CALL / TOPIC DOSSIER

Innovative approaches for the spatial design of neighbourhoods

Beautiful, inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods for communities

A decoded reading of one funding call: what it asks for, what it will be judged on, and what you would have to commit to. Read it to decide whether this call is worth a proposal — then verify anything you rely on against the official call text before you write.

KEY FACTS

The administrative frame of the call: how much money is available, how many projects will be funded, and by when you must apply. Check the budget per grant and the deadline first — they decide whether this call is worth your time before anything else does.

Call code	HORIZON-NEB-2026-01
Topic code	HORIZON-NEB-2026-01-PARTICIPATION-02
Programme	Horizon Europe
Status	Open
MGA Type	HORIZON Lump Sum Grant
Action Type	HORIZON Innovation Actions
Deadline model	single-stage
Opening date	2026-05-05 00:00:00
Deadline date	2026-12-01 00:00:00
Budget (EUR)	10,000,000.0
No. of grants	2.0
Budget / grant (EUR)	5,000,000.0

EXPECTED OUTCOME

The changes the European Commission wants to see in the world because this project existed. Your proposal will be scored on how convincingly it promises these specific outcomes, so treat each one as a target you must explicitly claim and evidence.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Demonstrated approaches aligned with NEB allow architects, designers, spatial planners and neighbourhood [1] decision makers to ensure an efficient and effective integration of user perspectives in the spatial design and/or transformation of public spaces.
- The demonstrated approaches deliver positive climate, environmental, social and cultural impact (such as addressing inequalities and enhancing social cohesion, community [1] resilience, civic engagement and a sense of security, ownership and belonging).

SCOPE

What the project is actually supposed to do, and the boundaries of what counts. Read the activity lists closely: they are the Commission's own description of the work, and a proposal that skips one of them is usually marked down for incomplete coverage.

The design of neighbourhood public spaces defines their functionality, but also other aspects such as power dynamics and sense of belonging. A fair green transition [1] calls for neighbourhood public spaces to be designed and managed

for diverse users. Integrating new methods (such as research-by-design, security-by-design [4] , or life-centric design) in the architectural design and spatial planning of public space can help reflect on the values, practices and stakeholder relations that underpin the design of public spaces; rethink how public spaces are understood; overcome the potential conflict between the need to accelerate planning and the time needed for participatory [1] , inclusive [1] and deliberative processes; and speed up their green transition while actively includin g their inhabitants' diverse perspectives.

Proposals are expected to address all of the following:

- Assess how spatial design determines gendered, age-appropriate and identity-related patterns of use (e.g. in terms of mobility, safety, sense of security and access to public and private spaces) and how inclusive approaches and accessibility can address diverse needs and experiences of users and the community.
- Develop one approach to designing and planning public space that uses innovative methods. These innovative methods are expected to:
  - Analyse the values, practices and stakeholder relations that underpin the design of public space in neighbourhoods.
  - Be adapted to the sociocultural factors of the neighbourhoods and use co-creation [1] to incorporate inhabitants' diverse perspectives and to exploit the potential of cultural, creative, and educational (academic) sectors.
  - Address climate-resilience, water resilience, civil security, and biodiversity of public space and the safety, well-being and security of its users.
  - Assess the multisensory perception of public spaces, including their beauty and aesthetics, by users and the community.
  - Be adaptable, replicable and scalable to local specificities.
- Demonstrate the approach in at least three neighbourhoods (in urban, peri-urban and rural areas) located in different Member States and/or Associated Countries.
- Develop plans and recommendations for the take up of the demonstrated approach. This includes assessing its potential application to other areas of the green transition of neighbourhoods (e.g. water resilient design planning, public service design, procurement, etc.) as well as identifying skills needs and gaps.

Proposals are expected to follow a participatory [1] and transdisciplinary [1] approach through the integration of different actors and disciplines.

This topic requires the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) [1] disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

Proposals are expected to allocate at least 0.8% of their budget for engaging with the Horizon Europe-funded 'New European Bauhaus hub for results and impact' to share their intermediate and final results, findings and learning, as well as to contribute to impact assessment.

REFERENCES (10) — FROM THE CALL TEXT

[1] See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

[2] See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

[3] See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

[4] LARCHER, M., KARLOS, V., SCHUMACHER, R., STREZOVA, D., CAVERZAN, A. et al., 'Security by Design: Protection of public spaces from terrorist attacks', Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/654492

[5] See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

[6] See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

[7] See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

[8] See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

[9] See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

[10] See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

DESTINATION

The larger group of calls this one belongs to, and the shared goal that group serves. It tells you which policy conversation your proposal is joining, and which other funded projects the evaluators will have in mind when they read yours.

Connecting the green transformation, social inclusion and local democracy (2026-27)

IMPACT POSITION IN THE EC ARCHITECTURE

Where this call sits in the chain that runs from the EU's political priorities down to this individual topic. Use it to frame your opening pitch in the language the Commission already uses for this area, rather than inventing your own framing.

Policy priorities	New European Bauhaus · Renovation Wave · KSO 1 · The green transition · KSO 3 · A more resilient, competitive, inclusive and democratic Europe
Expected impact (Destination)	New European Bauhaus — “Place-based, citizen-co-created transformation joining sustainability, aesthetics and inclusion.” (Horizon Europe - New European Bauhaus facility)
Demand signal	52 organisations registered a partner-search on this topic

> Outside the Pillar II clusters this strategic frame is context — expected impacts in this work programme part are not derived directly from the Strategic Plan.

KEY IMPACT PATHWAYS & EC INDICATORS

The standard measures the Commission uses to judge whether funded research paid off. These are the yardsticks your project will eventually be measured against, so quoting the matching indicator when you state your own targets makes your claims easy to score.

KIP 6 · Strengthening the uptake of R&I in society (primary)

KIP 4 · Addressing EU policy priorities and global challenges through R&I (secondary)

PATHWAY	HORIZON	INDICATOR TO MIRROR IN §2
KIP 6	short	Projects with citizen / end-user co-creation
	medium	Outreach / diffusion to citizens
	long	Societal uptake of R&I outputs

IMPACT WRITING BRIEF (PER EXPECTED OUTCOME)

An analysis decoding some of the requirements for each stated outcome, who benefits, what angle the story could take, and which numbers you might use to prove it. Drafting suggestions to react to, not facts about the call.

1 · User-integrated public-space design

> “to ensure an efficient and effective integration of user perspectives in the spatial design and/or transformation of public spaces.”

Target groups	architects, designers and spatial planners · neighbourhood decision-makers and local authorities · diverse public-space users/inhabitants
Narrative	Demonstrate NEB-aligned approaches that genuinely integrate diverse user perspectives into public-space design/transformation — using research-by-design, security-by-design or life-centric design, balancing participation with the need to accelerate the green transition.

CANDIDATE KPI	BASELINE SOURCE
Public-space (re)designs delivered with demonstrated user-perspective integration	current participatory-design practice in the pilot neighbourhoods
Planners/decision-makers adopting the demonstrated approaches	zero baseline for the new approaches

2 · Multi-value neighbourhood impact

> "The demonstrated approaches deliver positive climate, environmental, social and cultural impact"

Target groups	neighbourhood inhabitants and communities · local authorities and planners · NEB community
Narrative	The approaches must deliver measurable climate/environmental AND social/cultural impact (cohesion, resilience, civic engagement, belonging, security) — measure both dimensions in the demonstrations, embodying NEB's beautiful-sustainable-together principles.

CANDIDATE KPI	BASELINE SOURCE
Climate/environmental gains of the redesigned spaces (e.g. greening, heat, emissions)	baseline environmental metrics of pilot spaces
Social/cultural outcomes (cohesion, belonging, security) in pilot neighbourhoods (pre/post)	baseline community surveys

BARRIERS IN THIS DOMAIN (§2.1.2)

The obstacles that typically stop work in this field from reaching real use, and ways proposals commonly answer them. Naming the barrier you face and your answer to it is usually stronger than implying the path is clear.

BARRIER	WHY IT BITES HERE	MITIGATION ANGLE
Participation vs speed of green transition	the scope names this tension explicitly	efficient participatory methods (research-by-design); time-boxed deliberation
Power dynamics and exclusion in public space	design shapes power dynamics and belonging	inclusive, life-centric design; diverse-user engagement
Measuring social/cultural impact	the outcome requires demonstrated social/cultural impact	mixed-methods evaluation; community indicators
Scaling beyond demonstrators	approaches must transfer to other neighbourhoods	transferable toolkits; NEB-network dissemination

Scale frame	How widespread: neighbourhoods, public spaces and planners reached by the demonstrated approaches.
Significance frame	Value of the benefit: greener, more inclusive, cohesive neighbourhood public spaces — anchor to the New European Bauhaus and fair-green-transition objectives.
KIP 6 claim	Strengthens societal uptake: communities co-shaping public spaces (a core New European Bauhaus pathway).
KIP 4 claim	Serves NEB and fair-green-transition policy priorities.
Dissemination	New European Bauhaus community; architecture/planning and local-authority networks · open design approaches and toolkits
Communication	inhabitant- and community-facing co-creation and engagement
Exploitation	design approaches adopted by planners and neighbourhood decision-makers; NEB replication
DNSH	Spatial-design research for the green transition — positively aligned with climate/environmental objectives.

DECODED REQUIREMENTS (10)

Every obligation we could find stated in the call text, pulled out and listed as separate items, each with the exact sentence it came from. Use it as a checklist: each item is something your proposal has to visibly satisfy. Verify against the official call text before relying on it.

REQUIRED (10)

REQUIREMENT	WHAT THE PROPOSAL MUST DO	EVIDENCE (VERBATIM)
Develop one innovative public-space design approach	Develop one approach to designing and planning public space using innovative methods (e.g. research-by-design, security-by-design, life-centric design).	Develop one approach to designing and planning public space that uses innovative methods.
Assess gendered/age/identity patterns of use	Assess how spatial design determines gendered, age-appropriate and identity-related patterns of use and how inclusive/accessible approaches address diverse needs.	Assess how spatial design determines gendered, age-appropriate and identity-related patterns of use (e.g. in terms of mobility, safety, sense of security and access to public and private spaces) and how inclusive appr...
Co-creation adapted to sociocultural factors	Adapt the approach to neighbourhood sociocultural factors and use co-creation to incorporate inhabitants' diverse perspectives and engage cultural/creative/educational sectors.	Be adapted to the sociocultural factors of the neighbourhoods and use co-creation [1] to incorporate inhabitants’ diverse perspectives and to exploit the potential of cultural, creative, and educational (academic) sectors.
Address climate, water, security, biodiversity	Address climate resilience, water resilience, civil security and biodiversity of public space, plus user safety, well-being and security.	Address climate-resilience, water resilience, civil security, and biodiversity of public space and the safety, well-being and security of its users.
Demonstrate in >=3 neighbourhoods across areas	Demonstrate the approach in at least three neighbourhoods spanning urban, peri-urban and rural areas in different Member States and/or Associated Countries.	Demonstrate the approach in at least three neighbourhoods (in urban, peri-urban and rural areas) located in different Member States and/or Associated Countries.
Take-up plans, skills needs/gaps	Develop take-up plans/recommendations, assess applicability to other green-transition areas and identify skills needs and gaps.	Develop plans and recommendations for the take up of the demonstrated approach. This includes assessing its potential application to other areas of the green transition of neighbourhoods (e.g. water resilient design p...
Participatory, transdisciplinary approach	Follow a participatory and transdisciplinary approach integrating different actors and disciplines.	Proposals are expected to follow a participatory [1] and transdisciplinary [1] approach through the integration of different actors and disciplines.
Mandatory SSH integration	Effectively integrate SSH disciplines, experts and institutions to enhance the societal impact of the research.	This topic requires the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) [1] disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to p...

REQUIREMENT	WHAT THE PROPOSAL MUST DO	EVIDENCE (VERBATIM)
Allocate >=0.8% budget to NEB hub engagement	Allocate at least 0.8% of the budget to engage with the NEB hub for results and impact, sharing results and contributing to impact assessment.	Proposals are expected to allocate at least 0.8% of their budget for engaging with the Horizon Europe-funded 'New European Bauhaus hub for results and impact' to share their intermediate and final results, findings an...
Lump sum grant	Budget the proposal as a lump sum per the 7 July 2021 lump sum decision, using the detailed budget table (HE LS).	Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme

We support research and innovation organisations in the design, preparation and management of European grant-funded projects. Our practice combines deep proposal-writing experience with structured knowledge capture and a working infrastructure that bridges proposal preparation and project implementation.

We look forward to supporting you.

For partnerships or proposal development services, please reach out to:

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