

Plan Einstein Academy

Social Investment Plan

INTERMUNICIPAL COMMUNITY OF
COIMBRA REGION

2025-2027

Supported by the URBACT programme Plan Einstein Academy Innovation Transfer Network





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1. Context

1.1.WHY THIS INVESTMENT PLAN?

This Investment Plan has been developed within the framework of the **URBACT IV Innovation Transfer Network Plan Einstein Academy**. It is the outcome of a **participatory local process** involving a wide range of stakeholders from across the Coimbra Region, brought together through the URBACT Local Group (ULG).

Rather than starting from a blank slate, the Investment Plan builds on an **ongoing trajectory of local and intermunicipal action**. In recent years, the Coimbra Region has been actively responding to demographic change, labour shortages and increasing migration flows. These efforts have laid important foundations for **migrant reception and inclusion** at both local and intermunicipal levels.

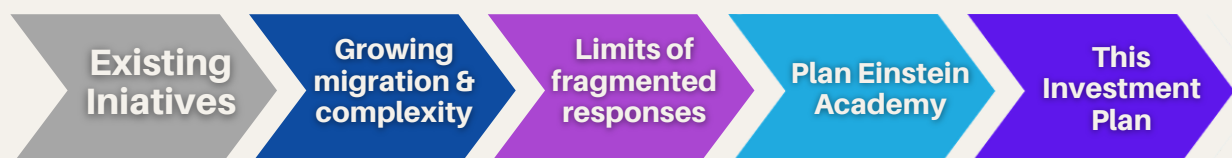
At the same time, the growing scale and diversity of migration have highlighted the limits of **fragmented and sector-based responses**. It has become increasingly clear that projects alone are not enough. There is a need to strengthen coherence **between initiatives**, to connect policies with everyday practices, and to place **community-building and meaningful encounters** at the centre of migrant reception and inclusion.

From Projects to Community

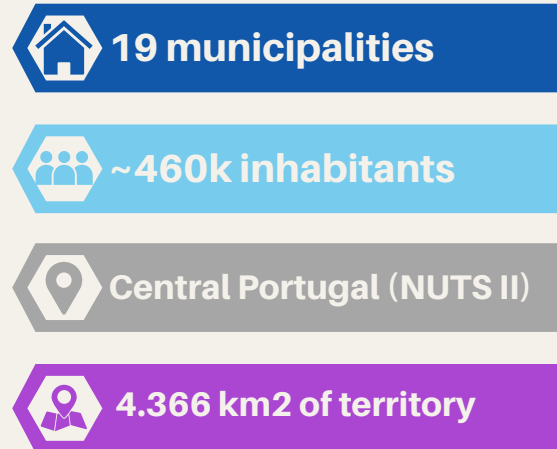
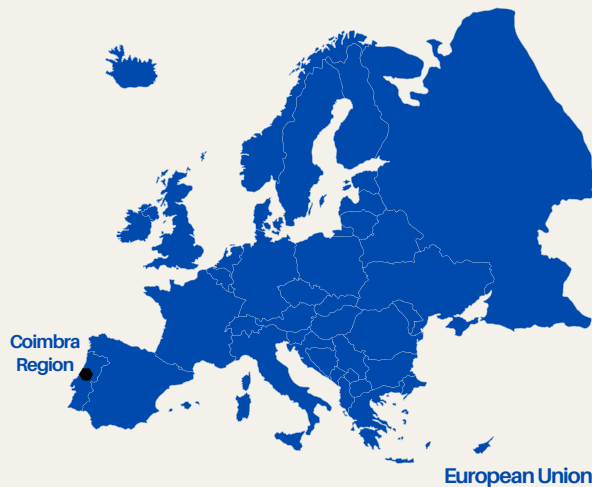
This Investment Plan marks a shift from fragmented initiatives towards a more integrated, community-based approach to migrant reception and inclusion in the Coimbra Region.

In this context, the Investment Plan represents a **moment of consolidation and strategic alignment**. It sets out a shared vision for how the principles of the Plan Einstein approach can support the Coimbra Region in moving from isolated responses towards a **more integrated, community-based model**. The Plan identifies priorities for action, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and outlines pathways for implementation, while recognising that not all actions can be implemented immediately or through a single funding source.

The Investment Plan should therefore be understood as both a **planning and a communication tool**. It reflects the **collective learning generated** through participation in the Plan Einstein Academy network and provides a **common reference framework** to guide future action, investment and collaboration across the territory.



1.2. COIMBRA REGION: A DIVERSE AND POLYCENTRIC TERRITORY



The **Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region** (CIM-RC) is located in Central Portugal (NUTS II Centro) and corresponds to the NUTS III Coimbra Region, approximately halfway between Lisbon and Porto. It brings together **19 municipalities** across three districts (Coimbra, Aveiro and Viseu), covering an area of **4.336 km²** and home to around **460,000 inhabitants**.

As an intermunicipal territory, the Coimbra Region is characterised by a **high degree of internal diversity**. It includes coastal, urban and predominantly rural areas, with significant differences in population density, age structure, economic activity and access to services.

Several cities and towns within the region maintain strong historical and functional links, giving the territory a polycentric structure and a strong capacity for coordination and metropolisation.

In the context of Portugal's decentralisation process, intermunicipal communities and local authorities have assumed a more active role in **designing and implementing local and regional policies**. In the Coimbra Region, this has translated into growing responsibilities in areas such as **education, health and social inclusion**, reinforcing the importance of intermunicipal cooperation and shared strategic approaches.

The city of Coimbra plays a particularly significant role within the region. Internationally recognised for its University, one of the oldest in Europe, and its historic urban fabric, classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Coimbra acts as an educational, cultural and service hub for the wider territory.



Figure 1 - University of Coimbra

At the same time, many smaller municipalities face challenges related to demographic decline, limited service provision and geographic isolation, highlighting the need for **territory-wide, inclusive and place-sensitive responses**.

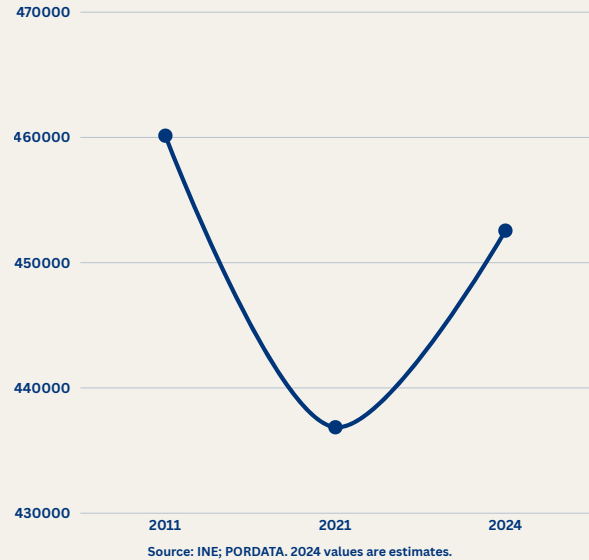
This combination of scale, diversity and institutional capacity makes the Coimbra Region both complex and full of potential. It provides a strong foundation for intermunicipal action on migrant reception and inclusion, while also underlining the importance of approaches that can adapt to different local realities within a shared strategic framework.

1.3. A TERRITORY IN TRANSITION: DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND MIGRATION CHALLENGES

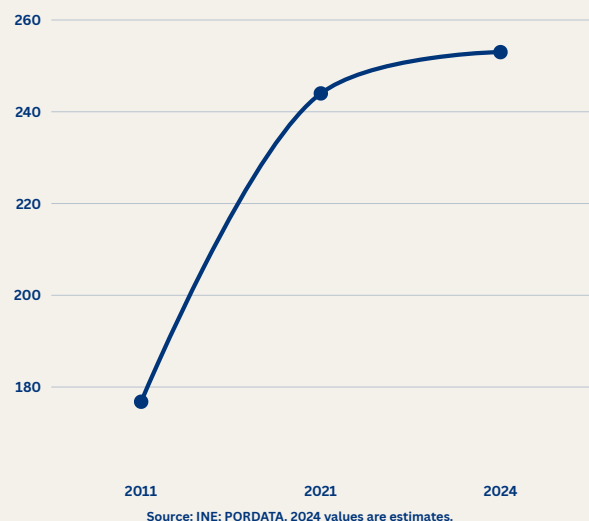
The Coimbra Region is **undergoing a significant demographic transition**, marked by long-term population decline, strong population ageing and a more recent phase of **partial demographic recovery**.

Between **2011** and **2021**, the resident population decreased, reflecting structural trends such as low birth rates, ageing and outmigration. More recent estimates, however, indicate a **recovery since 2021**, with population growth observed up to 2024. Despite this positive development, the region continues to face a very high ageing index, highlighting persistent challenges related to labour availability, service provision and territorial sustainability.

Population residing in the Coimbra Region
(2011–2024)

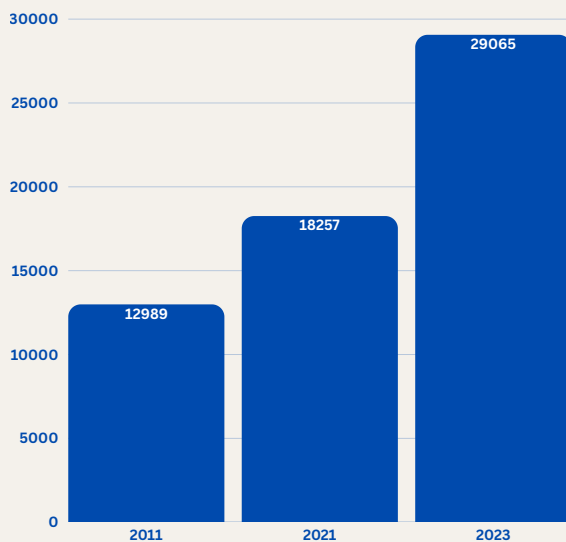


Ageing index in the Coimbra Region (2011–2024)
Number of elderly people per 100 young people, showing a
continuous and significant ageing of the population.



In this context, **migration has become a key driver of demographic and social change**. The number of foreign residents has grown steadily over the last decade, contributing significantly to the recent recovery in population figures. This confirms that migration is no longer a marginal phenomenon, but a **structural component of the region's demographic dynamics**.

Growth of the foreign resident population in the Coimbra Region (2011-2023)



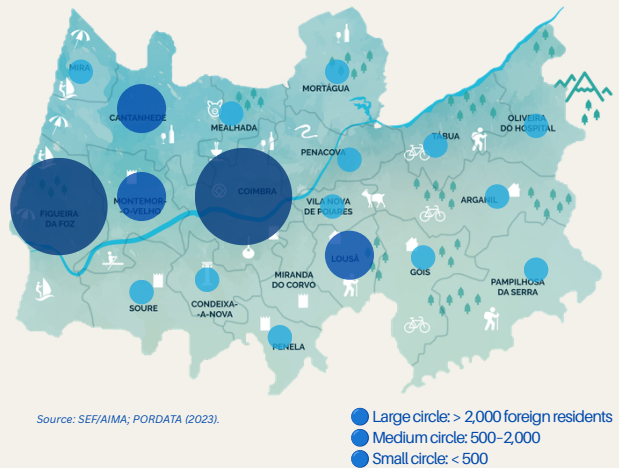
Source: SEF/AIMA; PORDATA.

Migration in Coimbra Region is predominantly labour-driven, representing around **85% of current migration profiles**, which strongly shapes integration needs and priorities.

Migration patterns vary considerably across the territory. The Coimbra Region is characterised by **strong internal heterogeneity**, with urban, intermediate and low-density municipalities experiencing different dynamics. While larger cities concentrate the highest absolute numbers of foreign residents, several smaller municipalities display **higher relative shares**, reinforcing the need for **place-based and intermunicipal approaches** to migrant reception and inclusion.

Recent data also suggest that many migrants are no longer in the initial phase of arrival, but in intermediate stages of settlement.

Foreign resident population by municipality in the Coimbra Region (2023)



This creates both opportunities and challenges, as inclusion efforts increasingly need to focus on **stability, access to services, participation and community life**, rather than only first reception.

Overall, these dynamics highlight migration as a **central factor for demographic sustainability and community renewal** in the Coimbra Region, while underlining the importance of **coordinated, inclusive and community-based responses** across the territory.

Migration as a driver of demographic sustainability

Migration is no longer a temporary or marginal phenomenon in Coimbra Region. It plays a central role in mitigating demographic decline, sustaining local economies and reshaping community life, reinforcing the need for coordinated and community-based approaches to inclusion.

1.4. A SOLID BASE OF POLICIES, PARTNERSHIPS AND EXPERIENCE

The response to migration in the Coimbra Region is framed by a strong strategic commitment to social inclusion, territorial cohesion and equal access to rights. This commitment is anchored in the **Integrated Territorial Development Strategy (ITDS) 2021-2027**, which defines a region focused on enhancing its endogenous potential, facilitating mobility and ensuring equitable access to employment, health, education, culture and social rights.

Strategic Framework

The response to migration in the Coimbra Region is embedded in a long-term territorial strategy focused on social inclusion, equal access to rights and territorial cohesion.

The ITDS is aligned with the priorities of the **Centro 2030 Operational Programme**, the **National Spatial Planning Policy Programme (PNPOT)** and the wider framework of **EU Cohesion Policy**, ensuring coherence between regional, national and European objectives.

A central priority of this strategy is **"A More Social Region"**, focused on the implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**.

Within this priority, migration and inclusion are addressed as cross-cutting issues, closely linked to employment, education, health, social inclusion, equality and the prevention of discrimination.

This strategic orientation is further reinforced by the **Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region's commitment to the Portuguese Charter for Diversity**, signed in February 2024. Through this commitment, diversity is recognised as a guiding ethical principle, shaping both internal practices and external action, and providing a solid foundation for inclusive, community-oriented approaches to migrant reception and inclusion.

1.5. A MOMENT OF CONSOLIDATION AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Taken together, the demographic changes affecting the Coimbra Region, the strategic commitment to a **more social and inclusive territory** and the implementation of **AMIF-funded integration actions** point to a clear moment of transition.

From strategy to action: aligning policy, funding and community-based approaches.

The challenge is no longer only to respond to immediate needs, but to **connect policies, projects and people** in a coherent and community-oriented way.

In this context, participation in the **Plan Einstein Academy** offered an opportunity to reflect on existing practices, to strengthen coordination across municipalities, and to place **meaningful encounters and community-building** at the centre of migrant reception and inclusion.

This Investment Plan emerges as a **bridge between strategy and practice**. It consolidates learning, aligns ongoing initiatives and sets out a shared direction for future action, providing a clear framework to guide implementation, investment and collaboration across the Coimbra Region.



Figure 2 - TEX Meeting of Plan Einstein Academy



2. Methodology

2.1. FROM UTRECHT TO COIMBRA

Plan Einstein was originally developed by the **City of Utrecht (The Netherlands)** in response to the steep rise in new arrivals in **2015-2016**, when local authorities faced the need to rapidly expand reception capacity while avoiding the negative impacts of traditional reception models. In the Netherlands, reception is managed nationally by the **Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA)**, and reception centres have often been located in fenced-off sites with limited connection to surrounding communities. Experience showed that these models could isolate newcomers, slow down inclusion, and fuel resentment and distrust at neighbourhood level, while negatively affecting wellbeing.

Against this backdrop, Utrecht's officials formulated an alternative approach: placing reception **at the heart of the community** and enabling early participation through supportive activities from the first stages of arrival. The resulting initiative was tested through the **Utrecht Refugee Launchpad**, funded under Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) (2016-2019), receiving nearly **EUR 2.8 million (ERDF)**. The pilot was implemented in the neighbourhood of **Overvecht**, using two former office buildings located on **Einsteinreed**.

One building was developed by COA as the reception centre, while the second was converted into housing for local young people and into spaces for learning and incubation, creating an environment that supported the core concept of **"living together, learning together and working together."**

A defining feature of Plan Einstein is its theory of change: by bringing **locals and newcomers together as equals**, through activities "from day one", the approach strengthens good local relations, supports the development of **future-proof skills and connections**, and promotes higher levels of **mental wellbeing** for both newcomers and neighbourhood members. In practice, Utrecht created open and welcoming spaces and organised a combination of structured and informal activities, such as training courses in English and entrepreneurship, alongside everyday moments of interaction (e.g., eating together, tutoring, joint cultural and social activities). These activities were supported by a broader **ecosystem of partners** (NGOs, social enterprises, educational institutions and community actors), reflecting the principle that local authorities do not deliver integration alone, but enable collective action.

The pilot also demonstrated that the approach can positively influence local attitudes over time. Despite initial opposition from parts of the community, the evaluation highlighted improvements in social relations, skills and confidence, and reported wellbeing among participants, while local resistance decreased significantly once the centre became active and visible in practice. These results contributed to a major milestone: **in 2019, Plan Einstein was adopted as official local policy in Utrecht**, approved unanimously across the political spectrum, and subsequently implemented through new Plan Einstein locations and “hubs”, adapted to different neighbourhood contexts.



Figure 3 - Plan Einstein Haydn

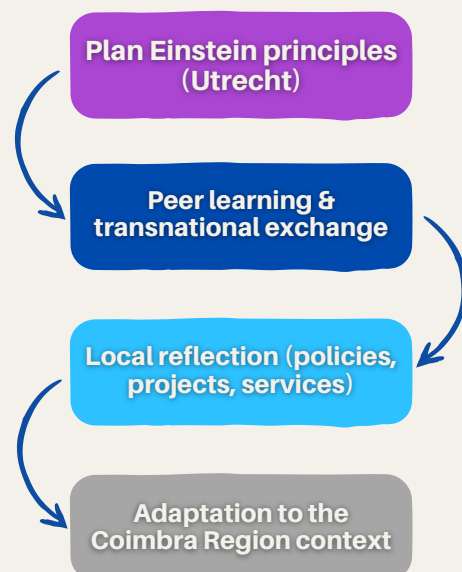
Building on Utrecht’s journey, **Plan Einstein Academy** was established as an **URBACT Innovation Transfer Network (2024–2026)**, enabling partner territories to deepen understanding of Plan Einstein’s principles, assess transfer potential and prepare locally grounded pathways for reuse. A key conclusion of the network’s Understand Phase is that Plan Einstein is not a fixed set of obligatory activities.

Instead, it is a **principle-based and adaptable approach**, where each territory builds its own constellation of actions while maintaining fidelity to core principles, particularly the creation of spaces and activities for meaningful encounters and the mobilisation of a supportive local ecosystem.

In this context, the **Coimbra Region (CIM-RC)** joined Plan Einstein Academy to translate these principles to an **intermunicipal reality**, connecting peer learning and transnational exchange with a structured local reflection on existing policies, services and projects. Participation in the network provided a shared framework to strengthen **community-based approaches** and to align existing initiatives, reinforcing coherence and long-term sustainability, rather than replicating a single model.

Transfer as Adaptation

In Coimbra Region, the transfer of Plan Einstein focuses on adapting principles to local realities, aligning existing initiatives and strengthening community-based approaches rather than replicating a single model.



2.2. BUILDING THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP (ULG)

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) in Coimbra Region was established as a **multi-sectoral and intermunicipal platform**, reflecting the diversity and complexity of migrant reception and inclusion across the territory. The ULG is **coordinated by the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra (CES-UC)**, under the scientific guidance of **Pedro Góis**, ensuring methodological coherence and a strong link between research, policy and practice.

Rather than creating a new or parallel structure, the ULG builds on **existing governance and cooperation mechanisms**. Many of its members are also part of the **Supra-Council Social Platform**, coordinated by the Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region, which brings together key actors working on employment, ageing, inclusion, health and social action. This ensured continuity, institutional memory and alignment with ongoing social policies and initiatives.

The ULG brings together actors from **intermunicipal and municipal governance**, public administration, and key sectors such as **employment, education, health and social integration**, reflecting a shared understanding that migrant inclusion requires **coordinated and cross-sectoral action**. Its composition and interactions are illustrated in the stakeholder mapping below.

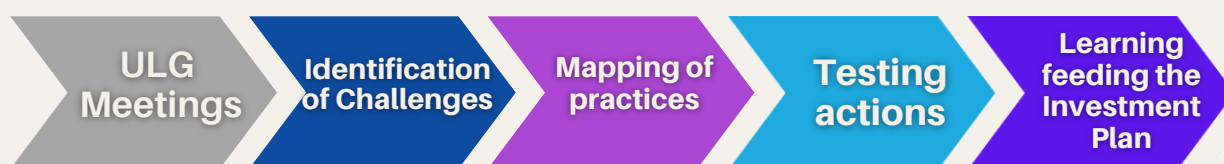


TABLE 1.1 - COMPOSITION OF THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP (ULG)

ORGANISATIONS	ROLE
 ces Centre for Social Studies University of Coimbra COORDINATOR: PEDRO GÓIS	<i>Provides overall coordination and scientific guidance to the ULG. Ensures methodological coherence, supports evidence-based reflection and facilitates the adaptation of Plan Einstein principles to the Coimbra Region context, strengthening links between research, policy and practice.</i>
 CIM RC COMUNIDADE INTERMUNICIPAL REGIÃO DE COIMBRA INTERMUNICIPAL COMMUNITY OF THE COIMBRA REGION	<i>Lead local partner and territorial coordinator. Ensures alignment with regional strategies, including the "More Social Region" priority, and articulation with AMIF/FAMI-funded integration projects. Supports intermunicipal cooperation and consolidation of the Investment Plan.</i>
 ARGANIL Município MUNICIPALITY OF ARGANIL	<i>Municipality with extensive hands-on experience in migrant reception and integration, including the operation of a Local Support Centre for the Integration of Migrants (CLAIM). Contributes practical knowledge on intercultural activities and community engagement.</i>
 Cantanhede Município MUNICIPALITY OF CANTANHEDE	<i>Coordinator of the Social Inclusion Working Group of the Supra-Council Social Platform. Contributes with experience in local social inclusion policies, supporting the scaling of integration approaches across the territory.</i>
MIGUEL TORGA ISMT MIGUEL TORGA INSTITUTE	<i>Provides academic expertise on migration, social inclusion and community-based approaches, supporting reflection, learning and the development of the shared vision.</i>
 DGEste Direção-Geral dos Estabelecimentos Escolares DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR SCHOOL ESTABLISHMENTS - CENTRO REGION (DGE)	<i>Contributes the education perspective, focusing on the integration of migrant children and youth and on schools as key spaces for early inclusion and meaningful encounters.</i>
 INSTITUTO DO EMPREGO E FORMAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING (IEFP)	<i>Coordinator of the Employment Working Group of the Supra-Council Social Platform. Brings expertise on labour market integration, vocational training and employability pathways for migrants, responding to regional labour needs.</i>

ORGANISATIONS	ROLE
 UNIÃO DAS MISERICÓRDIAS PORTUGUEAS UNION OF PORTUGUESE MISERICÓRDIAS (UMP)	<i>Coordinator of the Health Working Group of the Supra-Council Social Platform. Represents social and solidarity organisations active in social support, health and inclusion, particularly for vulnerable migrant populations.</i>
 UNIDADE LOCAL DE SAÚDE COIMBRA LOCAL HEALTH UNIT OF COIMBRA (ULS COIMBRA)	<i>Addresses challenges related to access to healthcare, vaccination and health services for migrant populations, identified as a priority during ULG discussions.</i>
 UNIDADE LOCAL DE SAÚDE BAIXO MONDEGO LOCAL HEALTH UNIT OF BAIXO MONDEGO (ULS BAIXO MONDEGO)	<i>Contributes a territorial health perspective, supporting integrated and people-centred approaches to migrant inclusion.</i>
 CENTRO COMISSÃO DE COORDENAÇÃO E DESENVOLVIMENTO REGIONAL DO CENTRO, I.P. REGIONAL COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION - CENTRE OF PORTUGAL	<i>Coordinator of the Ageing Working Group of the Supra-Council Social Platform. Ensures alignment with regional development policies, EU funding frameworks and territorial cohesion objectives.</i>

From the outset, the ULG was conceived as a **working and learning-oriented group**. Meetings progressively shifted from initial familiarisation with the Plan Einstein approach towards **collective reflection on local challenges, identification of priorities and preparation of testing actions**, laying the groundwork for a shared vision and the development of this Investment Plan.



During the project, ULG held **five meetings**. These meetings followed a progressive and cumulative logic. Initial sessions focused on introducing the Plan Einstein principles, sharing institutional perspectives and identifying key challenges related to migrant reception and inclusion across the region. As the process evolved, discussions became more concrete and increasingly grounded in the realities of municipalities and local actors.

As discussions progressed, the ULG reached agreement on the **strategic level at which intervention should be prioritised**. In light of the diversity of initiatives already in place and the need for long-term coherence, **policy and strategy** were identified as the main area of intervention. In particular, it was agreed that the development of **Municipal Integration Plans and an Intermunicipal Integration Plan** would be a key lever to align existing actions, strengthen coordination across municipalities and embed community-based approaches into formal policy frameworks throughout the Coimbra Region.



Figure 3 - ULG meeting

The mapping exercise has been conceived as a **living document**. Its aim is not only to systematise existing initiatives, but also to function as a **shared repository**, allowing municipalities and partners to continuously add and update practices over time. In this way, it supports mutual learning, avoids duplication and strengthens coherence at intermunicipal level, providing a shared evidence base for the Investment Plan.

The document is available here: [Mapping of Practices](#)

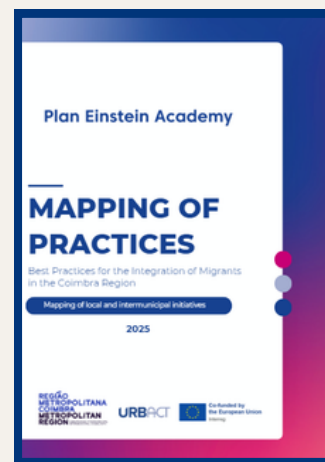


Figure 4 - Mapping of Practices

2.3. TESTING ACTIONS

2.3.1. Living Repository of Inclusion Practices

A key outcome of the ULG process was the decision to carry out a **mapping of existing practices** related to migrant reception and inclusion in the Coimbra Region. This exercise emerged from a shared recognition that, before proposing new actions, it was essential to **understand what is already being done across the territory**.

Through the ULG, it was possible to identify around **20 practices implemented** in more than **12 municipalities**, covering areas such as reception, social inclusion, education, employment, health and community engagement.

2.3.2. DENSO - Culture as a space for meaningful encounters

As a second testing action, the Coimbra Region used **DENSO**, an annual regional cultural showcase, as an opportunity to translate Plan Einstein principles into an existing cultural initiative. The 2026 edition took place between **10 April and 17 May 2026**, bringing together artistic works from municipalities across the Coimbra Region and highlighting the identity, diversity and creativity of the territory.

Inspired by Plan Einstein Academy, municipalities were encouraged to include artistic works by **newcomers living in their communities**, alongside works by local artists. Rather than creating a separate activity for migrants, DENSO opened an existing regional initiative to new voices and cultural expressions, turning the exhibition into a more explicitly intercultural platform.

This allowed newcomers to be recognised not only as beneficiaries of inclusion policies, but as **active contributors to the cultural identity of the Coimbra Region**. In parallel, the Coimbra Region also participated in a roundtable discussion on “Inclusion through culture”, reinforcing culture as a tool for visibility, dialogue and belonging.

This testing action demonstrated how the Plan Einstein approach was adapted to the Coimbra Region: by using existing cultural spaces and initiatives to foster meaningful encounters, challenge stereotypes and strengthen more inclusive local narratives.



Figure 5 - Roundtable

2.3.3. Nós 19 – Music as a space for meaningful encounters

As a third testing action, the Coimbra Region used **“Nós 19, o som de todos!”**, an intermunicipal culture-based inclusion project, to test how music can create meaningful encounters between people from different municipalities, backgrounds and life experiences.

“Nós 19, o som de todos!” is a regional participatory music initiative promoted at intermunicipal scale. The project brings together participants from across the **19 municipalities** through collective music workshops, culminating in a final public performance with Maestro Tim Steiner. Its purpose is not only to produce an artistic result, but also to use music as a shared language to strengthen participation, interaction and belonging.

The workshops took place between **2 and 5 June 2026** and brought together participants and musicians from across the territory. Rather than focusing only on artistic preparation, the workshops were designed as an initial space for participants to meet, rehearse together and begin interacting through a shared creative process.

This testing action translated the Plan Einstein principle of meaningful encounters into a cultural and intermunicipal context. Music was used as a common language, helping participants to interact beyond administrative, linguistic or social barriers. The process also showed how an existing cultural initiative can be opened to more inclusive participation, avoiding separate activities and strengthening a sense of shared belonging.

The workshops represented a first step in a longer process. The interaction and collective work initiated in June will continue towards the **final public performance in October 2026** with Maestro **Tim Steiner**, where the inclusive and community-based dimension of the initiative will become visible to a wider audience.

This testing action confirmed that culture can be a practical entry point for inclusion, particularly when it creates regular spaces for people to participate together, recognise each other and build trust over time.



Figure 6 - Workshop held in the Municipality of Tábua

3. Intervention Logic

3.1. Why a Social Investment Plan?

This Investment Plan is framed as a **Social Investment Plan** because migrant inclusion in the Coimbra Region requires more than isolated projects or one-off activities. It requires a long-term commitment to strengthening the social foundations that make inclusion possible: coordination, participation, access to opportunities, meaningful encounters and community-level belonging.

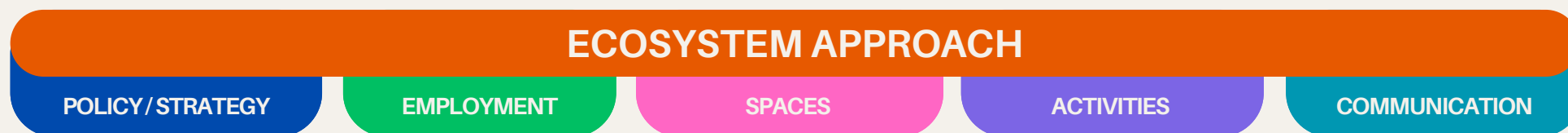
In this sense, “investment” is understood not only as financial expenditure, but also as the mobilisation of partnerships, existing initiatives, municipal capacities and community resources. The Plan therefore works as a practical framework to guide priorities, align actions and support municipalities in adapting the Plan Einstein principles to their own local realities.

Why a Social Investment Plan?

This project should be understood as a social investment. It is not about immediate financial spending, but about building a long-term strategy for the future.

-Pedro Góis, CES-UC

3.2. Umbrella logic: Ecosystem Approach



The intervention logic is organised around an **Ecosystem Approach**, which functions as the umbrella for the whole Plan. Migrant reception and inclusion cannot be delivered by one institution alone. It depends on how municipalities, public services, civil society organisations, employers, schools, health services, cultural actors and communities work together in practice.

The ecosystem approach creates the conditions for the other intervention areas to work together. It supports coordination routines, role clarity, referral pathways, shared learning and transfer of practices across municipalities. This allows each municipality to prioritise according to its needs, while contributing to a coherent intermunicipal direction.

GLOBAL VISION		
TO EMBED COMMUNITY-BASED MIGRANT INCLUSION INTO MUNICIPAL AND INTERMUNICIPAL POLICIES, FOSTERING MEANINGFUL ENCOUNTERS AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COIMBRA REGION.		
AREAS OF INTERVENTION	OBJECTIVES	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
ECOSYSTEM APPROACH	STRENGTHEN COORDINATED INTERMUNICIPAL COOPERATION FOR MIGRANT INCLUSION.	This area builds the enabling conditions for the whole plan by establishing coordination routines, clarifying roles and strengthening cooperation between municipalities and key stakeholders. It supports shared tools and learning mechanisms (e.g., practice repository, referral pathways and capacity-building), ensuring actions are delivered through an effective ecosystem rather than fragmented initiatives.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION	OBJECTIVES	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
POLICY / STRATEGY	EMBED INCLUSION PRIORITIES IN MUNICIPAL AND INTERMUNICIPAL PLANS.	This area is anchored in the approved AMIF/FAMI 2030 operation “Coimbra Region: Your Place”, implemented by CIM-RC with the 19 municipalities. It supports the development and/or revision of 19 Municipal Migrant Integration Plans (PMIM) and one Intermunicipal Integration Plan (PIIM), while also funding selected measures and communication activities. These plans provide a common framework to align priorities, responsibilities and monitoring across the territory, while encouraging municipalities to design actions that are AMIF/FAMI-compliant, open to the community and able to foster meaningful encounters between migrants and local residents.
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PATHWAYS	IMPROVE ACCESS TO DECENT WORK AND EMPLOYABILITY PATHWAYS FOR MIGRANTS ACROSS MUNICIPALITIES.	This area focuses on practical pathways into employment by combining guidance and skills recognition with links to employers and local services. It supports migrants in navigating the labour market (CV, interviews, referrals), while strengthening cooperation with businesses to promote decent work and stable inclusion across municipalities.
SPACES FOR MEANINGFUL ENCOUNTERS	ACTIVATE INCLUSIVE SPACES THAT SUPPORT PARTICIPATION AND BELONGING.	This area focuses on identifying, activating and improving accessible and welcoming spaces (public, community or shared-use venues) where locals and migrants can meet on an equal footing. It promotes low-threshold participation, regular use and connection to community activities, strengthening belonging and social cohesion across municipalities.
ACTIVITIES FOR MEANINGFUL ENCOUNTERS	DELIVER REGULAR CULTURE AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES THAT BUILD RELATIONSHIPS.	This area focuses on designing and delivering regular community-based activities that bring locals and newcomers together through shared experiences. Culture and sports are used as accessible entry points to build trust, strengthen social ties and support participation in community life.
COMMUNICATION	PROMOTE INCLUSIVE MINDSETS THROUGH POSITIVE NARRATIVES AND DIALOGUE	This area tackles stereotypes and low everyday contact by strengthening local narratives and community dialogue. It uses accessible communication tools (campaigns, storytelling and media content) to make contributions visible, build trust and support more welcoming attitudes across municipalities.



4. Plan of Action

The actions presented in this chapter translate the intervention logic of the Social Investment Plan into concrete areas of implementation. They result from the ULG process and from the mapping of existing practices across the Coimbra Region, reflecting the diversity of responses already underway in the territory, as well as new actions that may be developed over time.

In line with the intermunicipal nature of the Coimbra Region, these actions were not selected to represent only one municipality or one type of intervention. Instead, they show how different local realities can contribute to a shared regional direction. Some actions are already being implemented, others are under preparation, and others correspond to intended actions that may be activated according to local priorities, available resources and future funding opportunities.

The action tables should therefore be read in two complementary ways. First, they present concrete commitments or planned measures linked to the implementation of the Investment Plan. Second, they provide transferable examples that can inspire other municipalities. A practice identified in one municipality may become a useful reference for another, supporting adaptation, replication and shared learning within the territory.

To make this logic clearer, the tables distinguish between two levels of action:

- Intermunicipal actions, led or coordinated at regional level by CIM-RC, which support shared frameworks, common tools, coordination mechanisms or activities involving several municipalities;
- Municipal or local actions, led by individual municipalities or local partners, which respond to specific local needs and may serve as examples for transfer to other municipalities.

This distinction is also reflected visually in the action tables. Actions presented with white text on a coloured background refer to intermunicipal actions. Actions presented with coloured text on a white background refer to municipal or local-level actions. This colour code helps clarify the scale of implementation while showing that both levels are part of the same ecosystem-based approach.

AREA OF INTERVENTION		ECOSYSTEM APPROACH				
OBJECTIVE		Strengthen intermunicipal coordination, partnerships and shared learning to enable integrated, community-based migrant inclusion across the Coimbra Region.				
ACTION	DESCRIPTION	OUTPUT TARGET	ACTION LEAD	PARTNERS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMEFRAME
A1. Mapping Initiative / Living Repository of Practices	Mapping of migrant inclusion practices across the Coimbra Region, organised as a living repository to support learning and transfer between municipalities.	Living repository created and updated. Practices identified and shared across municipalities.	CIM-RC + CES-UC	19 municipalities; ULG members; CLAIMs/municipal services	Low-Medium: staff time, data collection, repository update, coordination and dissemination.	2025-2027; continuous update.
A2. Supra-Council Social Platform	Continuation of the ULG work through the existing Supra-Council Social Platform, embedding Plan Einstein learning into intermunicipal social cooperation.	ULG follow-up integrated into the Platform. Migration topics included in relevant working groups.	CIM-RC	CES-UC; 19 municipalities; Supra-Council Social Platform members; thematic working groups	Low: coordination time, meeting facilitation, monitoring inputs and dissemination.	2026-2027 and beyond.
A3. Front-office training for municipal staff	Training programme for municipal front-office staff focused on first-contact reception "from day one", combining practical English, intercultural communication and referral pathways to improve service delivery and support meaningful encounters.	Training sessions delivered for municipal front-office staff. Practical "welcome kit" produced (scripts, referral checklist, basic bilingual templates).	CIM-RC (coordination) + 19 municipalities.	CLAIMs/municipal services; relevant training providers; IEFPP/ULS/education actors	Medium (potential AMIF/FAMI funding): trainer time, training materials, venue/logistics, basic bilingual templates and referral tools.	2026-2027 (to be confirmed, subject to funding and municipal availability)

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	OUTPUT TARGET	ACTION LEAD	PARTNERS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMEFRAME
A4. Intermunicipal Steering Group	Regular coordination group to follow the implementation of the Investment Plan, address constraints and support shared decision-making across municipalities.	Quarterly meetings held. Progress and constraints reviewed. Shared decisions and follow-up points agreed.	CIM-RC	Municipal focal points; CES-UC; ULG members; relevant thematic partners.	Low: coordination time, meeting preparation, facilitation, minutes and follow-up documentation.	2026–2027 and beyond.
A5. Thematic Coordination Meetings	Meetings focused on key intervention areas, supporting coordination, peer learning and transfer of practices between municipalities and stakeholders.	Two thematic meetings per year. Priority topics discussed. Transfer opportunities identified.	CIM-RC	Municipalities; thematic working groups; IEPF; ULS; DGEstE; UMP; CCDRC; social and community organisations.	Low: coordination time, facilitation, thematic inputs, meeting materials and follow-up notes.	2026–2027 and beyond.
A6. Annual Review Meeting	Annual review to assess progress, consolidate learning, update priorities and align future funding and implementation opportunities.	One annual review meeting held. Progress reviewed. Priorities updated. Funding opportunities and next steps identified.	CIM-RC	Municipalities; CES-UC; ULG members; Supra-Council Social Platform; relevant funding and policy actors.	Low: preparation of monitoring inputs, facilitation, reporting, documentation and dissemination of lessons learned.	2026–2027 annually



Action Table

AREA OF INTERVENTION		POLICY/STRATEGY				
OBJECTIVE		Embed inclusion priorities in municipal and intermunicipal plans.				
ACTION	DESCRIPTION	OUTPUT TARGET	ACTION LEAD	PARTNERS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMEFRAME
B1. Intermunicipal Migrant Integration Plan (PIIM)	Development of one PIIM, providing a shared strategic framework for migrant reception and inclusion across the Coimbra Region. The plan will align common priorities, governance arrangements and monitoring at intermunicipal level.	1 PIIM developed. Common priorities defined. Intermunicipal governance and monitoring framework established.	CIM-RC	19 municipalities; CES-UC; public services; social sector organisations; education, health and employment actors; local community stakeholders.	High (AMIF/FAMI 2030 secured): technical assistance for diagnosis, plan development, stakeholder engagement, governance design, monitoring framework and communication.	2025–2027 / until March 2027.
B2. Municipal Migrant Integration Plans (PMIM)	Development and/or revision of 19 PMIM, adapted to the specific needs, priorities and realities of each municipality. The plans will support local action and the implementation of selected integration and inclusion measures.	19 PMIM developed and/or revised. Selected local measures implemented. Municipal stakeholder engagement activities delivered.	19 municipalities, with CIM-RC coordination	Municipal services; CLAIMs/local migrant support structures; public services; social sector organisations; schools; health and employment actors; local community	High (AMIF/FAMI 2030 secured): technical assistance for local diagnostics, plan development/revision, action plan design, implementation of selected measures, stakeholder engagement	2025–2027 / until March 2027.

AREA OF INTERVENTION

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PATHWAYS

OBJECTIVE

Improve access to decent work and employability pathways for migrants across municipalities.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	OUTPUT TARGET	ACTION LEAD	PARTNERS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMEFRAME
C1. Integra.te	Employment support desk for migrants, offering guidance on skills recognition, CV and interview preparation, and mediation with local employers to facilitate labour market inclusion.	Regular employability guidance sessions delivered. Employer contacts activated.	Côja Social and Parish Center - Arganil CLDS 5G	Local employers/ companies; municipal services.	Low-Medium: staff time, basic tools/materials, meeting space, coordination and outreach.	Jan 2025 - Dec 2028
C2. Intermunicipal Employment Fair	Intermunicipal job fair bringing together employers and jobseekers, with practical workshops on CV writing, interview preparation and job matching, to support employment opportunities in the interior of the Coimbra Region.	1 intermunicipal employment fair delivered. Employer participation employability workshops delivered.	Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region	Local employers/companies; IEFP; municipal services; community organisations supporting migrants	Medium: AMIF/FAMI-funded (financial secured): venue/logistics, trainers/facilitators, communication/outreach. basic equipment (screens/sound)	H2 2026

AREA OF INTERVENTION		SPACES FOR MEANINGFUL ENCOUNTERS				
OBJECTIVE		Enable meaningful encounters by activating inclusive spaces where locals and newcomers can meet, participate and feel a sense of belonging.				
ACTION	DESCRIPTION	OUTPUT TARGET	ACTION LEAD	PARTNERS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMEFRAME
D1. Intercultural Municipal Markets	Use municipal markets as welcoming meeting points by encouraging migrant participation as vendors and customers, creating opportunities to share food, crafts and cultural traditions	Pilot concept designed and agreed with host municipality/market management. 1 pilot intercultural market event	Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region	Host Municipality Municipal market management; local vendors' associations; migrant community organisations; cultural/arts actors	Financial: small event budget (logistics, communication, coordination). Materials: basic signage/stands, promotion materials, cleaning/logistics support.	To be defined (subject to funding)

AREA OF INTERVENTION		ACTIVITIES FOR MEANINGFUL ENCOUNTERS				
OBJECTIVE		Deliver regular culture and sports activities that build relationships.				
E1. Community children's choir	Brings together migrant and local children, including Nepalese and Roma children, using music to foster interaction, language practice and belonging.	3 rehearsal hubs; weekly rehearsals; 1 joint session/month; 1 public performance	Municipality of Figueira da Foz	CAE School of Arts; parish councils/community venues; local schools; relevant community organisations	Medium: conductor/educator time, spaces, basic logistics (incl. transport if needed), communication.	Yearly If funded

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	OUTPUT TARGET	ACTION LEAD	PARTNERS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMEFRAME
E2. Intercultural Surf for Kids	Free intercultural event for children combining a surf session, a multicultural lunch, and artistic activities to promote social interaction between Portuguese and international children in Figueira da Foz	1 event delivered (5th edition). 150 children reached (expected)	Surf Development Association and Promotion and Tourism Marketing Association	Municipality; School clusters; international communities in Figueira da Foz; local volunteers; organisations	Medium: instructors wetsuits and surfboards; venue/logistics; lunch and activity materials; volunteer coordination; communication	Yearly 5th edition- june 6th 2026
E3. Ativa(Mente)	Participatory culture, recreation and sports activities with an educational and co-creation approach, engaging migrants and the local community, especially vulnerable families, to strengthen cohesion, learning and community participation.	Participatory workshops and community activities delivered Engagement of migrants and local community, with focus on vulnerable families. Participation target exceeded (e.g., 130 participants reached in the initial phase).	Côja Social and Parish Center - Arganil CLDS 5G	Municipality of Arganil	Low-Medium: facilitators/educator, materials for workshops, spaces/venues, coordination and outreach.	Jan 2025 - Dec 2028
E4. World Cultures Meeting	Two-day intercultural festival where migrant communities showcase culture, gastronomy, traditions and creative/professional activities, promoting interaction with the local community.	1 intercultural event delivered (2 days). Participation of migrant communities and local residents.	Municipality of Tábuá.	Local cultural/community organisations; migrant community representatives; municipal services; local associations	Medium: event coordination, venue/logistics, exhibitors/workshops support, communication and outreach.	Annual repetition planned

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	OUTPUT TARGET	ACTION LEAD	PARTNERS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMEFRAME
E5. Nós 19 – “o som de todos!”	Community Orchestra bringing together participants from across the 19 municipalities through collective workshops and a final public performance, using music to foster interaction, belonging and meaningful encounters.	4 intermunicipal workshops delivered. Around 200 participants engaged. Final public performance held with Maestro Tim Steiner.	CIM-RC	19 municipalities; Maestro Tim Steiner; cultural and artistic partners; local community organisations; participants from across the region.	Medium (CENTRO2030 / FSE+ secured): artistic direction, workshop delivery, production/logistics, communication and final performance.	2026 / until October 2026
E6. SuperAção com Jogos	Play-based inclusion activity using group dynamics, board games and methodologies such as Lego® Serious Play® to create safe and relaxed spaces for interaction, learning, sharing and well-being.	Playful group sessions delivered. Participants engaged in inclusive activities supporting social, cognitive and emotional skills.	Associação Inclusão Contacto	Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Coimbra; local partners; community organisations.	Low-Medium: facilitators, game materials, session spaces, coordination and outreach.	Since 2019 / ongoing
E7. Immigrants + Safe	Pilot project combining the georeferencing of foreign residents with local community-based fire prevention practices. Since 2017, residents have organised to protect villages against forest fires using local resources such as water tanks, hoses and vehicles equipped with water.	Foreign residents georeferenced. Emergency information shared. Local prevention and emergency response capacity strengthened.	Local CLDS / Municipality of Arganil	Local communities; fire brigades; municipal civil protection services; migrant residents.	Low-Medium: georeferencing tools, information materials, translation support, coordination with emergency services and local communities.	Pilot: 2021–2022 / building on local prevention practices since 2017 ongoing

AREA OF INTERVENTION		COMMUNICATION				
OBJECTIVE		Promote inclusive mindsets through positive narratives and dialogue.				
ACTION	DESCRIPTION	OUTPUT TARGET	ACTION LEAD	PARTNERS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMEFRAME
F1. "If you live here, vote here" civic awareness video	Awareness-raising video encouraging migrants and local residents to participate in civic life and, where eligible, register and exercise their right to vote in local elections	1 awareness video produced and disseminated. Outreach to migrants and local residents ahead of local elections.	Municipality of Arganil	—	Low: video production support, communication channels, outreach/dissemination.	May 2025 – Oct 2025 additional campaigns may be developed
F2. "10 tips for inclusive communication" toolkit	Short, practical guidance on inclusive communication, including 10 key tips for clear language, respectful tone and accessible messaging when engaging migrants and local communities.	1 toolkit produced and shared across municipalities. Brief online session to present and promote use.	Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region	Municipal communication teams; CLAIMS/municipal services (inputs); relevant community organisations (feedback).	Low: drafting and design, translation (if needed), dissemination.	2026-2027 if funded
F3. Podcast on migrant entrepreneurship and local stories	Podcast featuring local and migrant entrepreneurs, giving visibility to their contribution to the local economy and community life.	Podcast concept developed. 4-5 Episodes recorded and disseminated.	Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region	Municipalities; migrant entrepreneurs; local entrepreneurs; communication partners; community organisations.	Low-Medium: content preparation, recording/editing, communication and dissemination.	2026

5. IMPLEMENTATION



5.1. Future governance and delivery set-up

The implementation of this Investment Plan will follow a **two-level delivery model**, reflecting the intermunicipal nature of the Coimbra Region.

INTERMUNICIPAL COORDINATION

CIM-RC will ensure overall coordination of the Investment Plan, including alignment between intervention areas, facilitation of cooperation across municipalities, and support to the activation of partnerships. CIM-RC will also maintain and update shared tools developed through the process and consolidate implementation information across municipalities.

SCIENTIFIC AND METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT

The Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, under the scientific guidance of Pedro Góis, will support methodological coherence and learning. This includes advising on process quality, supporting evidence-based reflection, and contributing to monitoring and learning activities, ensuring that implementation remains aligned with the Plan Einstein Academy principles.

MUNICIPAL DELIVERY

Municipalities will act as the primary delivery level for local actions, either through municipal services or through partnerships with local organisations. Each municipality will rely on an already designated focal point for migrant-related matters to facilitate coordination, reporting and participation in intermunicipal routines.

Continuity through existing cooperation structures - Importantly, implementation will build on the Supra-Council Social Platform coordinated by CIM-RC and its thematic working groups (employment, inclusion, health, ageing and social action). Many ULG members are already active within this platform, meaning that the cooperation routines, partnerships and thematic dialogue developed through the Plan Einstein Academy process are embedded in an existing and ongoing governance structure. This ensures that the work can continue beyond the end of the URBACT network.

The following routines will support implementation:

- **Intermunicipal Steering Group** (quarterly): CIM-RC, municipal focal points and ULG members, focusing on progress, coordination issues and shared decisions.
- **Thematic coordination meetings** (twice per year): working meetings by intervention area (e.g., Employment, Communication, Activities), supporting peer learning and scaling opportunities.
- **Annual review meeting**: to consolidate learning, update priorities and align the pipeline of actions and funding opportunities.

5.2. Financing and investment logic

The implementation of this Social Investment Plan will rely on a mixed financing logic, combining secured funding, municipal resources and future funding opportunities at regional, national and European level.

A first funding basis is already in place through the approved **AMIF/FAMI 2030 operation “Coimbra Region: Your Place”**, which will support:

- the development and/or revision of the 19 Municipal Migrant Integration Plans;
- the development of one Intermunicipal Integration Plan;
- the implementation of selected measures linked to migrant inclusion;
- communication and dissemination activities.

In parallel, some actions included in this Plan are already being supported through other funding sources, including:

- **national and regional programmes**, particularly in areas such as culture, social inclusion and community participation;
- **municipal budgets**, especially for smaller-scale or recurring local actions;
- **local partnerships and existing community-based projects**, which provide staff time, venues, technical support and outreach capacity.

This reflects the fact that the Investment Plan does not depend on a single funding source. Instead, it builds on a combination of instruments that can be mobilised according to the nature, scale and maturity of each action.

At the same time, CIM-RC and the municipalities will continue to actively seek new funding opportunities to consolidate and scale the actions identified in this Plan. Potential sources may include:

- URBACT;
- Horizon Europe;
- CERV;
- AMIF/FAMI;
- Interreg;
- other national and regional funding mechanisms aligned with social inclusion, employment, culture, education, community participation and territorial cohesion.

This financing logic allows the Coimbra Region to combine **short-term implementation capacity with a long-term investment perspective**. Secured funding ensures that key strategic components can move forward, while future funding opportunities will support the expansion, adaptation and replication of actions across municipalities.

In this sense, the Social Investment Plan should be understood as a **flexible framework for mobilising resources over time**, rather than as a closed budgetary programme.

5.3. Risk identification and mitigation

The implementation of the Social Investment Plan may face a set of operational, institutional and community-level risks. These risks are not unexpected in a diverse intermunicipal territory and should be managed through coordination, flexibility and continuous learning.

RISK	MITIGATION
UNEVEN MUNICIPAL CAPACITY	ALLOW FLEXIBLE IMPLEMENTATION ACCORDING TO LOCAL CAPACITY; PROVIDE INTERMUNICIPAL SUPPORT THROUGH CIM-RC AND SHARED TOOLS.
FRAGMENTATION OF ACTIONS	USE THE SUPRA-COUNCIL SOCIAL PLATFORM AND THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS TO MAINTAIN COORDINATION AND SHARED FOLLOW-UP.
LIMITED PARTICIPATION	PRIORITISE LOW-THRESHOLD FORMATS, PUBLIC/OUTDOOR SPACES, CLEAR COMMUNICATION AND TRUSTED LOCAL PARTNERS.
PERSISTENT STEREOTYPES AND RESISTANCE	STRENGTHEN POSITIVE STORYTELLING, COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS AND ACTIVITIES THAT MAKE MIGRANT CONTRIBUTIONS VISIBLE.
STAFF TURNOVER AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY	USE SIMPLE MONITORING TOOLS, ACTION FOLLOW-UP TEMPLATES AND SHARED DOCUMENTATION TO PRESERVE INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY.
LIMITED TRANSFER BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES	MAINTAIN THE MAPPING INITIATIVE / LIVING REPOSITORY AND ORGANISE LEARNING MOMENTS TO SUPPORT REPLICATION.

6. Conclusion



This Social Investment Plan tells the story of a territory that is learning to look at migration not only as a challenge to be managed, but as part of its future. Across the Coimbra Region, municipalities, public services, community organisations and local actors are already responding in different ways to demographic change, labour needs and increasingly diverse communities.

The Plan Einstein Academy helped bring these efforts into a shared conversation. Through the ULG process, the Coimbra Region moved from identifying isolated practices to recognising a broader ecosystem of people, places and initiatives that can support inclusion. The Investment Plan captures this journey and turns it into a common direction for the years ahead.

Its purpose is not to impose one model on all municipalities. Instead, it offers a flexible framework that allows each place to start from its own reality, while contributing to a shared intermunicipal ambition: to create more opportunities for locals and newcomers to meet, participate and build trust. The next chapter of this story will be written through implementation, in municipal plans, cultural and sports activities, employment pathways, public spaces, communication tools and everyday encounters. Step by step, the Coimbra Region will continue to build communities where newcomers are not only received, but recognised as neighbours, participants and contributors to the life of the territory.