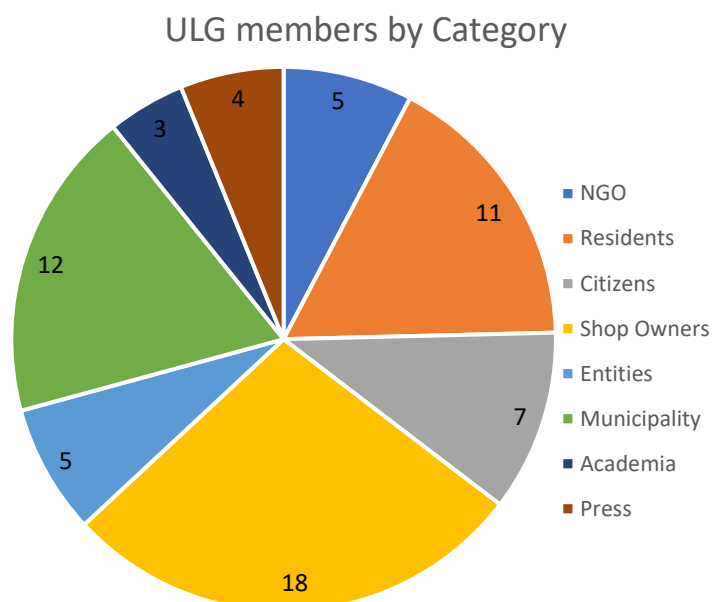


Figure 3. Number of members attending ULG meetings by category.

In addition to ULG meetings, partial meetings were held with some entities and municipal services, such as the Pombal Parish Council or the Green Spaces and Leisure Unit of the Municipality of Pombal.

Step 1. Problems and Challenges to Sustainability

The application of the “Problem Tree” exercise (Figure 4) during one of the preliminary meetings of the URBACT Local Group made it possible to identify the problems/challenges that hinder the sustainable transition of residents. Among the issues addressed were:

- Access to information on how to be more sustainable individually, at the workplace, or within the community;
- The habit of parking vehicles at the doorstep;
- Lack of green spaces and trees;
- Street characteristics;
- Limited habit of enjoying public streets;
- Inadequate building rehabilitation;
- Unclear management of public and private spaces;
- Lack of street cleaning associated with poor recycling practices.



Figure 4. The Problem Tree.
Exercise carried out to
identify the issues.

Looking specifically at Pombal's Historic Centre, the group identified several barriers to sustainable practices by citizens, namely pedestrian circulation within the historic zone, the lack of green spaces, waste management, and the use of public space. The deterioration of buildings and infrastructure, the lack of energy efficiency in private housing, and the need to revitalize public spaces were other issues highlighted.

It is important to note that the urban rehabilitation area covering Pombal's Historic Center was defined to address these challenges, promoting building rehabilitation and improving living conditions for its residents. However, despite efforts, many buildings have not yet been renovated, and the area continues to struggle with a loss of dynamism and the excessive presence of cars.

In addition to challenges related to sustainable mobility, waste management, and the promotion of circular economy practices, there is a pressing need to improve energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in housing.

Other issues include the desertification of the historic centre, the formation of heat islands during heatwaves, existing architectural barriers in public spaces, greenwashing, short-term sustainable initiatives, lack of awareness of the carbon footprint of decisions made, inefficient management processes, and mobility relying solely on private vehicles.

Consequently, local stakeholders identified the need to increase civic participation and community awareness of environmental and sustainability issues. Promoting educational and awareness initiatives and implementing digital tools to facilitate citizen participation are seen as important steps toward achieving these goals.

Step 2. Monitoring the Historic Centre

Implementing a local approach requires an understanding of the context. In this sense, one of the methods followed was conducting an observational walking tour by ULG members, focused on three aspects:

- a. Public space, where citizens interact, considering various aspects that promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability, namely comfort, walkability, tree coverage, and street use.
- b. Housing efficiency, involving the assessment of criteria focused on energy efficiency, resource use, environmental impact, and residents' quality of life.
- c. Mobility, involving soft mobility practices aimed at minimizing the environmental, social, and economic impact of road traffic, promoting efficiency, equity, and safety in shared mobility and walkability, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality, and ensuring equitable access to transportation.

A predefined walking route was established to allow not only an appropriate evaluation of the area, passing through conflict points (Figure 5), but also discussion among all participants at key locations such as Marquês de Pombal Square and Largo do Cardal.

For each aspect, two questions were asked using a standardized survey model in an “evaluation sheet”: “What is happening now?” and “What can be done?” For each question, some answers were listed, and after the visit, ULG members could add other responses not included in the evaluation sheet (Figure 6).

Regarding public space, most ULG members mentioned the lack of green spaces and trees, the impermeabilization of public space and absence of shaded areas, as well as the lack of points of interest (cultural, recreational, leisure, etc.) in the Historic Centre, and spaces designed for children (Figure 7).

Regarding energy efficiency, ULG members identified that currently the buildings in the Historic Centre lack thermal comfort, being characterized as unhealthy due to the absence of thermal insulation and effective ventilation, combined with the high impermeabilization of spaces adjacent to the buildings. These characteristics are compounded by a clear lack of information about what energy and thermal efficiency in buildings entails, the financial support available for

its implementation, and even the types of systems and equipment available on the market. This lack of information often prevents citizens from having informed and equitable knowledge, as access to financial support frequently requires the installation of more expensive systems. Finally, they noted the absence of rainwater harvesting and other natural resource utilization (Figure 7).



Figure 5. Predefined walking route highlighting conflict points.

Regarding mobility, all ULG members agreed on the existence of abusive parking and lack of enforcement (Figure 9). Additionally, most mentioned the lack of parking spaces/peripheral parking lots, the excessive through traffic, which affects pedestrians' sense of safety, and the absence of designated loading and unloading areas for local businesses and residents. Architectural barriers and other elements that hinder access for people with reduced mobility were also noted (Figure 7).

+ EFICIÊNCIA

1. Focado na construção e reabilitação, tendo por base a promoção da sua eficiência.
2. Envolve a avaliação de diversos critérios relacionados com a eficiência energética, uso de recursos, impacto ambiental e qualidade de vida dos residentes.

O que ocorre atualmente?

- ☐ Dificuldade na melhoria da eficiência energética das suas casas
- ☐ Existem plataformas de divulgação de fontes de financiamento acessíveis ao cidadão
- ☐ Grande parte dos edifícios não tem isolamento adequado
- ☐ Os edifícios são maioritariamente insalubres, afetando negativamente a qualidade do ambiente das casas
- ☐ As casas apresentam evidências de humidade
- ☐ É fácil implementar novas soluções energéticas nos edifícios antigos
- ☐ A maioria dos edifícios não estão preparados para soluções novas de equipamentos energéticos
- ☐ As pessoas não têm capacidade financeira para soluções mais eficientes
- ☐ As janelas e as portas das casas são pouco eficientes e deixam passar o ar
- ☐ As casas não possuem conforto térmico pelo que são frias no inverno e quentes no verão
- ☐ A iluminação pública é insuficiente
- ☐ A iluminação pública é excessiva
- ☐ A iluminação pública possui um horário desadequado
- ☐ Aproveitamento inexistente das águas pluviais
- ☐ Quantidade de ecopontos insuficiente
- ☐ Ecopontos mal localizados

O que fazer?

- ☐ Ter acesso a informação sobre soluções técnicas de melhoria da eficiência energética das suas casas
- ☐ Criação de local de informação/apoio sobre como tornar as habitações mais eficientes
- ☐ Criação de locais/plataformas onde os cidadãos possam ter apoio técnico qualificado na identificação e implementação de soluções técnicas
- ☐ Realizar regularmente ações de sensibilização e divulgação de como tornar as casas mais eficientes
- ☐ Converter a iluminação pública para tecnologia LED
- ☐ Adoção de sistema de recolha porta-a-porta para os resíduos urbanos
- ☐ Adoção de sistema de recolha para os bioresíduos
- ☐ Aumentar quantidade de ecopontos
- ☐ Recolha de águas pluviais para reutilização
- ☐ Implementação de programas municipais de apoio (Ex: painéis solares)

Figure 6. Evaluation sheet for the energy efficiency component.

Following this exercise, and to complement the survey conducted by the ULG, a count was carried out during one week in August 2025, at various times, to record the number of cars circulating and the number of cars parked illegally. It was found that the street with the highest presence of pedestrians and cars, both moving and parked, is Rua Almirante Reis. According to the survey, on average, during monitoring moments (walking across the three main streets of the Historic Centre), 46 pedestrians were observed moving through the historic centre, 11 vehicles in circulation, and another 16 parked illegally. These figures demonstrate the daily coexistence of moving pedestrians, vehicles passing through, or creating barriers to free movement, corroborating the results/problems/challenges identified by the ULG in the previous meeting.

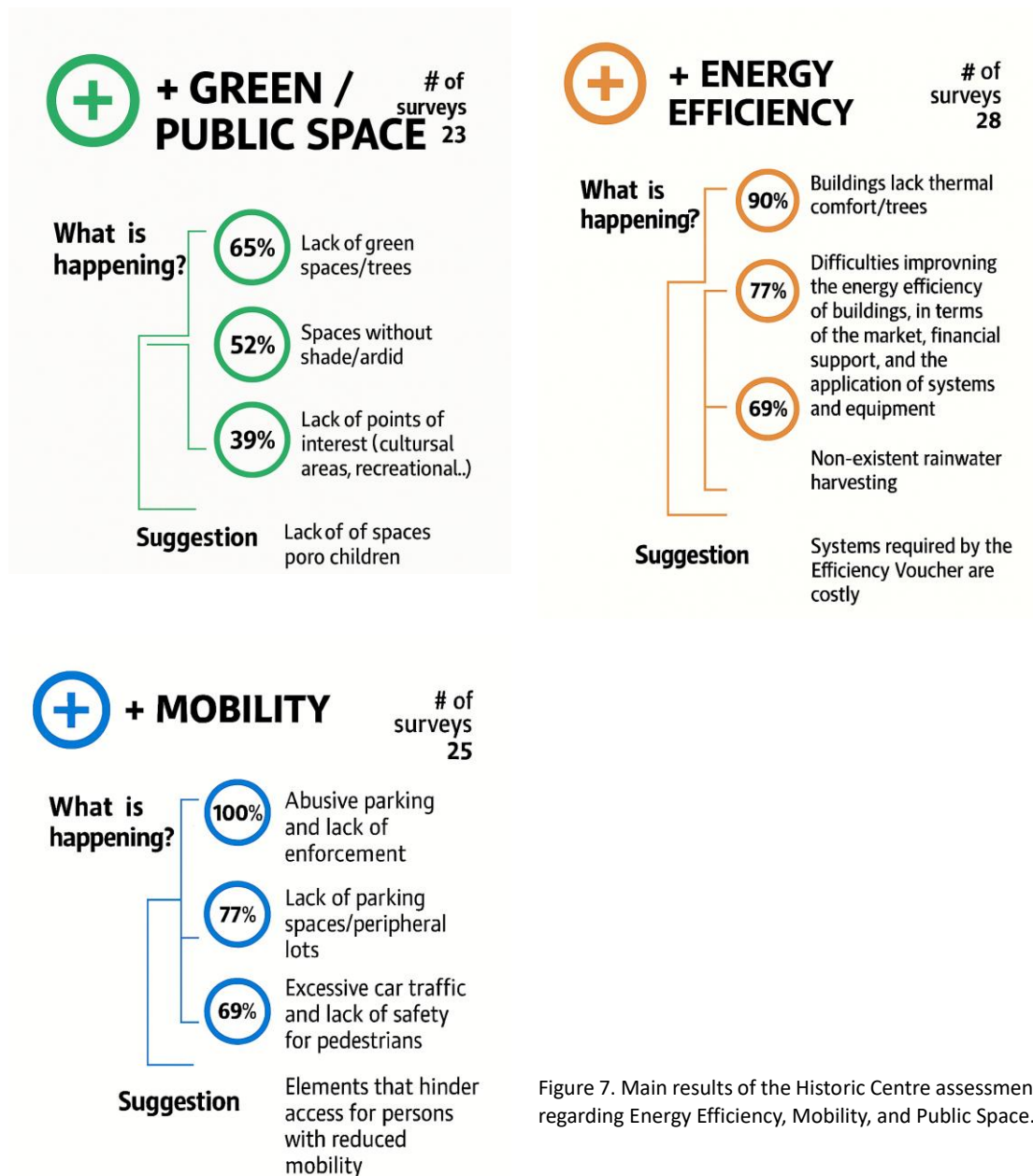


Figure 7. Main results of the Historic Centre assessment regarding Energy Efficiency, Mobility, and Public Space.

Step 3. Identification of Actions

After analysing the results obtained during the diagnostic walk, the ULG was invited to identify, for each strategic objective, the necessary measures to address the identified problems, the key actions to implement those measures, and finally, the experiences they would like to test to validate the actions. Table 1 provides a summary of this work.

Step 4. Ranking of High-Impact Actions

The ULG identified a total of 23 actions as necessary to make Pombal's Historic Centre more sustainable. Since developing all of them would be too ambitious, a voting system was

implemented during a new ULG meeting, where each member voted for the action, they considered most important and impactful within each strategic objective (Figure 8). Posters were created with the various proposed actions; each assigned a number. Next to each poster, jars were placed. Each ULG member had three balls, one per objective. One by one, they were invited to place the balls in the three actions they considered to have the greatest impact on making the Historic Centre more sustainable. The three actions with the highest number of votes in each axis were then further developed.

	Objective 1 + Green / Public Space	Objective 2 + Energy Efficiency	Objective 3 + Mobility
Specific Ob.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree planting Shading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainwater reuse Citizen communication and advice Sustainable construction Lighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access for people with reduced mobility Public transport Combating illegal parking More events
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant flowers Plant trees Install shading structures Promote an aromatic garden Bring the municipal canteen to the Historic Centre with local product consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an information space Define measures to combat energy poverty Use rainwater for irrigation Install solar lighting system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place signage indicating coexistence of cars and pedestrians Define a new parking policy with more spaces Create circuits Remove obstacles from roads
Testing Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask people what they want Create a pedestrian/cycling circuit to visit main points Create space for children/sports Develop an urbanization plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create tanks for rainwater collection Map building potential for solar energy production Produce leaflets with information on benefits for house rehabilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place obstacles to deter illegal parking Inform about free parking nearby Promote free parking

Table 1. Specific Objectives, Actions, and Test Actions Identified by the ULG

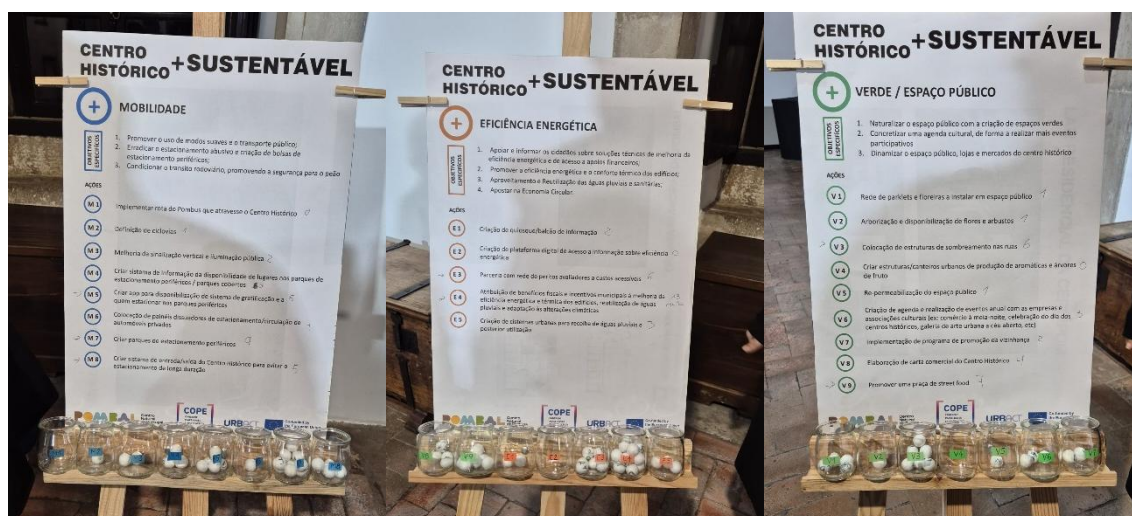


Figure 8. Ranking System of Actions by Objective and Final Result.

5. Vision / main goal

The prospective focus of the Integrated Action Plan being designed for Pombal's Historic Centre is to transform it into a sustainable, resilient, and vibrant community that serves as a model for other urban rehabilitation areas located in the Municipality of Pombal and beyond.

The plan will follow a holistic approach, aiming to address issues related to building rehabilitation, energy and thermal efficiency of buildings, mobility, biodiversity, public space enhancement, and economic development. These issues are, in essence, premises that have matured or resulted from learning through actions and best practices from other partner cities, particularly during visits made during the TNMs. Notable examples include A Coruña, with its emphasis on walking through public spaces and engaging the population about the challenges encountered; Kavala, with its interesting community-led redevelopment of a green public space in an integrated solution with the municipal authority; and Vilnius, with its replanting and identification of floral species.

To achieve this vision, the plan has three objectives:

- a. Promote a more pleasant public space, with initiatives that raise awareness about the need to change habits and contribute to making the streets of the Historic Center more dynamic, with the daily presence of people walking freely without cars;
- b. Develop tools and platforms, physical or digital, to provide access to information and help citizens seek advice on existing market solutions and financial assistance to make their homes more sustainable;
- c. Define the desired mobility approach for Pombal's Historic Centre, particularly regarding the possibilities of maintaining, restricting, or eliminating car traffic.

6. Main integration challenges

The main challenges to integrating the plan for a more sustainable Historic Centre are diverse and complex.

First, and this is an aspect that stems from the initiatives carried out with the ULG and the attempt to form a heterogeneous group, it is evident that the ULG was unable to include representatives of the immigrant population currently residing in the area.

Second, in the sphere of mobility, there is a lack of consensus among the population that lives, works, or frequents the space. This diversity of opinion becomes a critical factor for any action concerning the Historic Centre or its dynamics. Even within the URBACT Local Group, there is no consensus on the path to follow.

Third, citizens feel a lack of connection/closeness with local governance bodies, driven by processes in which they believe they were not heard or their opinions were not considered, resulting in feelings of distrust regarding the intended actions of the IAP.

Digital transformation applied to dialogue with citizens and urban planning has the potential to support more inclusive, transparent, and proactive decision-making processes. However, there is still a significant disparity among population groups in terms of digital literacy, making it essential to promote different forms of access to actions that advance digital transformation in the context of communication.

7. First ideas to test actions at local level

The changes envisioned for the Historic Centre may lead to challenging transformations, making it important to test solutions that can help better define the actions to be implemented. From this perspective, the URBACT Local Group of the COPE network developed three small experimental actions, each aimed at one of the three defined objectives, with the first action addressing two of the objectives simultaneously.

+ MOBILITY | + GREEN / PUBLIC SPACE

“What if this Street Were Pedestrian?”

The experimental action *“What if this street were pedestrian?”* aimed to unlock the green potential of the city’s Historic Centre through active citizen engagement. This action was part of the activities developed by the Municipality of Pombal within the framework of the European Mobility Week, which seeks to draw attention to existing mobility alternatives while promoting soft modes of transport.

The goal of this test action, which took place from September 16 to 22, 2024, was to return the public space of the Historic Centre to pedestrians and assess their feedback.

To achieve this, locations regularly occupied by illegal parking or with characteristics conducive to such practices were identified—a total of 11 sites—and community gathering areas were installed (Figure 9). These new areas featured diverse and inclusive urban solutions for all population groups (elderly, children, pets, tourists, residents, passersby, and local business customers). For the implementation of the initiative, support was requested from two municipal units responsible for urban furniture and green spaces. The Division of Conservation and Maintenance of Municipal Equipment provided urban furniture such as benches and tables. The Green Spaces Unit supplied flowers and tree species and assisted with the placement of urban furniture. This made it possible to create new social spaces and prevent vehicle parking. With the support of a local artist, six game areas were painted on the streets, promoting traditional street games such as hopscotch and “the floor is lava.”

To restrict traffic within the Historic Centre, billboards were placed at the entrances to the area. These were produced by the Municipality of Pombal’s Communication and Protocol Office and installed by the Division of Conservation and Maintenance of Municipal Equipment (Figure 10). The purpose of the billboards was to raise awareness that streets can be pedestrian because there are alternatives to road traffic and parking, such as the set of parking lots located nearby, and because walking or cycling within the Historic Centre takes only a few minutes. These coordinated actions aimed to demonstrate that streets are—and should be—primarily for pedestrians, and only then for cars. In this way, the initiative sought to test what it would be like to return the Historic Centre to pedestrians.

Since it was important to assess the level of agreement with some of the proposed changes, posters were placed near the newly created gathering areas mentioned above, asking to what extent citizens would like the changes to become permanent. Each poster included a QR code through which citizens could respond using a smartphone and indicate a level of agreement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The results of this small action proved promising: during the week, the number of illegal parking incidents decreased, and many people began using the tables and benches provided to rest, read, have their meals, and chat with neighbours.

Participation in the surveys was also significant. In response to the question about the possibility of closing three streets in the Historic Centre to car traffic, the majority indicated that they completely agree, although there is a group that completely disagrees with this option (Figure 11).

With a consensus level of 4.7, there is also a strong willingness for the ideas proposed within this action to be effectively implemented (Figure 12).



Figure 9. Location of the Identified Sites for Installing Urban Furniture and Creating New Gathering Areas.



Figure 10. Billboard installed on one of the entrance streets to the Historic Center.

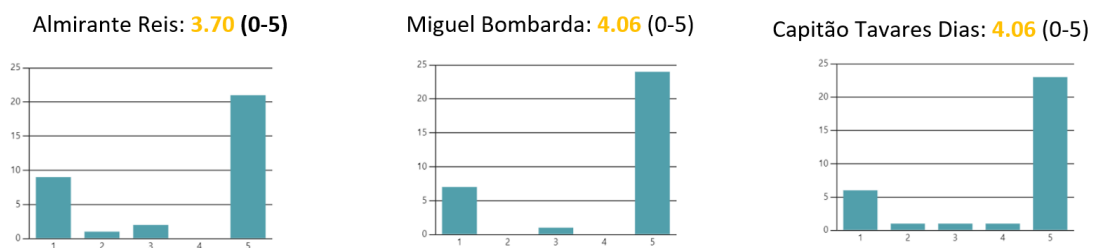


Figure 11. Level of Agreement Regarding the Closure of Each Street to Car Traffic.

Looking at the gathering areas created, the urban solution that achieved the greatest consensus was Marquês de Pombal Square, where citizens believe a space with shade, tables, and chairs should be designed to allow people to enjoy this square (Figure 13).

Next, the areas that received the most agreement—almost tied—were those where a parklet and small green spaces were installed, allowing people to sit and enjoy the space, or even read, observe the surroundings, people, and dynamics (Figure 14).

The creation of spaces for children and young people within the Historic Center also gathered consensus among citizens, so that more children and young people use public space (Figure 15).

Despite the success of this small action, old habits later returned, such as moving planters to create parking spaces, revealing that, beyond transforming public space, a more direct and targeted awareness effort toward drivers is necessary.

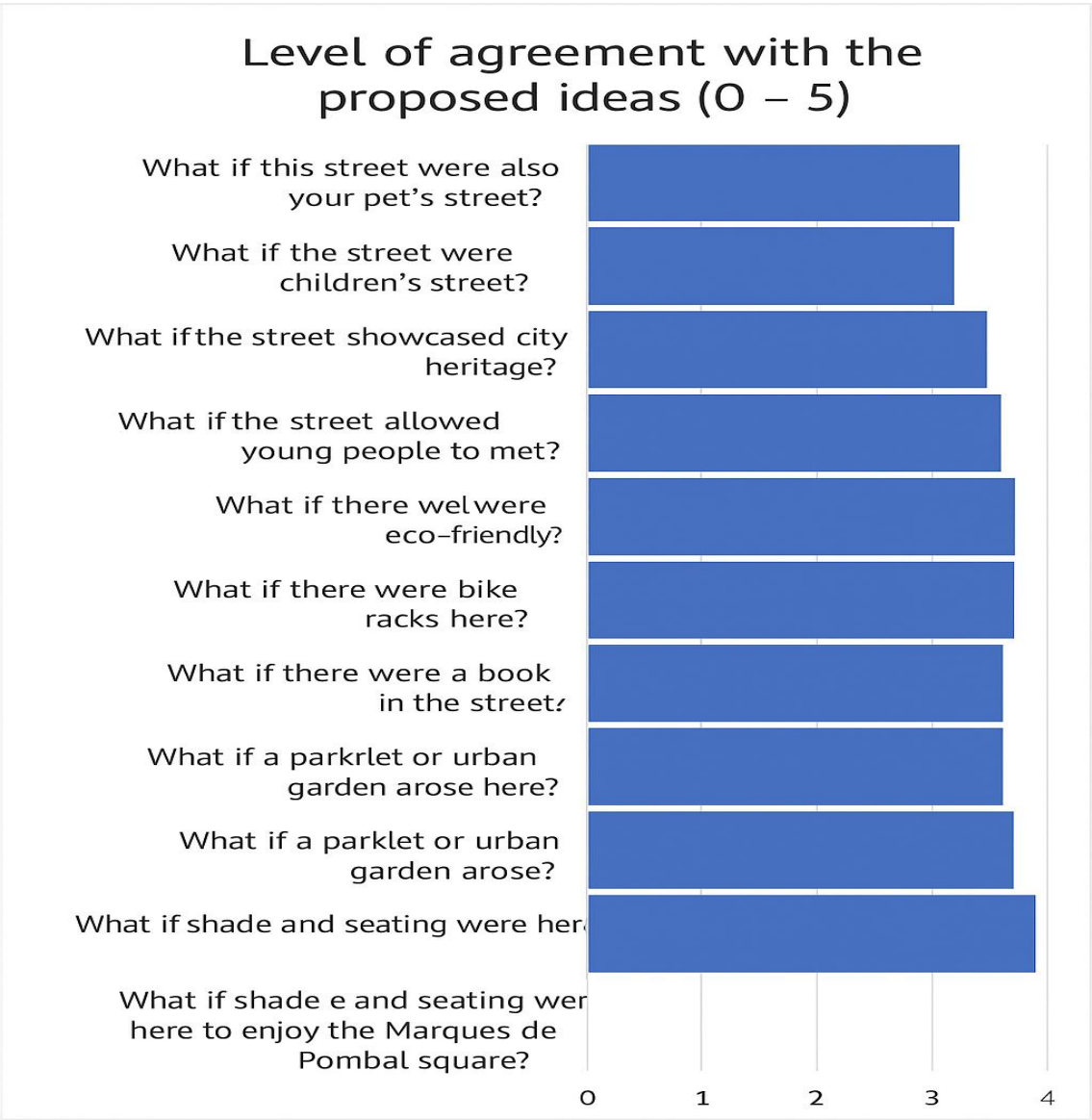


Figure 12. Level of Agreement with the Ideas Proposed within the Scope of the Small Action.



Figure 13. Creation of a Rest Area in Praça Marquês de Pombal.



Figure 14. Creation of Small Gathering Spaces.



Figure 15. Proposal for Creating a Space Dedicated to Children.

+ EFFICIENCY

Discussion “Historic Center of Pombal: Preservation, Growth, and Sustainability”

The promotion of energy efficiency and the rehabilitation of buildings were considered by the ULG as relevant topics for building a more sustainable Historic Center. In this context, the ULG deemed it important to communicate the benefits of urban rehabilitation and present good practices for promoting energy efficiency in buildings to citizens.

To test the communication approach to be applied, an informational session was organized featuring two academics — João Ferrão (University of Lisbon) and Carla Rodrigues (University of Coimbra) — and two representatives of local entities with a presence in the Historic Center — Horácio Mota (Business Association of Pombal) and Carla Longo (Pombal Parish Council) (Figure 16).

Additionally, leaflets were distributed to attendees with information on tax benefits and municipal incentives related to urban rehabilitation processes carried out in the ARU (Urban Rehabilitation Area) of Pombal’s Central Zone (Figure 17).

This session was part of the celebrations of the National Day of Historic Centers, locally promoted by the Municipality of Pombal’s Tourism Unit, which helped amplify its dissemination.



Figura 17. Roundtable



Figure 18. Leaflets Distributed During the Discussion Session and Later at Municipal Services and the Parish Council.

This event addressed the importance of historic centers as pillars of our cultural heritage and urban life. It highlighted the relevance of commerce in revitalizing these spaces, emphasizing the need for commercial urban planning policies that promote sustainability and quality of life while considering the territory in its diversity rather than as a homogeneous whole. Strategies for urban rehabilitation that respect the past while embracing the future were also discussed, with a special focus on improving energy efficiency in historic buildings and implementing essential energy efficiency measures to ensure sustainable development and reduce the ecological footprint of historic centers.

+ GREEN / PUBLIC SPACE

“Blooming Pombal”

To make the Historic Center greener, the ULG proposed an experimental action consisting of offering flower boxes to citizens. The basis of this action lies in two distinct considerations. On one hand, placing flowers in public spaces makes them more pleasant. On the other, citizen participation in actions that improve public space fosters a sense of belonging.

A promotional campaign for the program was carried out—through posters, news articles, and leaflets distributed by ULG members, as well as door-to-door in the Historic Center—inviting residents to register to receive and later maintain flower boxes.

In total, 100 applications were received, and an average of two flower boxes per person was distributed (Figure 19). Today, anyone passing through the Historic Center can see these flower boxes both on balconies and in front of commercial or service spaces. Some already feature plants different from those initially offered, added later on an individual basis by local merchants and residents (Figure 20).



Figure 19. Flower Boxes Offered to Citizens as Part of the “Blooming Pombal” Experiment.



Figure 20. Flower Boxes in the Historic Center.

2 | GENERAL LOGIC AND INTEGRATED APPROACH



1. Strategic Objectives

Global Vision:

Make Pombal's Historic Center more sustainable—environmentally, socially, and economically—by promoting mobility through soft modes and advancing the green and energy transition.

Strategic Objective 1: + GREEN / PUBLIC SPACE

Public space, and in this case the Historic Center, has suffered abandonment by residents, visitors, and shopkeepers due to its decreasing attractiveness; this, in turn, is driven by a physical space that is increasingly impermeable, arid, and lacking social, cultural, and even commercial dynamics.

Areas of Intervention: Nature, Environment, Public Space, Culture, Events, Economic Activities, Rehabilitation.

Specific Objectives (SO):

1. Naturalize public space by creating green areas;
2. Implement a cultural agenda to hold more participatory events;
3. Revitalize public space, shops, and markets in the Historic Center.

SO	Action	Type	Effort	Prazo	Responsabilidade
1	#1: Network of parklets and flower boxes to be installed in public space	Equipment	High	2030	Municipality of Pombal / Residents
1	#2: Tree planting and provision of flowers and shrubs	Renaturalization; community involvement	Low	2027	Municipality of Pombal
1	#3: Installation of shading structures on streets	Regeneration	High	2030	Municipality of Pombal
1	#4: Creation of urban beds for aromatic plants and fruit trees	Renaturalization; community involvement	Medium	2027	Municipality of Pombal / Residents
1	#5: Re-permeabilization of public space	Renaturalization	High	2030	Municipality of Pombal
2	#6: Creation of annual agenda and organization of events with companies and cultural associations	Dynamization	High	2028	Business Association of Pombal
2	#7: Implementation of neighbourhood promotion program	Regeneration and dynamization; community involvement	Medium	2026	Municipality of Pombal / Residents
3	#8: Preparation of commercial map of the Historic Center	Document	Medium	2030	Municipality of Pombal / Business Association of Pombal
3	#9: Promotion of a street food square	Infrastructure	High	2030	Municipality of Pombal

SO	Action	Type	Effort	Prazo	Responsabilidade
3	#10: Definition of tourist routes associated with local products/arts	Routes	Medium	2030	Municipality of Pombal

Table 2. Actions proposed by the ULG to address the Strategic Objective +Green.

Strategic Objective 2: + ENERGY EFFICIENCY

In Portugal, energy poverty in buildings is a serious issue, and Pombal is no exception. In this context, the aim is to improve the energy efficiency of the Historic Centre, starting with enhancing the energy performance of buildings to reduce fossil fuel consumption by installing renewable energy solutions. At the same time, the goal is to significantly improve thermal comfort for the population (both residents and visitors) through thermal qualification of habitats.

Intervention Areas: Energy, Environment, Natural Resources (water, solar exposure, etc.), Buildings, Public Space, Rehabilitation.

Specific Objectives:

4. Support and inform citizens about technical solutions to improve energy efficiency and access to financial support;
5. Promote energy efficiency and thermal comfort in buildings;
6. Harnessing and reusing rainwater and wastewater;
7. Commitment to Circular Economy.

SO	Action	Type	Effort	Deadline	Responsibility
4	#11: Creation of an information kiosk/counter on energy efficiency	Infrastructure	High	2027	Municipality of Pombal
4	#12: Creation of a digital platform to access information on energy efficiency	Digital platform	Low	2026	Municipality of Pombal
5	#13: Partnership with a network of expert evaluators at affordable costs	Network	Low	2026	Municipality of Pombal / Engineers / Architects
5/6	#14: Granting of tax benefits and municipal incentives for improving energy and thermal efficiency of buildings, reuse of rainwater, and	Regulation	Low	2027	Municipality of Pombal / Landlords

SO	Action	Type	Effort	Deadline	Responsibility
	adaptation to climate change				
6/7	#15: Creation of urban cisterns for rainwater collection and subsequent use	Infrastructure	Medium	2028	Municipality of Pombal

Table 3. Actions proposed by the ULG to address the Strategic Objective +Efficient

Strategic Objective 3: + MOBILITY

The Historic Center underwent an urban regeneration process aimed at promoting soft mobility modes to trigger urban decarbonization and encourage a healthier lifestyle for the population, in direct synergy with the enjoyment of public space. However, it is important to continue this process, as no restrictions have ever been applied to road traffic, which interferes with and undermines the enjoyment of public space. At a time when environmental issues are part of the European agenda, the moment has come to invest in sustainable and green mobility.

Intervention Areas: Mobility, Soft Modes, Environment, Public Space, Traffic.

Specific Objectives:

8. Promote the use of soft mobility modes and public transport;
9. Eliminate illegal parking and create peripheral parking areas;
10. Restrict road traffic, promoting pedestrian safety.

SO	Action	Type	Effort	Deadline	Responsibility
8	#16: Implementation of Pombus route crossing the Historic Centre	Infrastructure	High	2030	Municipality of Pombal
8	#17: Definition of bike lanes	Infrastructure	Medium	2030	Municipality of Pombal
9	#18: Creation of an information system on the availability of spaces in peripheral/covered parking lots	Equipment	Medium	2030	Municipality of Pombal
9	#19: Development of an app to provide a reward system for those parking in peripheral parking lots	Digital platform / Regulation	High	2030	Municipality of Pombal
9	#20: Installation of panels discouraging parking/private car circulation	Information	Low	2027	Municipality of Pombal
9	#21: Creation of peripheral parking lots	Infrastructure	High	2030	Municipality of Pombal

SO	Action	Type	Effort	Deadline	Responsibility
10	#22: Improvement of vertical signage and public lighting	Equipment	Medium	2028	Municipality of Pombal
10	#23: Creation of an entry/exit system for the Historic Center to prevent long-term parking	Infrastructure	High	2030	Municipality of Pombal

Table 4. Actions proposed by the ULG to address the Strategic Objective +Mobility.

3 | DETAILED ACTION PLAN



The ULG identified a total of 23 actions as necessary to make Pombal's Historic Center more sustainable. Since developing all of them would be too ambitious, and for strategic and implementation purposes, the ULG applied a voting system during its meeting, where each member voted, within each strategic objective, for the action they considered most important and impactful. The three actions with the highest number of votes in each axis were identified as priorities for transforming this territory and, accordingly, were further detailed in this section.

Strategic Objective 1: + GREEN / PUBLIC SPACE

#2: PUBLIC SPACE GREENING					
Create small areas in the historic zone with trees, flower boxes, chairs, parks, tables, etc.					
Responsible	Municipality of Pombal				
Partners	Pombal Parish; local businesses; residents; local nurseries; ICNF; AECF				
Strategic Documents	Pombal 2030 Development Strategy - A.12.03.02. Creation of a network of family and community leisure spaces				
Execution Deadline	Short / 2026 - 2027				
Risks	Lack of budget; unavailability of locations for implementation; lack of public interest				
Financial Resources	200.000€ Municipal Budget; Environmental Fund; European Funding				
Impact	More resting and social spaces within the Historic Center; more flower boxes on balconies and in front of businesses; more shade; more tables				
Activity	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Supply of flowers and aromatic plants	2026	Human resources; flowers	Regulation	Number of flower boxes outside homes	Flower saturation; lack of resident interest; vandalism
Identification and creation of spaces for benches, dining tables, flower boxes, and trees	2027	Human resources; public spaces; projects	Project implementation	Number of benches in public space	Spaces too small; vandalism

Table 5. Summary sheet of Action #2: Public Space Tree Planting

#3: INSTALLATION OF SHADING STRUCTURES

The goal is to create shade in public spaces to promote a cooler and more welcoming environment for citizens – thus combating increasingly high temperatures caused by climate change and the lack of green areas in the intervention zone. These structures may include built elements, decorative elements, or vegetation.

Responsible	Municipality of Pombal				
Partners	Pombal Parish; Residents				
Strategic Documents	Pombal 2030 Development Strategy - A.12.02.02. Integrated plan for revitalization of Pombal's historic area				
Execution Deadline	Medium / 2027 - 2030				
Risks	Loss of identity of the existing urban environment				
Financial Resources	200.000€ Municipal Budget; Environmental Fund; European Funding				
Impact	Well-being in public space; increased use and sense of community; more pleasant environment; economic and commercial development				
Activity	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Development of projects to define the type of structures	2026-2028	Project; human resources	Definition of locations and types of structures to implement	Number of shaded spaces created	Delays in deadlines and decision-making; Undefined locations; Private opposition
Installation of structures	2028-2030	Specialized companies; human resources	Management plan	Number of people on the street during hot days	Insulation during winter

Table 6. Summary sheet of Action #3: Installation of Shading Structures

#9: PROMOTE A STREET FOOD SQUARE

Creation of a Street Food square in Praça Marquês de Pombal, with the installation of prefabricated containers or food trucks and dining areas, aiming to energize public space, attract visitors, and increase the existing offer, bringing life to the Historic Center.

Responsible	Municipality of Pombal
Partners	Restaurant businesses or service providers
Strategic Documents	Pombal 2030 Development Strategy - A.12.02.02. Integrated plan for revitalization of Pombal's historic area
Execution Deadline	Long / 2028 - 2030
Risks	Low interest from restaurant businesses; low public support; increased noise and waste; incompatibility with religious events at the Main Church; decline in higher education
Financial Resources	2.000.000€ Municipal Budget; restaurant businesses; European funding
Impact	More dynamic public spaces; higher usage rate of public space; differentiated complementarity in the offer of existing uses/services; increased city-scale offer; creation of a social and wellness hub; improvement of existing infrastructure and urban furniture; creation of a new tourist attraction hub

Activity	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Definition of operating criteria and design of public space	2028	Regulation; human resources	Execution project; operational plan	Publication of Regulation	Complexity of documents or application
Preparation of an integrated project, including use of existing shops in the square and construction of a self-cleaning public restroom	2029-2030	Projects; specialized companies; human resources	Execution projects; definition of space layout	Number of available spaces	Project complexity; funding
Execution of infrastructure	2029-2030	Specialized companies; human resources	Definition of terrace space	Number of available seats	Slow procedures and construction contracts; funding availability
Tender for concession award	2030	Regulation; communication; human resources	Identification of interested parties; organization of meetings	Number of interested candidates for space operation	Low participation; regulations misaligned with business intentions

Activity	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Installation of the square	2030	Urban furniture; maintenance staff; human resources	Square installation; promotion; event organization	Number of visitors	Noise and urban waste impacts; coordination with other events or activities in the square

Table 7. Summary sheet of Action #9 Promote a street food square

Strategic Objective 2: + ENERGY EFFICIENCY

#11: ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY					
Create a space where citizens can go to gather information on how they can renovate or make their home more efficient, what the best options are, get help to assess the home, and apply for funding.					
Responsible	Municipality of Pombal				
Partners	Parish of Pombal; ADENE; Environmental Fund.				
Strategic Documents	Pombal 2030 Development Strategy - A.04.04.02. Pombal + energy: Program to Improve Energy Performance in the public, business, and housing sectors				
Execution Deadline	Short / 2026				
Risks	Lack of budget for human resources; lack of citizen interest				
Financial Resources	60.000€ Municipal Budget; Environmental Fund; European funding				
Impact	Increase in the number of rehabilitation processes in the ARU; increase in information requests; greater number of communication campaigns				
Activities	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Define the space for the one-stop shop, with a high-tech, innovative, and self-sufficient concept, in a visible location	2026	Project; human resources	Project development; establishment of municipal management team	Opening date of the one-stop shop	Lack of funding; re-use of spaces
Training of human resources	2026	Trainer; human resources	Define organization and responsibilities	Number of trained human resources	Human resources assigned to other services
Definition of a communication plan	2026	Communication materials; human resources	Production of communication material	Number of campaigns	Lack of time to define the plan or implement actions

Table 8. Summary sheet of Action #11 One-stop shop for energy efficiency

#14: BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Granting tax benefits and municipal incentives to property owners who make improvements in energy and thermal efficiency of buildings and/or implement rainwater reuse systems.

Responsible	Municipality of Pombal				
Partners	Property owners and private entities				
Strategic Documents	Pombal 2030 Development Strategy - A.04.04.02. Pombal + energy: Program to Improve Energy Performance in the public, business, and housing sectors				
Execution Deadline	Short / 2026 - 2027				
Risks	Low participation of property owners; lack of information; need for private investment				
Financial Resources	2.000€ Municipal Budget; Private property owners; State Budget; European funding.				
Impact	Improvement of housing conditions; enhancement of overall urban image; improvement of energy and climate efficiency of properties for sale or rent; increased demand for commercial/service spaces for rent; reduction of segregation or urban depopulation; revitalization of the Historic Center; greater demographic and age diversity among residents and visitors; renewal or modification of current values or criteria for granting tax benefits and municipal incentives				
Activities	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Definition of regulation with framework for granting tax benefits and municipal incentives	2026	Human resources	Approval of document for granting tax benefits	Number of benefits granted	Lengthy process; lack of funding
Holding information sessions	2026 - 2028	Logistical support materials for presentations; Posters/flyers; human resources	Public presentations; production of communication materials; establishment of municipal management team	Number of participants; number of sessions; number of procedures submitted for access to benefits	Low participation; difficulty in communication/dissemination of sessions; deviation from proposed topic to other subjects; timely execution of sessions considering the planned schedule

Activities	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Conducting technical visits	2026 - 2028	Human resources; regulation	Identification, characterization, and evaluation of actions carried out; establishment of municipal management team	Number of properties intervened; number of properties with improved energy certification levels	Initial financial investment by owners; lack of knowledge; lengthy procedures; maintaining relevance of sustainability topics versus own investment and return on interventions in the short and long term

Table 9. Summary sheet of Action #14 Benefits and incentives to improve energy efficiency

#15: URBAN CISTERNS FOR RAINWATER COLLECTION AND REUSE

Creation of a rainwater reuse system that includes the use of urban cisterns in public spaces and buildings for irrigation or domestic use.

Responsible	Municipality of Pombal				
Partners	Residents; Parish of Pombal				
Strategic Documents	Pombal 2030 Development Strategy - A.04.01.04. Optimization of sustainable water use Less waste, more efficiency				
Execution Deadline	Medium / 2027 - 2028				
Risks	Costs; urban and landscape context; availability of space				
Financial Resources	200.000€ Municipal Budget; Environmental Fund; European funding				
Impact	Less water and energy consumption; more green public space; reduction of water bills for some residents				
Activities	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Definition of locations for cistern installation	2026-2027	Human resources	Evaluation of spaces for cistern installation	Number of locations for cistern installation	Physical space limitations; unavailability of cistern options; coordination with private entities
Design of the cistern	2027	Specialized technicians; human resources	Urban, landscape, and heritage context	Number of cistern design options	Environmental impact
Installation of cisterns	2028	Cisterns; installation companies; human resources	Agreement with private entities	Amount of water collected	Water quality; vandalism

Table 10. Summary sheet of Action #15 Urban cisterns for rainwater collection and reuse

Strategic Objective 3: + MOBILITY

#20: REWARD APP					
Create an application that allows those who park in peripheral lots to access discounts in local stores.					
Responsible	Municipality of Pombal				
Partners	Shop owners; AECP				
Strategic Documents	Pombal 2030 Development Strategy - A.11.02.03. Promotion of pedestrian circulation and elimination of barriers				
Execution Deadline	Long / 2028 - 2030				
Risks	Lack of interest from store owners or citizens; app complexity; complexity of regulations				
Financial Resources	100.000€ European funding; Municipality of Pombal				
Impact	Fewer cars in the historic area; more customers in local commerce; more people walking; more users of cultural and sports spaces				
Activities	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Agreement with store owners and managers of cultural/sports spaces to provide benefits	2028	Human resources; regulation	Co-creation workshops; drafting of regulations	Number of participating stores/entities	Lack of interest from store owners; complexity of regulations
App development	2029	Human resources; specialized company; control system	Georeferencing of peripheral parking lots	Number of app subscribers	App complexity; app slowness; system errors
App communication	2030	Communication materials; human resources	Preparation of communication campaigns; establishment of municipal management team	Number of citizens using the app in stores/entities	Lack of interest from citizens

Table 11. Summary sheet of Action #20 Reward App

#22: PERIPHERAL PARKING LOTS

Creation of a peripheral parking lot around the city center to reduce car traffic and promote soft mobility. This will help improve the environment and air quality, in line with European decarbonization goals.

Responsible	Municipality of Pombal				
Partners	CIMRL; Parish of Pombal				
Strategic Documents	PAMUS; Pombal 2030 Development Strategy - A.11.02.07. Creation of parking areas in the city of Pombal				
Execution Deadline	Long / 2028 - 2030				
Risks	High financial costs; land acquisition				
Financial Resources	1.500.000€ Municipal Budget; European funding.				
Impact	Lower CO2 emissions; healthier and more active life for citizens; reduced congestion; increased road safety. The more distant location from the city center requires strengthening the public transport network.				
Activities	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Acquisition of peripheral land	2026-2028	Land; human resources	Identification of location and owners; deeds	Area (m ²) acquired	Owners unwilling to sell
Project development	2028-2029	Human resources	Design and construction of complementary infrastructure (e.g., pedestrian circuits, bike lanes)	Reduction of CO2 emissions from transport	Lack of public transport between lots and city center
Construction of real-time parking monitoring system	2029	Sensors; human resources; control system; panels	Sensor installation, development of monitoring program	Number of sensors installed	Lack of financial resources
Construction of parking lots	2030	Human resources	Construction control	Number of parking spaces	Low usage
Installation of panels showing walking time to main services and next bus arrival	2030	Human resources; panels; control system	Development of communication plan to promote use; creation of informational content	Number of cars parked in Historic Center for long periods	Low citizen interest; lack of regular public transport; uncomfortable waiting areas

Activities	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Implementation of panels at city entrances with information on available spaces in peripheral parking lots	2030	Billboards; real-time database system; human resources	Formation of municipal management team	Operational start date	Breakdowns; citizen disinterest; incorrect information

Table 12. Summary sheet of Action #22 Peripheral parking lots

#23: ENTRY/EXIT SYSTEM FOR THE HISTORIC CENTER

Implementation of one or more deterrent systems to minimize abusive parking on the streets of the historic center, particularly long-term parking. One of the systems consists of implementing a system where vehicles entering the Historic Center and staying for more than 20 minutes pay for parking.

Responsible	Municipality of Pombal				
Partners	Public Security Police; users/drivers; residents				
Strategic Documents	Pombal 2030 Development Strategy - A.12.02.02. Integrated plan for revitalization of Pombal's historic area				
Execution Deadline	Short / 2029 - 2030				
Risks	Difficulty in enforcement due to fines and penalties; non-compliance by users/drivers				
Financial Resources	500.000€ Municipal Budget; European funding				
Impact	Improvement of urban environment and quality of life; better safety conditions for superior and soft mobility modes; minimization of carbon emissions; deterrence of car crossings through the Historic Center; clearing of shop windows; less street obstruction and consequently greater visual openness of streets and commercial spaces				
Activities	Year	Required Resources	Related Activities	Indicators / Results	Concerns
Regulation of parking in the Historic Center	2029	Human resources; regulation	Co-creation meetings; identification of exceptions	Publication of regulation	Opposition from shopkeepers and/or citizens
Regulation of loading and unloading in the Historic Center	2029	Human resources; regulation	Co-creation meetings	Publication of regulation	Opposition from shopkeepers and/or citizens; disregard for regulation
Construction of entry/exit monitoring and payment system	2030	Surveillance system; human resources; payment system	Definition of surveillance and payment systems	Operational start date; number of vehicles paying for parking	Decrease in store customers; vandalism
Implementation of automatic system for parking lots in the Historic Center open 24 hours a day	2030	Human resources; control system; access system; payment system	Equipment acquisition; formation of municipal management team	Number of parked cars	Low usage

Table 13. Summary sheet of Action #23 Entry/Exit system for the historic center

4 | IMPLEMENTATION



The implementation of the Integrated Action Plan for a More Sustainable Historic Centre in the Municipality of Pombal requires a coordinated, inclusive framework aligned with the defined strategic objectives. This plan aims to promote sustainable urban regeneration and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Implementation will be led by the Municipality of Pombal, supported by a network of local and regional partners, in close coordination with the URBACT Local Group (ULG), established within the COPE network.

The implementation framework is structured around the following key pillars:

- Governance: Clear definition of responsibilities, with municipal leadership and active involvement of local partners;
- Continuous stakeholder engagement: Promotion of participatory processes and open communication channels with citizens, merchants, associations, and entities;
- Funding applications and strategy: Identification of funding sources, including European funds, and new application opportunities;
- Global scheduling: Time planning of actions, with defined goals and milestones for progress monitoring;
- Risk assessment: Identification of potential obstacles and definition of mitigation measures;
- Monitoring and reporting: Establishment of performance indicators and reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency and continuous improvement of the process.

1. Governance

The implementation of the Integrated Action Plan “Historic Centre + Sustainable” in the Municipality of Pombal is based on a collaborative, inclusive, and adaptable structure designed to ensure the effectiveness, transparency, and sustainability of the proposed actions. This governance model is grounded in the principles developed within the URBACT COPE network, strengthening coordination among different local actors and promoting an integrated approach to sustainable urban development.

According to Figure 21, the Municipality of Pombal assumes leadership in implementing the plan through the Division of Urbanism, Planning, and Urban Rehabilitation (DUPRU), which will be responsible for strategic coordination, administrative management, and operationalization of actions. This technical unit ensures coordination among different municipal departments, guaranteeing alignment with the objectives of the Pombal 2030 Development Strategy and with regional and national policy frameworks, such as the New European Bauhaus and the European Green Deal. Additionally, it will serve as the contact point between involved partners and as a facilitator of participatory processes.

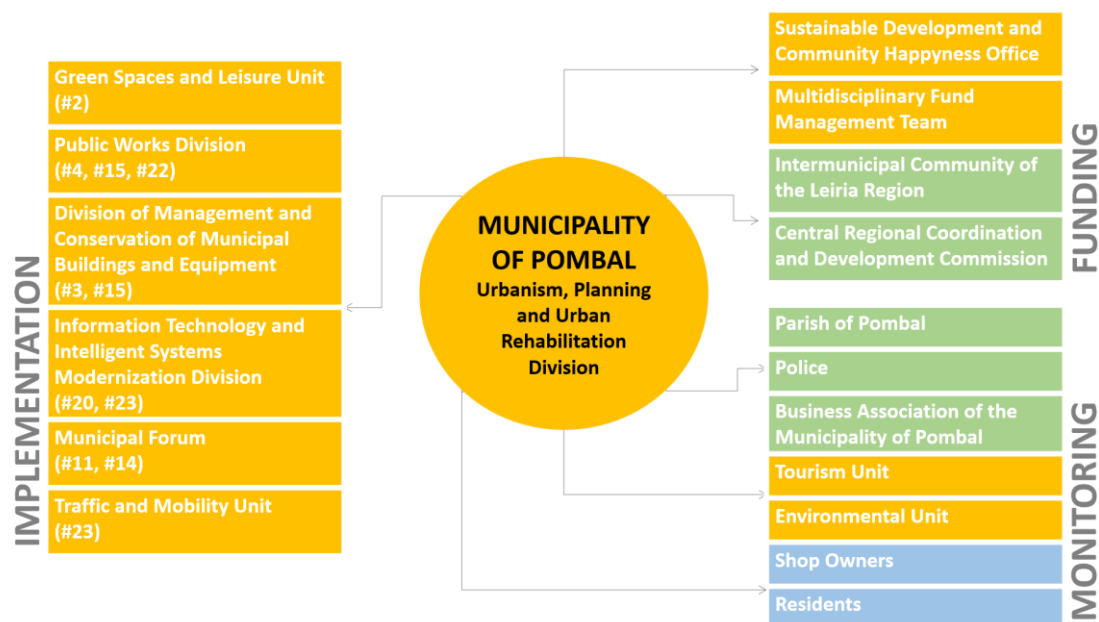


Figure 21. Governance model of the “Historic Centre + Sustainable” Plan

Note: In the diagram above, municipal services are shown in yellow, entities in green, and citizens and merchants in blue.

The Sustainable Development and Happiness Office and the Multidisciplinary Team for Funding Management will be responsible for identifying European and national funding opportunities, respectively, to implement the actions listed in this plan and for preparing applications accordingly.

Other municipal services will play a relevant role in some actions, such as the Green Spaces and Leisure Unit, which will support Action #2, public space afforestation, by promoting the installation and maintenance of the created spaces; the Public Works Division, which will oversee the works related to Actions #4, street food square, #15, urban cisterns for rainwater collection and reuse, and #22, peripheral parking lots, ensuring proper execution; the Building and Municipal Equipment Management and Conservation Division, which will assist in installing shading structures and urban equipment under Actions #3, installation of shading structures, and #15, urban cisterns for rainwater collection and reuse; the IT and Smart Systems Modernization Division, which will support the creation and integration with other municipal platforms under Action #20, reward app, and the development of the surveillance system for monitoring entry/exit in the historic centre under Action #23, entry/exit system for the Historic Centre; the Traffic and Mobility Unit, which will assist in regulating traffic in the Historic Centre, mainly in implementing Action #23; and the Citizen Forum, a centralized citizen service structure, which will allocate human resources to the Pombal+Energy space under the one-stop shop for

energy efficiency and support citizens in accessing benefits and incentives under Action #14, granting benefits and incentives to improve energy efficiency.

The URBACT Local Group (ULG), established during the COPE project, will be maintained and institutionalized as a permanent advisory body. This group will play a central role in implementing the plan, promoting active participation of citizens and local entities. Its composition includes representatives of local entities—such as the Parish Council of Pombal, the Public Security Police, and the Pombal Business Association—merchants and residents of the Historic Centre, and municipal technicians from the environment and tourism areas. Special attention will be given to including merchants and residents, ensuring that decisions consider the perspective of those who use the historic centre daily, promoting community ownership of actions.

In addition to the entities mentioned above, close collaboration will be maintained with the following regional entities due to their knowledge of funding opportunities: the Intermunicipal Community of the Region of Leiria and the Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the Centre.

The governance structure integrates regular participation and communication mechanisms, including periodic meetings of the ULG and the municipal technical team, public sessions to discuss new actions and initiatives that may arise over time to make the Historic Centre more sustainable, thematic forums and collaborative workshops, as well as digital platforms for collecting contributions and disseminating results. These mechanisms allow actions to be adjusted based on citizen feedback and local dynamics, promoting a culture of continuous improvement and open governance.

The implementation of the plan will be articulated with already mobilized funding instruments and new applications to European and national programs. This strategy aims to maximize available resources, avoid duplication, and ensure the financial sustainability of actions. Integration with existing public policies reinforces synergies and ensures that the plan contributes to the municipality's broader strategic objectives. It should be noted that there is alignment between the actions outlined here and those identified in the Pombal 2030 development strategy (Table 14).

More Sustainable Historical Centre Plan	Pombal 2030 Development Strategy
#2: PUBLIC SPACE GREENING	A.12.03.02. Creation of a network of family and community leisure spaces
#3: INSTALLATION OF SHADING STRUCTURES	A.12.02.02. Integrated plan for revitalization of Pombal's historic area
#9: PROMOTE A STREET FOOD SQUARE	A.12.02.02. Integrated plan for revitalization of Pombal's historic area
#11: ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY	A.04.04.02. Pombal + energy: Program to Improve Energy Performance in the public, business, and housing sectors
#14: BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY	A.04.04.02. Pombal + energy: Program to Improve Energy Performance in the public, business, and housing sectors
#15: URBAN CISTERNS FOR RAINWATER COLLECTION AND REUSE	A.04.01.04. Optimization of sustainable water use Less waste, more efficiency
#20: REWARD APP	A.11.02.03. Promotion of pedestrian circulation and elimination of barriers
#22: PERIPHERAL PARKING LOTS	A.11.02.07. Creation of parking areas in the city of Pombal
#23: ENTRY/EXIT SYSTEM FOR THE HISTORIC CENTER	A.12.02.02. Integrated plan for revitalization of Pombal's historic area

Table 14. Correspondence between the actions of the Historic Centre + Sustainable Plan and the actions of the Pombal 2030 Development Strategy

Finally, the governance model includes a monitoring and evaluation system based on clear indicators, periodic reports, and strategic review moments. This system makes it possible to track progress, identify constraints, and adapt actions to contextual changes. Transparency and accountability are ensured through the public disclosure of results and the promotion of a culture of institutional learning. Thus, the Integrated Action Plan “Historic Centre + Sustainable” is not presented merely as a strategic document, but as a dynamic and transformative process, centered on people, the territory, and the collective construction of a fairer, more resilient, and sustainable urban future.

2. Continuous stakeholder engagement

The implementation of the Integrated Action Plan “Historic Centre + Sustainable” requires the continuous and structured involvement of stakeholders through a dynamic, participatory, and transparent process that extends well beyond the plan’s drafting phase (Figure 22). This involvement is essential to ensure that the proposed actions remain aligned with the real needs

of the community, that local knowledge is continuously integrated, and that the momentum for the sustainable transformation of the territory is preserved.

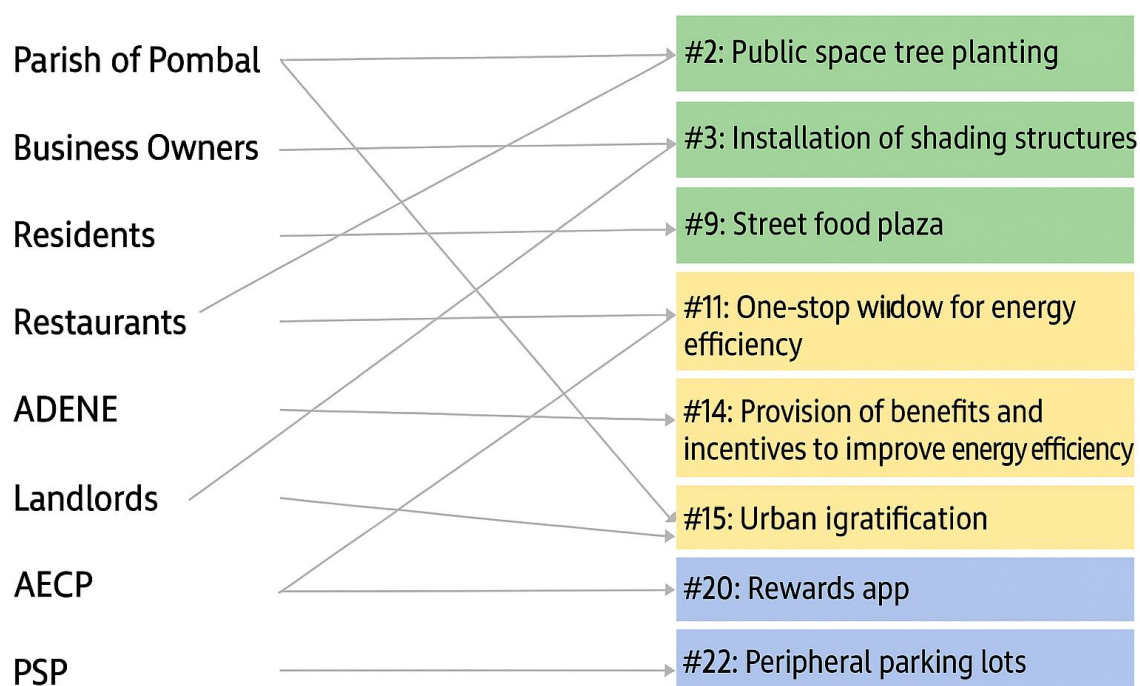


Figure 22. Partners responsible for implementing the detailed actions.

Note that, according to section 2, the Municipality is not the only entity responsible for implementing the macro actions identified by the ULG:

- Residents are responsible for actions #1, #4, and #7, through placing flower boxes on streets and balconies, caring for urban garden beds for food production, and submitting applications to the municipal neighbourhood promotion program, respectively.
- The Pombal Business Association is responsible for actions #6 and #8, by defining and implementing a cultural agenda that energizes the Historic Centre throughout the year and by creating an updated and forward-looking commercial map, respectively. Additionally, it plays an important role in encouraging shopkeepers to join the incentive program for parking in peripheral lots, stemming from action #20.
- Local professionals recognized as expert evaluators will be responsible for action #13 by joining the network of experts at affordable costs.
- Landlords are responsible for action #14 by promoting building renovations.

- Restaurant entrepreneurs are responsible for action #9 by promoting the installation of their businesses in the food court.
- The Public Security Police is responsible for action #23 by enforcing illegal parking regulations.
- The Pombal Parish Council is responsible for actions #2, #15, and #22, namely by supporting the maintenance of some garden beds, flower boxes, and cisterns, and identifying locations for peripheral parking.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, visitors and tourists also have responsibilities, because if they do not frequent the historic centre, none of the actions will succeed.

The Municipality of Pombal recognizes that the long-term success of the plan depends not only on good technical and financial management but also on active support and ownership by local actors. Therefore, the active maintenance of the URBACT Local Group (ULG), created under the COPE project, will be ensured as a permanent advisory structure. This group should meet regularly to monitor the implementation of actions, evaluate results, propose adjustments, and co-design next steps, ensuring that the plan evolves in harmony with the territory and its inhabitants.

The ULG includes representatives from various local entities — such as the Pombal Parish Council, the Public Security Police, and the Pombal Business Association — as well as shopkeepers, Historic Centre residents, and municipal technicians from the environment and tourism sectors. This diversity of profiles ensures that decisions take multiple perspectives into account, with special attention to including those who live and work daily in the historic centre, fostering a true sense of belonging and collective responsibility.

To strengthen this involvement, open and accessible communication channels will be created and promoted, such as public forums and co-creation sessions. These tools will keep stakeholders informed, collect contributions, share results, and foster continuous dialogue between the municipality and the community. The focus on innovative participation formats — such as local challenges, neighbourhood projects, or environmental awareness campaigns — will help stimulate a culture of active citizenship.

Additionally, the Municipality of Pombal will maintain close collaboration with regional entities such as the Intermunicipal Community of the Region of Leiria (CIMRL) and the Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the Centro Region (CCDRC), which play a strategic role in identifying funding opportunities and aligning with broader public policies.

This model of continuous and collaborative involvement aims to consolidate an integrated approach to urban regeneration, centered on people and the territory, capable of generating lasting impacts on quality of life, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability in Pombal's Historic Centre.

3. General costs and financing strategy

The Integrated Action Plan “Historic Centre + Sustainable” of the Municipality of Pombal is supported by a structured financial strategy aimed at ensuring the feasibility and timely execution of the proposed actions. The overall estimated budget for the implementation of the plan will be secured through a combination of municipal resources, European and national funds, namely through programs such as Portugal 2030, the Environmental Fund, and the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR) (Table 15).

Action	Local Funding	Regional Funding	National Funding	European Funding	Investment
#2: PUBLIC SPACE GREENING	Municipal Budget	Centro 2030	Environmental Fund	LIFE EUI EIT Climate-KIC	200.000€
#3: INSTALLATION OF SHADING STRUCTURES			Portugal + Green Sustainable 2030	Horizon EIT Climate-KIC	200.000€
#9: PROMOTE A STREET FOOD SQUARE	ADL Terras de Sicó	Centro 2030	Portugal + Closer Portugal + Competitive	InvestEU Horizon INTERREG	2.000.000€
#11: ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY	Municipal Budget		Environmental Fund Portugal + Green PRR POSEUR		60.000€
#14: BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY	Municipal Budget		IHRU IFRRU 2030 PRR		2.000€
#15: URBAN CISTERNS FOR RAINWATER COLLECTION AND REUSE	Municipal Budget		Environmental Fund Portugal + Green IFRRU 2030	EIT Climate-KIC Horizon InvestEU	200.000€

Action	Local Funding	Regional Funding	National Funding	European Funding	Investment
#20: REWARD APP			Portugal + Smart Portugal + Closer Transportation Fund Environmental Fund	EIT Urban Mobility EIT Digital Horizon InvestEU	100.000€
#22: PERIPHERAL PARKING LOTS		Centro 2030	Portugal + Green Portugal + Closer Transportation Fund Environmental Fund	EIT Mobility InvestEU	1.500.000€
#23: ENTRY/EXIT SYSTEM FOR THE HISTORIC CENTER			Portugal + Green Portugal + Closer Environmental Fund	EIT Urban Mobility, Horizon	500.000€

Table 15. Investment Needs and Possible Funding Sources.

The allocation of resources and funding for each action will be defined based on technical studies, market estimates, and implementation schedules, ensuring that each intervention is aligned with the objectives of sustainable urban development, social inclusion, and environmental performance.

In a forward-looking analysis, it is estimated that the implementation of the 20 actions mentioned in section 2 will cost €6.9 million. For the 9 priority actions, the projected cost is €4,762,000, with the most expensive actions being #9, construction of the food court, and #22, creation of peripheral parking lots with an information system on space availability. The actions with the lowest cost are #11, creation of the Pombal+Energy desk, and #14, granting benefits for home improvements that promote energy efficiency.

It should be noted that, since the early version of the ideas to be implemented in the Historic Centre, efforts have been made to explore funding opportunities at the national and European levels. In this regard, 7 proposals have already been submitted so far, as shown in Table 16. The Municipality of Pombal, through the Office for Sustainable Development and Happiness and the Multidisciplinary Team for Funding Management, will continue to identify complementary funding sources, promoting strategic applications and partnerships with regional entities such as

CIM Leiria Region and CCDR Centro, which play a key role in coordinating with operational programs and providing technical guidance for application processes.

Funding Programme	Title of the proposal	Action
HORIZON-MISS-2024-CLIMA-01 Supporting the implementation of the EU Mission Adaptation to Climate Change	CASEN Climate Adaptation and Social Equity Networks	#2: PUBLIC SPACE GREENING
CERV-2025-CITIZENS-TOWN-TT Call for proposals for Town Twinning	COMMON SPACES cultural opportunities to mobilise municipalities and open new spaces for participatory, accessible, creative and empowering solutions	#2: PUBLIC SPACE GREENING
LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV (Circular Economy and Quality of Life - Standard Action Projects (SAP))	LIFE Uncovered Uncovering LIFE beneath the city's sealed surfaces to restore soil quality and ecosystem services	#2: PUBLIC SPACE GREENING
LIFE-2024-CET LIFE Clean Energy Transition	ETplus Facilitating and Streamlining Energy Transition Action Planning in Local Authorities	#14: BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY
European Urban Initiative Innovative Actions (EUI-IA)	APPOLON Innovative digital approaches for stimulating innovative behaviour change aiming at buildings and smart cities energy sustainability	#14: BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY
Fundo Ambiental	Pombal + Energia	#11: ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY
URBACT Transfer Network	Bike2work Cities: Moving Communities	#20: REWARD APP

Table 16. Applications submitted to obtain funding for the actions defined in the IAP.

This financial framework reinforces the municipality's long-term vision for a Historic Centre that is more inclusive, innovative, and resilient to climate change, ensuring that every euro invested contributes to the sustainable transformation of the territory and to the well-being of its community.

4. Timeline

The implementation of the Integrated Action Plan “Historic Centre + Sustainable” of the Municipality of Pombal is scheduled to take place between January 2026 and December 2030. This period ensures sufficient time for technical preparation, mobilization of local partners, institutional coordination, and phased execution of the planned actions.

The actions have been organized sequentially, allowing governance structures to lay the foundations for physical interventions such as the installation of shading structures, the creation of peripheral parks, the implementation of rainwater reuse systems, and the planting of trees in public spaces. This structured timeline aims to maximize synergies between actions, ensure consistency with funding deadlines, and respect the municipality’s technical and administrative capacity.

Execution will be supported by a continuous monitoring system, with evaluation and adjustment phases, ensuring that the plan remains aligned with the defined strategic objectives and the real needs of the community. Coordination with regional, national, and European funding programs will guarantee the necessary resources and strengthen the impact of actions on the territory. A Gantt chart has been prepared to provide an overview of the proposed schedule for each action, facilitating integrated management and communication with stakeholders (Table 17).

Actions	2026		2027		2028		2029		2030	
	1S	2S	1S	2S	1S	2S	1S	2S	1S	2S
#2: PUBLIC SPACE GREENING				x						
#3: INSTALLATION OF SHADING STRUCTURES										x
#9: PROMOTE A STREET FOOD SQUARE										x
#11: ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY				x						
#14: BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY				x						
#15: URBAN CISTERNS FOR RAINWATER COLLECTION AND REUSE						x				
#20: REWARD APP										x
#22: PERIPHERAL PARKING LOTS										x
#23: ENTRY/EXIT SYSTEM FOR THE HISTORIC CENTER										x

Table 17. Implementation Schedule of Actions

5. Risk Assessment

The involvement of a diverse set of actions, partner entities, and funding sources makes it essential to adopt a structured and proactive risk assessment approach, enabling the anticipation of challenges, the prevention of delays, and the long-term success of the plan. Risk management is an integral part of the governance model and the implementation framework, supporting informed decision-making throughout the entire process.

The risk assessment strategy includes identifying potential risks in four main categories (Cat.): administrative, financial, operational, and external or unpredictable. Each identified risk will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Probability (Prob.) – The likelihood of the risk occurring during the plan's implementation.
- Impact (Imp.) – The estimated consequences of the risk on the schedule, quality, or budget of the actions.
- Prevention Measures – Actions aimed at reducing the probability of the risk occurring.
- Mitigation Measures – Strategies to minimize or manage the impact of the risk if it materializes.

This approach allows the Municipality of Pombal and its partners to maintain the necessary flexibility to respond to uncertainties, ensuring continuity in the execution of priority actions. Furthermore, it strengthens transparency and accountability towards stakeholders, funders, and the community at large.

A risk analysis table has been prepared to identify the most relevant risks in each category and the corresponding prevention and mitigation strategies. This table will be periodically updated throughout implementation and monitored by the plan's coordination team, in coordination with the URBACT Local Group (Table 18).

Cat.	Description	Prob.	Imp.	Prevention	Mitigation
Administrative Risk	1. Bureaucratic delays in permits, authorizations, or procurement processes	Medium	High	Early engagement with authorities; Time buffers in planning	Close monitoring; Flexible rescheduling

Cat.	Description	Prob.	Imp.	Prevention	Mitigation
	2. Lack of coordination between municipal departments and external partners	Medium	Moderate	Clear definition of roles; Regular coordination meetings	Conflict resolution structures; Progress monitoring
	3. Delays in conducting public consultations or obtaining stakeholder approval	Medium	Moderate	Advance scheduling; Prior communication	Streamlined approval processes; Alternative participation formats
Financial Risk	1. Increase in costs due to inflation or fluctuations in material prices	Medium	High	Conservative estimates; 10–15% contingency margin	Adjustment of action scope; Search for complementary funding
	2. Delays in fund transfers by funding entities	Low	Moderate	Timely submission of documents; Continuous follow-up	Use of bridge financing; Prioritization of essential tasks
	3. Underestimation of maintenance and life-cycle costs of infrastructure	Medium	Moderate	Inclusion of maintenance projections in the budget	Periodic reviews; Corrective adjustments
Operational Risk	1. Technical complexity in adapting old infrastructure	Medium	High	Preliminary feasibility studies; Technical assessment	Project adjustment; Hiring of specialists
	2. Vandalism or theft of urban equipment or furniture	Low	Moderate	Community engagement; Awareness campaigns	Municipal monitoring; Rapid response to damage
	3. Delays caused by weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances at the construction site	Medium	Moderate	Seasonal planning; Protective measures at intervention sites	Rescheduling margins; Contingency plans
Other Risks	1. Low participation of residents and business owners in ULG meetings	Medium	Moderate	Diversification of formats and communication channels	More targeted proximity actions; Repetition of events
	2. Resistance to changing mobility habits	Medium	Moderate	Educational workshops; Pilot programs	Incentives; Improvement of public space

Cat.	Description	Prob.	Imp.	Prevention	Mitigation
	3. Exclusion of vulnerable groups in participatory processes	Medium	Moderate	Inclusive strategies; Choice of accessible locations; Mailbox invitations	Continuous evaluation and adaptation of engagement methods

Table 18. Risk Analysis

6. Monitoring

The monitoring and reporting framework of the Integrated Action Plan “Historic Centre + Sustainable” is essential to ensure transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in the implementation process. This system was designed to track progress against defined objectives, identify emerging challenges, and support evidence-based decision-making throughout the entire lifecycle of the plan.

Monitoring will be carried out by the plan’s coordination team, integrated within the Urban Planning, Development, and Urban Rehabilitation Division (DUPRU) of the Municipality of Pombal. This team will be responsible for collecting and analysing data related to the execution of each action, preparing progress reports, and verifying compliance of results with expected outputs and defined performance indicators. Monitoring will be conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively, covering the physical execution of actions, stakeholder engagement, financial management, and alignment with relevant public policies.

Each action included in the plan is associated with specific deliverables and an execution schedule, as described in the planning section. Monitoring will be carried out through:

- Quarterly internal reviews, conducted by the coordination team.
- Annual reports presented to the URBACT Local Group (ULG), detailing progress, potential delays, and necessary adjustments.
- Mid-term and final evaluations, which will assess overall performance, the impact of actions, and lessons learned for future replication or scalability.
- Public transparency, ensured through the publication of reports and updates on the municipality’s website and community platforms. Feedback mechanisms will be maintained, including digital surveys and in-person sessions, to integrate citizens’ contributions into the implementation process.

- Compliance with funders, guaranteed by meeting monitoring and audit requirements of funding programs such as Portugal 2030, the Environmental Fund, and other European and national instruments.

The Municipality of Pombal is committed to using monitoring results to adjust strategies, respond to emerging needs, and foster a culture of urban development that is results-oriented and people-centered.

7. Conclusion

The Integrated Action Plan “Historic Centre + Sustainable” of the Municipality of Pombal represents a strategic and transformative vision for urban regeneration focused on sustainability, inclusion, and citizen participation. Aligned with the core values of the COPE project and the principles of the European Green Deal, this plan embodies a strong commitment to revitalizing the Historic Centre as a vibrant, resilient, and socially just space.

Developed based on the real needs of the community and through an extensive participatory process, the plan brings together concrete actions that promote soft mobility, heritage rehabilitation, improvement of public space, and, consequently, local economy and social cohesion. By valuing local knowledge, engaging residents, and promoting green solutions, Pombal positions itself as a territory committed to territorial innovation and spatial justice.

The proposed actions are structured, feasible, and results-oriented, supported by a robust implementation and monitoring system. This approach ensures the adaptability of the plan in the face of emerging challenges, without losing sight of long-term strategic objectives.

The success of “Historic Centre + Sustainable” will depend on the continuous commitment of all stakeholders — municipal authorities, civil society, business owners, entities, and residents — and on the implementation of all 23 actions listed herein. Through ongoing collaboration, transparent governance, and collective ownership of solutions, Pombal is ready to become a benchmark in place-based urban innovation and sustainability.