Feedback opportunity for the work programme 2025

The New European Bauhaus Facility

Destination 1: Connecting the green transformation, social inclusion and local democracy

Draft expected impacts:

There is a growing disconnect between people and democratic institutions, and the rise of populist and anti-establishment movements across Europe are a symptom of people's disenchantment with established structures. Climate change, security threats and other crises over the last years, such as economic downturns or public health emergencies, deepen such feelings as institutions can be perceived as ineffective or slow to respond, contributing to emotional reactions of disconnect and distrust.

Addressing these challenges is, in many ways, uncharted territory and requires a nuanced and comprehensive approach, where research is essential. Efforts to address socio-economic inequalities and improve transparency need to go hand in hand with engaging with and fostering an open dialogue to rebuild trust. Re-establishing a strong connection between people and democratic institutions will be key to implement the changes required to make the green transition happen. Strengthening fairness and cohesion in the green transition is key to ensure social acceptance for measures to reach climate neutrality and circularity. A recent Eurobarometer demonstrates that 88% of EU citizens think that green transition should be fair and leave no one behind. Yet only 46% of Europeans are confident that by 2050 sustainable energy, products and services will be affordable for everyone, including poorer people. Vulnerable groups are often more exposed to climate risks and pollution, while being least responsible and having lower capacity to adapt. Furthermore, socio-economically disadvantaged households risk facing disproportionality higher costs due to green measure, if solutions in place do not support affordability..

Therefore, this Destination will aim to identify how to restore people's trust in democracies by finding innovative ways to involve them in the decision-making process and ensure their ownership of transformative processes, which will contribute to the acceptance of the changes required by the green transition. Cultural participation, cultural heritage and cultural diversity are key enablers of this. The destination will also foster social and ecological co-benefits to enable environmentally friendly, healthy and inclusive living spaces. In work programme 2025, this Destination will aim to restore people's trust in the green transition and in their power to shape and adjust to change by:

Reinforcing and rebuilding people's trust, sense of ownership and belonging through more active, engaged and inclusive communities in neighbourhoods

- Developing positive narratives and visions for a common European future
- Involving citizens – paying particular attention to minorities and vulnerable groups such as women, youth, older people, people with disabilities, homeless, migrants and ethnic minorities – in the decision-making processes that affect them and their living spaces through innovative participatory governance models to support the design of inclusive and accessible public and private spaces.

- Countering the damaging effects of disinformation on people's trust towards democratic institutions through empowerment, including aspects such as cultural participation, creativity and diversity, and positive emotions

Main expected outcomes:

To address the expected impacts mentioned above, this Destination aims to:

- Understand how individual and collective mind-sets, habits and practices can change into more sustainable and inclusive ones, taking into account various geographical realities (e.g. urban, peri-urban, rural). The potential of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) or virtual reality to achieve such changes should be considered.
- Develop user-centric services and digital platforms to foster a sense of community, ownership, belonging, and sustainable living, exploring the notion of 'circular networks of care' through which people could adopt more sustainable and circular lifestyles, turning the limitations and constraints stemming from the green and digital transitions into economic and social opportunities.
- Identify the factors (e.g. at the level of infrastructure, economy) that promote, facilitate and support new models of organisation within a neighbourhood, stimulate the emergence of inclusive and active communities within neighbourhoods and encourage people to adopt more sustainable and circular lifestyles (e.g. makerspaces, reuse shops, local material banks, joint purchases, community spaces, cultural assets and spaces, etc.).
- Understand the transformative potential of participatory practices and governance models and how innovative technologies can serve such practices and models and contribute, where applicable, to place-based research and innovation.
- Identify strategies for meaningful community engagement and co-creation in the (re-)design and (re-)construction process of neighbourhoods, ensuring that regenerative projects positively engage and impact local communities, build upon their cultural identity, cultural heritage, and cultural diversity, and address social equity concerns.
- Identity strategies to enhance synergies between building renovations (energy efficiency, circularity and decarbonisation) and social housing to tackle energy poverty as well as homelessness through the "housing first principle" and assess social investment needs.
- Explore the role of people and environment -centred spatial planning in urban and rural areas to foster wellbeing, ensure access to essential services and strengthen local cultures for vibrant communities and balanced territorial development.
- Identify how culture and creative industry can contribute to a successful transformation and strengthen a positive perception by the citizens.

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Destination 2: Circular and regenerative approaches for the built environment

Draft expected impacts:

The development of a European circular and regenerative ecosystem for the built environment is key to support the competitiveness of the sector and EU open strategic autonomy, and to achieve our climate ambitions. But this cannot be achieved without ensuring that citizens accept and support the necessary transformations.

Although considerable research efforts are underway on this matter, there remain significant gaps, meaning that innovation spreads slowly namely in the construction ecosystem, but also materials, including, where applicable, textiles. For instance, renovations are still not correctly targeted, too expensive, too slow, and often of insufficient quality, resulting in renovation rates that are too low; buildings are inefficiently used and undermine people's well-being; there is a lack of awareness of circular and innovative approaches amongst the different actors of the construction ecosystem; construction and renovation activity is concentrated only in specific neighbourhoods or cities, while other places face decline; and the market remains very attached to low costs in the short term. There is a broader dimensions of circularity that involves also re-purposing existing built environment and living spaces, as well as regeneration.

In work programme 2025, this Destination will contribute to addressing certain gaps and making the construction ecosystem more sustainable, resilient, circular and regenerative while also being human-centred. The Destination aims to deliver on this by:

- Increasing the re-use and re-purposing of materials, building elements, buildings and public spaces towards circularity in construction, based on reversible building design and sufficiency.
- Turning the built environment into a carbon sink (including through nature-based solutions), while respecting local cultural heritage and [cultural] landscape, taking them as inspiration for the design and construction of contemporary buildings, infrastructure, public spaces and landscapes.
- Applying the concept of sufficiency to buildings and architecture, and developing designs, methods and approaches in order to create structures that are functional, efficient, resilient, and effective in fulfilling intended and changing purposes and in satisfying people's social and psychological needs.
- Identifying regenerative design and construction processes that can be applied to a variety of building and public spaces, including cultural heritage.
- Ensure that the solutions developed are user-centred, connect with local cultural identity and cultural heritage, answer the needs of people on the ground - including minorities and vulnerable groups -, strengthen sense of belonging and societal resilience and are accepted.

The rural, peri-urban and urban environments should be considered.

Main expected outcomes:

To address the expected impacts mentioned above, this Destination aims to:

- Make elements of the built environment, construction materials and products more adaptable, durable and re-usable, and increase their recycling rate, leading to a more circular ecosystem for the built environment and a more efficient use of resources, thus limiting the extraction of new materials and waste generation for the construction ecosystem, in turn strengthening the EU's open strategic autonomy and competitiveness.
- Further explore sufficiency and regenerative design to research solutions for buildings and public spaces (including cultural heritage), applicable by architects and other relevant construction stakeholders, making better use of existing buildings, including for changing demand. Better designed and/or multi-purpose buildings and public spaces contribute to minimising the waste and environmental impact of the built environment while also contributing to the well-being of end-users.
- Better collect, structure, process and use data to contribute to increased circularity in the built environments by enhancing resource efficiency, reducing waste, and promoting sustainable practices throughout the building life cycle. This will include the specificities of cultural assets.
- Research how to ensure a better, more frequent use of by-products and secondary bio-based materials (including re-claimed wood), as well as regenerative design by the construction ecosystem and develop new solutions, contributing to making the built environment a carbon sink.
- Develop innovative uses for residuals from conventional forestry or non-timber forest products applicable by the actors of the construction ecosystem.
- Develop life cycle assessment methodologies to assess the aesthetic, social and economic impacts (affordability, job creation, skills needed, well-being) of carbon-sequestering materials in the built environment (including for cultural heritage), resulting in mainstreamed and affordable use of those materials.
- Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are increasingly used to significantly reduce costs, optimize resource utilisation, and enhance efficiency of renovation, production and construction processes to make sustainable, circular and regenerative renovation and construction more economically viable and culturally sensitive.
- Develop methods and tools that more effectively facilitate collaboration among diverse stakeholders such as architects, engineers, designers, environmentalists, artists, culture and creative professionals and the end-users throughout the design and implementation phases to enhance multidisciplinary collaboration.
- Improve the climate adaptability and resilience of buildings and public spaces through regenerative designs that contribute to longevity, energy efficiency, and overall climate resilience in the face of evolving environmental conditions, contributing to a more sustainable and future-proof built environment.

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Destination 3: Innovative funding and new business models for the transformation of neighbourhoods

Draft expected impacts:

Companies face a number of challenges and obstacles on their transition to carbon-neutrality. The construction ecosystem, for example, faces various challenges that hinder its transition towards sustainability. It has traditionally been resistant to change due to established norms, practices, and a conservative mind-set. For the sector to change and adapt, there needs to be demand and incentives. New business models can disrupt the status quo by providing a framework to rethink how projects are conceived, planned, and executed. Demonstrating the potential, feasibility, benefits for society and economic sustainability of new business models can incentivise specific ecosystems in the built environment and other related ecosystems (e.g. banking, insurance, social economy, real estate), to move towards more circular and sustainable practices as well as practices which are resilient against natural, including climate change-induced, and human-made hazards while also promoting new values such as affordability, inclusion, diversity, functionality and beauty. Introducing and demonstrating new business models and innovative funding mechanisms is thus crucial to encourage the uptake of new practices that do not only focus on cost-effectiveness and efficiency but also align with larger societal goals and values, driving positive cultural, social and environmental change in the construction ecosystem while also enhancing the ecosystem's long-term sustainability and competitiveness.

In work programme 2025, this Destination will aim to better understand the market (both demand and supply sides, as well as the related policy and regulatory aspects) and develop new business models and innovative funding to drive positive change in neighbourhoods and encourage the uptake of new values, including social and aesthetic values, by:

- Better understanding the market dynamics, what drives and influences both the demand and the supply, how they can differ in rural, peri-urban or urban areas, and how they can be shifted towards more sustainable, eco-friendly, resource-efficient, inclusive and beautiful practices in the built environment.
- Establishing and supporting a new set of principles, policies, and regulatory frameworks that encourage, guide and enable the wider construction industry to adopt innovative, inclusive, more sustainable and socially and culturally sensitive practices.
- Developing new business models – including in the social economy and community-based models – and innovative funding mechanisms putting sustainability, inclusion, people - including minorities and vulnerable groups -, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and aesthetics at the centre and providing the necessary resources for companies to adopt and implement such practices.
- Understanding and promoting the social and economic value of beauty in a quality built environment.
- Understanding the new skills and needs linked to circular and regenerative methods for building renovation, repurposing, repair and construction.

Main expected outcomes:

To address the expected impacts mentioned above, this Destination aims to:

- Better understanding of the incentives (e.g. financial rewards, regulatory advantages, or positive public perception) and barriers that push or prevent stakeholders for example within the construction ecosystem to adopt innovative sustainable practices even if they are perceived as less cost-effective than traditional ones in the short term.
- Understand what are the incentives and barriers that stimulate or prevent demand for sustainable, inclusive and beautiful projects in the built environment, exploring factors such as market demand, consumer preferences, and price sensitivity, and assess the potential for adoption and acceptance of the three NEB values and concepts in the marketplace, in different rural, peri-urban and urban settings.
- Develop new strategies to make sustainable and inclusive projects in the built environment both attractive and affordable, leveraging design innovation, creativity and cultural heritage, low- and/or no-tech, efficient use of resources, economies of scale, and cost-effective technologies to minimise n costs without compromising on quality or sustainability.
- Better understanding of what can trigger stakeholders such as investors, developers, governments, and community organisations to cover the costs associated with sustainable, regenerative and inclusive construction projects, as well as to overcome the perceived risks associated with approaches combining environmental sustainability with other aspects that increase the acceptance of solutions (e.g. accessibility, affordability, aesthetics, social fulfilment and cultural relevance).
- Develop innovative supply chains – taking the 'cascading principle' into account when relevant – that transform waste materials into high-quality secondary construction materials and products, contributing to promoting a circular economy within the wider construction ecosystem, to reduce reliance on traditional, resource-intensive, linear practices and to make the construction ecosystem more sustainable and resource-efficient.
- Provide evidence of the social and economic value and investment returns associated with aesthetically pleasing, inclusive and sustainable built environment to incentivise the integration of cultural, social, aesthetic and sustainable considerations in construction practices and related sectors
- Understand the market dynamics, incentives, risks, and barriers affecting the adoption of sustainable building practices to help stakeholders developing targeted strategies to overcome obstacles and create an environment that encourages the widespread adoption of sustainable renovation, production and construction practices.
- Assess the impact and effectiveness of existing policies and regulations promoting a sustainable and circular construction, including the use of carbon-sequestering materials, to refine and strengthen existing policies or develop new ones to encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly construction materials and methods.
- Develop methods to measure and quantify the regenerative impact and the carbon sequestration potential of new and existing buildings and public spaces (including cultural assets) to provide a holistic understanding of their potential negative or positive impact in terms of carbon footprint, regeneration of its environment, or societal and economic benefits.

- Develop economic models for investment in regenerative construction projects that embed inclusion and aesthetics, considering factors such as long-term value, ecosystem services, and social benefits.
- Develop new business-models that incorporate circular economy principles, life cycle thinking, and sustainable practices while being economically attractive.
- Assess the skills investment needs as well as job creation potential for building renovation, repurposing, repair and regenerative construction methods.