

Investment plan: Disclosing hidden Hydro Heritage in Roeselare



City of Roeselare

August 2026

Executive Summary

Roeselare grew where the Mandel and Sint-Amandsbeek meet. Over time, approximately five kilometres of these watercourses disappeared beneath streets and buildings. They still perform an essential hydraulic function, but they have largely disappeared from public awareness. At the same time, climate adaptation, water quality improvements and planned infrastructure works create a new opportunity: treat the underground water system not only as technical infrastructure, but also as a living part of the city's identity and future.

Through the Hydro-Heritage Cities network, Roeselare adapts lessons from Cultural H.I.D.R.A.N.T. in Halandri. The adapted approach links water management, heritage, culture, urban development, education and participation. It uses storytelling, public-space interpretation, digital tools and co-creation to make hidden water visible and to strengthen support for necessary investments.

The proposed investment plan has five action lines: (1) build and maintain a shared knowledge base; (2) create a visible and digital hydro-heritage route; (3) integrate hydro-heritage into public infrastructure and urban development projects; (4) develop education, community stewardship and cultural programming; and (5) embed governance, financing and monitoring in the city administration.

The indicative investment need is EUR 1.13 million as a portfolio of projects. It combines municipal staff and operating resources with external expertise, cultural activation and a dedicated hydro-heritage share within larger infrastructure projects. The funding strategy deliberately avoids dependence on one grant and instead links each action to the most suitable municipal, Flemish, provincial, Interreg or project-specific source.

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1. Policy context

1.1 Needs analysis in the territorial context

Roeselare is a city of approximately 65,000 inhabitants in the Province of West-Flanders. Its economy is strongly rooted in food and manufacturing industries, sectors for which water has historically been and remains essential. Roeselare is also the largest municipality in the Midwest intermunicipal cooperation area of sixteen local authorities. Some policy challenges, including heritage work, are addressed at this wider scale where shared expertise and economies of scale add value.

The confluence of the Mandel and the Sint-Amandsbeek formed the cradle of the city. For centuries, both watercourses structured urban growth. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, pollution, odour nuisance and urban expansion led to their gradual covering. The final sections of the Sint-Amandsbeek were covered in the 1970s. Today, around five kilometres of watercourse run through underground tunnels.





Figure 1. Historical evolution of Roeselare: Frickx map (1712), Ferraris map (1777), Vandermaelen map (1846-1854) and aerial photograph (2012).

The underground watercourses remain a crucial part of the hydrographical system and carry a large part of the city's history. Yet because they are hidden, residents rarely recognise them as shared assets. This weak public connection creates a practical policy problem: major works on invisible infrastructure often generate disruption and costs, while their long-term value remains difficult to communicate.

Several developments now converge. Parts of the underground system require renewal or resizing. Urban projects create moments when the water infrastructure must be adapted. Climate change increases flood and drought risks. Improved water quality opens possibilities that did not exist when the watercourses were covered. Together, these changes create a policy window to reconnect society with the water system and to add cultural, educational and social value to unavoidable technical investments.

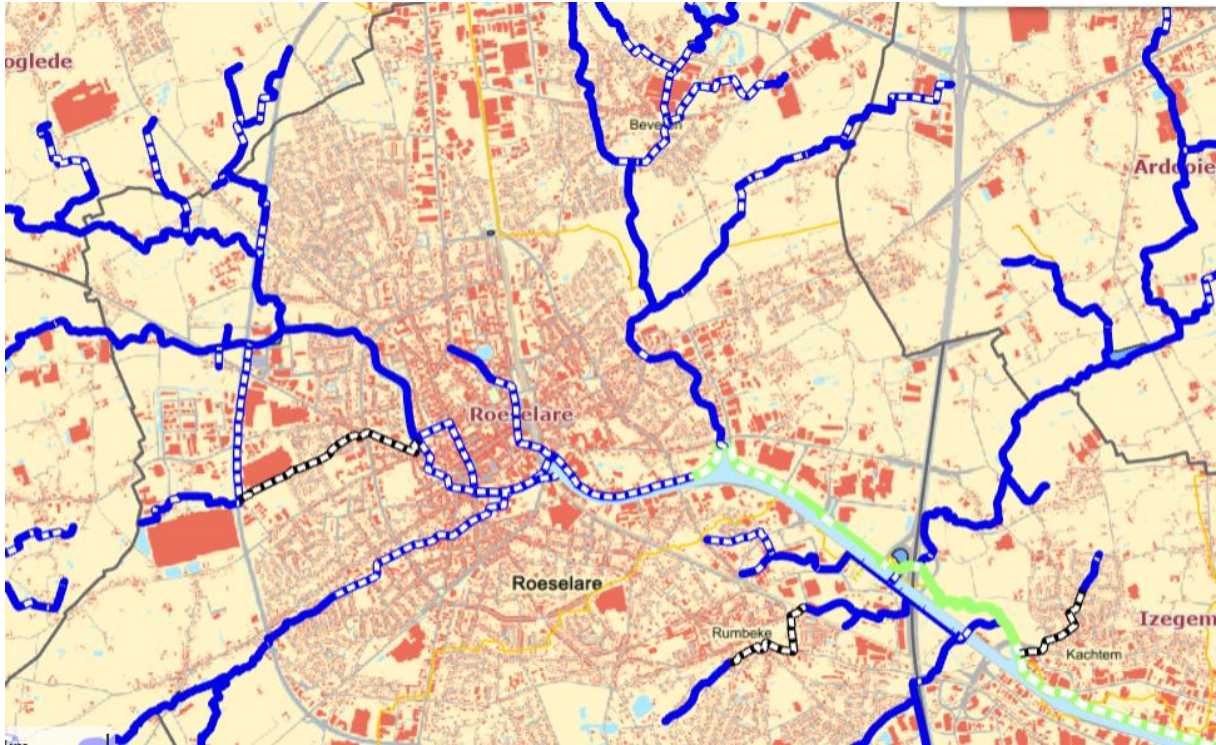


Figure 2: Current hydrographical system of Roeselare. Full blue lines show open provincial watercourses; dotted blue lines show covered watercourses.

Core policy challenge

How does Roeselare turn necessary works on hidden water infrastructure into visible public value, without reducing hydro-heritage to decoration or a one-off communication campaign?

The challenge operates at three levels. At infrastructure level, the city and Province must maintain a safe, climate-resilient water system. At urban level, projects above and alongside the watercourses need a shared design and decision framework. At societal level, residents need meaningful ways to understand, shape and care for the relationship between water, place and history.

1.2 Policy Response

The city's 2025-2030 political programme¹ confirms the ambition to revive Roeselare's water heritage and make it part of a "city to be discovered" through the Hydro-Heritage project. The same programme allocates significant investment to drought, flooding and water quality. This Investment Plan links those technical commitments to culture, heritage, tourism, education and participation.

The chapter 'Courage for Roeselare, smart city, city to be discovered), expresses the ambition to resuscitate the City's water heritage and to make it part of the city to be discovered through the Hydro Heritage project. Moreover, developments at the city's water system take a prominent place in its policy programme. Significant budgets are allocated for the necessary investment projects in order to tackle challenges of drought, flooding and water quality.

The Hydro Heritage Cities project is aimed to support the implementation of the climate adaptation and water management ambitions outlined in the same political policy programme.

At regional and national level, the plan aligns with water basin management, efficient water use, drought resilience, flood prevention and heritage access. At European level, it supports the logic of the Water Framework Directive, the European Green Deal and the role of cultural heritage in sustainable development and community stewardship.

The plan's policy response is therefore not a separate heritage project. It is an integration mechanism: hydro-heritage becomes a standard consideration when the city, Province or a private developer plans works that affect the Mandel or Sint-Amandsbeek.

Policy level	Relevant direction	Contribution of this plan
City of Roeselare	Climate adaptation, water quality, city development, heritage and culture	Connects technical works with public value, interpretation and participation.
Province / Flanders	Integrated water management, drought and flood resilience, heritage and cultural participation	Builds a transferable approach for provincial watercourses and links project calls to concrete actions.
European Union	Water Framework Directive, Green Deal, Cohesion Policy and cultural heritage	Creates an investment-ready, integrated and participative urban project.

¹ <https://www.roeselare.be/nl/beleid-en-bestuur/bestuur-van-de-stad/beleidsplannen-en-meerjarenplan>

2. Investment Proposal

2.1 Background to the proposal

Hydro-Heritage Cities is an URBACT Innovation Transfer Network inspired by the Cultural H.ID.R.A.N.T. project in Halandri, Greece. Halandri demonstrated that historic water infrastructure can act as a lever for climate adaptation, urban resilience, cultural identity and community engagement. Roeselare joined the network because its hidden watercourses combine the same types of challenge: technically important infrastructure, lost public visibility and a strong but underused local story.

The strategic rationale for transfer was never to copy a physical intervention. Roeselare instead selected a transferable methodology: reveal the water system, connect technical and cultural actors, involve communities, test interpretation methods and embed the lessons in future investment decisions.

2.2 Roeselare's starting point

At the start of the transfer process, water management and cultural heritage operated largely in parallel. The city had infrastructure projects, cultural programming, heritage expertise and neighbourhood networks, but no common framework that linked them around the underground watercourses. Public knowledge of the Mandel and Sint-Amandsbeek was fragmented, and responsibilities were spread across the city, Province, heritage organisations and project partners.

Assets at the start	Barriers at the start
A compelling history of the Mandel and Sint-Amandsbeek	The watercourses are physically hidden and socially “unowned”.
Planned public works and urban development projects	Hydro-heritage risked being added late, after technical choices were fixed.
Strong heritage, cultural and neighbourhood networks	Stakeholder roles were broad but not yet operational.
Experience with EU projects and external funding	No single administrative owner for the integrated approach.
Existing digital, event and exhibition channels	Limited baseline data on public awareness, support and inclusion.

The transfer process has already produced progress: stronger collaboration between water, heritage and cultural actors, a clearer narrative about the hidden waterways, pilot activities, and better links with future urban and water projects. The next step is to move from promising tests to an investment portfolio with clear ownership and phasing.

2.3 Adapted practice

The Hydro Heritage Cities project originates from the experience of the UIA Cultural H.I.D.R.A.N.T project implemented in Halandri (Athens, Greece), which demonstrated how water-related cultural heritage can act as a strategic lever for climate adaptation, urban resilience and community engagement. The Halandri project showed that historic water infrastructures, often hidden, fragmented or undervalued—can be reactivated not only as heritage assets, but as functional components of contemporary urban systems, contributing to flood and drought prevention, microclimatic regulation, biodiversity enhancement and social cohesion.

Rather than replicating a single solution, the Hydro Heritage Cities project focuses on transferring a methodological framework: understanding water heritage as a living system, combining physical infrastructure, governance arrangements, knowledge, skills and cultural practices, and embedding it into long-term urban strategies and investment planning.

Against this background, several key lessons and innovations underpin this Investment Plan:

- Developing the repository on history and making this available to the public, as well as connecting the unknown, the inaccessible to the public through artistic expression is elaborating on the experience gained in the frame of the UIA Cultural H.I.D.R.A.N.T project.
- From heritage object to functional system: water heritage is not treated as a static asset, but as an active system that can contribute to climate resilience, water efficiency and environmental quality when properly maintained and managed.
- Integration of tangible and intangible dimensions: physical interventions (maintenance, restoration, monitoring) are combined with knowledge transfer, education, cultural programming and citizen engagement to ensure long-term ownership and sustainability.
- Evidence-based management: monitoring, data collection and indicators are not add-ons, but core components that support decision-making, accountability and learning.
- Social acceptance as a condition for transition: innovation in water management (including reuse, new governance arrangements or digital tools) requires trust, transparency and pedagogical effort, anchored in local culture and identity.
- Investment logic over project logic: the approach shifts from isolated pilot actions to a structured investment pathway, capable of mobilising different funding sources over time.

Cultural component	H.ID.R.A.N.T.	Roeselare adaptation	Where it appears in the plan
Reveal hidden water heritage		Repository, maps, stories, QR points, exhibition content and public-space markers	Actions 1 and 2

Cultural component	H.ID.R.A.N.T.	Roeselare adaptation	Where it appears in the plan
Community engagement and co-creation		Neighbourhood story collection, co-design of interpretation and citizen testing	Actions 2 and 4
Culture as a bridge to water awareness		Murals, artistic commissions, heritage walks and events linked to infrastructure sites	Actions 2, 3 and 4
Integrated governance		Cross-department coordination, provincial water manager involvement and project-level integration	Action 5 and governance model
Evidence and learning		Baseline surveys, user data, complaints analysis, reflection after tests and staged scaling	Monitoring framework
Long-term investment pathway		Hydro-heritage requirements and budgets linked to planned public and private projects	Action 3 and budget strategy

2.4 Integrated approach and participative process

The integrated approach connects water management, heritage, culture, urban development, tourism, recreation, communication, education and neighbourhood work. The practical test is simple: each relevant project should answer not only “What technical work is required?” but also “What public value can this moment create, for whom, and with whose input?”

For this purpose, an Urbact Local group was created to convene various stakeholders, each with their own interests and viewpoints, to identify issues, establish policy priorities, and devise practical solutions. The ULG brought together experts in water management, heritage management, participation management, landscape development and regional development. Through the ULG connections were established to and between the policies, actions and projects in the different domains. This resulted for example in the organisation of a heritage walk on 31/08/2025 at the occasion of a Day of the Mandel, organised in the frame of a strategic development programme of the Mandel Valley. This day brought several undiscovered aspects above and underground of the Mandel to life.

Priority audiences include residents living above or near the hidden watercourses, children and young people, older residents with lived memory, newcomers, people with limited digital access, local traders and users of future redevelopment sites. Activities will combine digital and non-digital formats, plain language, accessible routes and targeted outreach through trusted organisations.

3. The investment proposal

3.1 Value proposition

Value	proposition
By investing in hydro-heritage, Roeselare turns unavoidable water and urban works into projects that residents understand, recognise and help shape. The investment strengthens climate resilience, reduces the risk that heritage is considered too late, builds public support and creates added value through a distinctive city narrative that links past, present and future.	

3.2 Workplan

The workplan converts the testing phase into five connected action lines. Each action produces a usable output, feeds a future investment decision and has a named lead. The sequence starts with knowledge and governance, then scales interpretation and participation through planned projects.

Action	Description	Key deliverables	Timing	Lead
A1. Shared hydro-heritage knowledge base	Consolidate historical, technical and community knowledge on the Mandel and Sint-Amandsbeek. Define standards for updating, ownership and reuse.	Validated repository; map of assets and stories; content protocol.	2026-2027	IOED Radar / City heritage service
A2. Visible and digital hydro-heritage route	Create a coherent family of physical markers, public artworks, QR points, app content and exhibition material. Test accessibility and user experience.	Route concept; minimum 5 digital points; 3 physical or artistic interventions; exhibition module.	2026-2028	Culture, communication and tourism services
A3. Integration into investment projects	Introduce a hydro-heritage scan at the start of public and relevant private projects. Translate findings into design briefs, budgets and participation plans.	Scan and design brief applied to at least 3 projects; project-specific heritage budgets.	2026-2030	Urban development / public works
A4. Participation and stewardship	Neighbourhood story labs, guided activities, event partnerships and a network of local ambassadors.	Citizen contributions & oral history; stewardship network.	2027-2030	Neighbourhood work / heritage

Action	Description	Key deliverables	Timing	Lead
A5. Governance, funding and learning	Appoint a programme owner, maintain an enlarged ULG, review funding opportunities and report on indicators twice a year.	Mandate and governance charter; annual investment pipeline; monitoring report.	2026-2030	Strategic coordination / programme owner

Action 1. Shared hydro-heritage knowledge base

- Purpose: give every future project a reliable starting point and prevent knowledge from remaining scattered across organisations or individuals.
- Complete and validate the repository of historical maps, photographs, stories, technical information and previous research.
- Add community memories and place-based stories through structured collection with neighbourhood partners.
- Define ownership, copyright, quality control, metadata and a yearly update process.
- Create a project-ready “hydro-heritage factsheet” for each priority site.
- Decision gate: the repository becomes the reference source for Actions 2 and 3 only after the city and IOED agree on governance and public-use rules.

Action 2. Visible and digital hydro-heritage route

- Build one recognisable interpretation concept for signs, murals, QR codes, app points and exhibition content.
- Use the Heritage Day launch, the bridge-pillar street art and the tested walk as prototypes, then evaluate what should be retained, adapted or stopped.
- Design physical and digital formats together, while retaining an offline alternative for people without a smartphone.
- Connect individual interventions into a route rather than presenting them as isolated objects.
- The route should not become a collection of “nice-to-have” signs. Each point must explain one clear relationship: how water shaped the place, how the infrastructure functions today, and what future choice or investment is linked to it.
- This builds on the hydro heritage mural that will be a starting point for a future physical route and serves as a point for collecting oral history.

Action 3. Integration into public and private investment projects

This is the central investment action. It moves hydro-heritage upstream into planning and design.

Priority opportunity	project	Hydro-heritage opportunity	Next decision
Restoration of the Sint-Amandsbeek - phase 2		Interpret underground flow, construction choices and neighbourhood stories; integrate artistic or visible markers.	Include hydro-heritage brief before design is fixed.

Priority opportunity	project	Hydro-heritage opportunity	Next decision
Rehabilitation of the Mandel/Klauwaertsbeek - Diksmuidesteenweg		Link climate adaptation and hydraulic works to public-space interpretation.	Define project share, participation moment and indicator baseline.
Reconstruction at the head of the Canal Roeselare-Leie		Explore visibility or access to the underground Mandel where technically and safely feasible; connect to exhibition centre.	Commission feasibility and heritage interpretation study.
Klein Seminarie and Stationsplein 38-43		Use planning dialogue to protect and reveal the relationship with hidden watercourses.	Add hydro-heritage scan to pre-consultation or project conditions.

A standard hydro-heritage scan should cover: site history, hydraulic constraints, opportunities for visibility or access, cultural and educational value, stakeholder map, participation needs, design implications, budget, and monitoring indicators.

Action 4. Participation and stewardship

- Organise neighbourhood story labs before the design of local interventions (as part of the Interreg North West Europe project).
- Invite residents to become contributors, route testers, guides or local ambassadors, not only event participants.
- Use existing programmes - Heritage Day, De Groote Stoorringhe, Thuiswaarts and the Provincial Water Festival - as recurring activation moments.
- Reserve targeted outreach resources for groups that do not join open calls or digital participation spontaneously.

Action 5. Governance, funding and learning

- Appoint one programme owner within the administration, supported by a cross-department coordination group.
- Review the investment pipeline and funding map at least once a year.
- Evaluation of testing actions and projects. Document choices after pilots and projects: what worked, for whom, at what cost and what changes next.

Risk analysis by action

Risk	Likelihood impact	Mitigation	Owner
Hydro-heritage remains an add-on introduced too late	Medium / High	Mandatory early scan and design brief for priority projects.	Programme owner + project lead

Risk	Likelihood / impact	Mitigation	Owner
Loss of momentum after staff changes	High / High	Formal mandate, shared repository, deputy owner and reporting rhythm.	Management team
Stakeholders remain advisors rather than implementers	Medium / High	Assign deliverables, deadlines and resources in stakeholder matrix.	Programme owner
External funding does not materialise	Medium / Medium	Phase actions; protect core municipal tasks; match grants to defined packages.	Funding adviser
Citizens are reached unevenly	Medium / Medium	Targeted outreach, offline formats, accessibility review and audience monitoring.	Neighbourhood work
Artistic interventions conflict with technical or maintenance needs	Low / High	Joint technical-cultural brief, safety review and maintenance agreement.	Public works / Province

3.3 Stakeholders & Partners

Actor	Role in implementation	Decision / contribution
Political sponsor and city management	Strategic sponsor	Confirm mandate, priorities and municipal resources; resolve cross-department barriers.
Programme owner	Accountable coordinator	Maintain roadmap, convene group, report progress, connect projects and funding.
Cross-department coordination group	Operational integration	Heritage, culture, water, public works, urban development, communication, tourism and neighbourhood work align actions.
Province of West Flanders	Water manager and project partner	Validate technical feasibility, connect provincial works and co-develop public interpretation.
IOED Radar / Midwest heritage partners	Knowledge and heritage lead	Manage repository, research, interpretation quality and regional reuse.

Actor	Role implementation in	Decision / contribution
ULG / enlarged stakeholder group	Co-creation and learning platform	Test choices, contribute content, mobilise networks and review progress.
Residents, schools and community groups	Contributors and users	Provide stories, co-design selected outputs, test accessibility and act as ambassadors.
Artists and cultural organisers	Creative delivery partners	Translate the water narrative into high-quality public experiences.
Private developers	Site-specific delivery partners	Address hydro-heritage in design dialogue where projects affect the hidden watercourses.

Partners that potentially could support the proposal or take a role in its implementation were informed and/or engaged at different stages:

- History and heritage communities, through the Intermunicipal Heritage group of the Midwest Region) are developing the repository on history;
- Public and private investment project developers (public: remediation of Sint-Amandsbeek, renovation of canal Roeselare-Leie, remediation of Klauwaertbeek; private: Stationsplein 38-43, Klein Seminarie?) are shown opportunities to add value to their projects;
- Artist communities will contribute with their creativity and translate history into stories e.g. Hydro heritage mural;
- Event organisers ('Groote Stoorringhe' 2027, 'Thuiswaarts' (Dienst Neighbourhoodwork), Provincial Waterfestival 2027, Yearly Heritage Day in April) are shown the opportunities whilst setting their respective agenda's;
- Developer of new Canal Roeselare-Leie Exhibition centre is provided with the small and big history being gathered;
- Regionaal Landschap 't Westvlaamse Hart will be shared the products developed, to be used in their outreach efforts to a broader public, to schools in particular;
- Responsible for neighbourhood work has the network, connections to assure participatory approach with particular communities, districts living above or around unknown underground infrastructures;
- Province of West-Flanders is as water manager finally responsible for the watercourses concerned, is also organizer of the Provincial water festival in 2027;
- Flemish Environment Agency (VMM) is regionally setting integrated water management policy framework, including aspects of experience;
- Flemish department for culture providing funding for cultural events through project calls.

3.4 Testing actions

A. Description

The testing actions were designed as small-scale experiments to examine how the principles of Cultural H.I.D.R.A.N.T. could work in Roeselare. They were not conceived as isolated cultural activities, but as a first step towards integrating hydro-heritage into future water, public-space and urban development projects.

The tests were organised near the location where the Sint-Amandsbeek disappears underground. This location reflects the central challenge of the Investment Plan: the watercourse remains physically present and technically important, but has largely disappeared from the daily experience of residents.

The testing process included:

- a test walk on the water heritage of Roeselare, followed by feedback from participants;
- the public launch of the historical repository through a QR code during Heritage Day;
- guided visits, children's activities and the display of historical photographs;
- an artistic visualisation at the location of the underground watercourse;
- the collection of local memories and stories as input for a future heritage route.

These actions tested different aspects of the proposed approach: public interest, storytelling, digital interpretation, artistic expression, neighbourhood participation and cooperation between technical and cultural actors. They also helped identify which elements should be retained, adapted or expanded in future projects.



Fig. 5 Heritage day - historic photo expo



Figure 6 Hydro Heritage Mural under construction

B. Lessons from the testing phase

The testing actions were valuable because they tested both the public concept and the internal way of working.

First, they showed that the hidden watercourses can provide a strong and accessible narrative through which residents can better understand the relationship between water, urban development and local history.

Second, they brought together municipal services and external partners that had previously worked mainly within separate policy fields. Water management provided technical knowledge, while heritage, cultural and neighbourhood actors contributed historical content, creative interpretation and connections with residents.

Third, the tests confirmed that a combination of physical, digital and participatory tools is more effective than one communication instrument alone. A walk, QR code, historical images, artistic interpretation and personal stories each reach different audiences and reinforce one another.

Finally, the tests highlighted that future actions should involve citizens not only as visitors, but also as contributors, storytellers and co-creators. This will strengthen local ownership and the long-term relevance of the hydro-heritage narrative.

C. From testing to implementation

The lessons from the testing actions will be used to develop a repeatable approach for future projects connected to the Mandel and Sint-Amandsbeek.

For each relevant infrastructure, public-space or redevelopment project, the city will:

1. identify the historical and social significance of the location;
2. involve technical, cultural and community partners at an early planning stage;
3. determine the most appropriate form of interpretation or participation;
4. integrate the selected action into the project design and budget;
5. monitor public reach, participation and appreciation;
6. document the results for use in subsequent projects.

Priority opportunities include the restoration of the Sint-Amandsbeek, the rehabilitation of the Mandel/Klauwaertsbeek, the redevelopment of the head of the Canal Roeselare-Leie and future public or private developments above the underground watercourses.

In this way, the testing actions become the starting point of a broader investment pathway rather than temporary stand-alone activities. This directly addresses the need for a clearer bridge between the testing phase and future investment, as identified in the review.

4. Budget

4.1 Project costs

The indicative total remains EUR 1.13 million over a period of 5 years. The revised structure links costs to action lines and distinguishes programme costs from project-linked investment. Amounts require refinement when design briefs and feasibility studies are completed.

Cost category	Indicative amount	Type	Main use	Status
Staff costs	EUR 200,000	Revenue	Programme communication, heritage/culture participation and coordination owner, policy, event	City budget - indicative
Overhead	EUR 30,000	Revenue	15% of staff costs	City budget - indicative
External expertise and services	EUR 400,000	Revenue / preparatory	Communication and events; design; infrastructure evaluation feasibility; study;	Mixed funding - to package
Infrastructure and construction works	EUR 500,000	Capital	Indicative hydro-heritage share within relevant infrastructure works	Project budgets / external funding
Total	EUR 1,130,000			

The plan currently assumes 10% of relevant infrastructure works for hydro-heritage-related interventions and 15% of works costs for studies. These percentages are useful planning assumptions, not yet approved commitments. They will be replaced by project-specific estimates as each investment package matures.

Indicative action-based budget allocation

Action	Indicative envelope	Main cost drivers	Funding logic
A1. Knowledge base	EUR 90,000	Research, digitisation, rights, content management	City / heritage partners / project calls

Action	Indicative envelope	Main cost drivers	Funding logic
A2. Visible and digital route	EUR 220,000	Design system, app content, markers, artworks, exhibition material	City, culture calls, events, Interreg
A3. Integration into investments	EUR 650,000	Studies and hydro-heritage share of construction projects	Infrastructure budgets, Province, external programmes
A4. Stakeholders and stewardship	EUR 80,000	School material, facilitation, outreach, annual programming	City, Province, culture and education sources
A5. Governance and evaluation	EUR 90,000	Coordination, monitoring, evaluation and funding preparation	City budget / project technical assistance
Total	EUR 1,130,000		

4.2 Investment sources

Source mechanism or	What it may fund	Timing condition /	Current gap
City multiannual budget	Core staff, coordination, communication, heritage and event contributions	2026-2030; requires named budget lines	Confirm protected core envelope
Budgets of infrastructure projects	Studies, design and physical integration within Sint-Amandsbeek, Mandel /Klauwaertsbeek and canal works	Aligned with each project decision cycle	Define project-specific percentage and scope
Flemish cultural project calls	Artistic expression, participation and cultural programming	Call-dependent	Prepare one defined package rather than a general request
Interreg France-Wallonia-Flanders microprojects	Cross-border artistic or participation pilot	Proposal under preparation	Confirm eligibility, partners and co-financing
Provincial Water Festival / event budgets	Activation, outreach and temporary interpretation	Linked to event cycles	Ensure outputs feed the permanent route

Source mechanism or	What it may fund	Timing condition /	Current gap
Exhibition centre budget	Permanent interpretation of canal and underground Mandel history	During exhibition design and procurement	Reserve content and design budget early
Private development contributions	Site interpretation, design or public-realm measures where projects affect hidden watercourses	Through project dialogue and legal planning instruments	Clarify basis, proportionality and maintenance responsibility
Interreg North West Europe – SLOWTOUR	Development of a industrial heritage route connected to the water heritage	March 2026 - March 2029	Dedicated budget for slow tourism

5. Monitoring & Evaluation

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation approach

Monitoring serves three purposes: implementation control, learning and accountability. The programme owner will compile progress twice a year with project leads and the enlarged ULG. Findings will inform changes to actions, communication, participation and funding choices. Major adaptations will be documented in a short decision log.

The approach is cumulative: each project contributes to the same city-wide objectives and indicator set. A summative review in 2030 will assess whether hydro-heritage has become part of normal planning and whether public value extends beyond awareness. An external evaluator is optional; external support is most useful for baseline design, independent outcome assessment and methods that compare different sites.

Indicator	Output/ Result	Base- line	Tar- get	Data Source	Respo- nsible Party	Frequ- ency
Repository on history of underground watercourses available	O	0	1	Report	IOED (ULG)	2-yearly
Visualisation of history of underground watercourses shown in new exhibition centre next to the Canal Roeselare-Leie	O	0	1	Expo	City	2-yearly
Visualization of history of underground watercourses on public domain	O	0	3	# of Interventions	City	2-yearly
History of underground watercourses virtually available through the heritage app.	O	0	5	#points in app	City	2-yearly
3 (temporary and/or lasting?) actions artistic expression, adding value to underground watercourses	O	0	3	Project monitoring system	City	2-yearly
Output of the 3 actions artistic expression adding value to underground watercourses	R	0	500	#participants	City	2-yearly
Increased public support for works on underground watercourses to be measured in terms of # complaints/notifications	R	Comparable project	10% lower	# notifications /complaints	City	2-yearly
Increased public support for works on underground watercourses	R	50	80	Sentiment measurement through questionnaire	City	2-yearly

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