

Glossary of the NEB Facility part of the Horizon Europe 'main' Work Programme 2026- 2027

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Purpose of this document

This document gathers the definitions under the glossary of the [NEB Facility part of the Horizon Europe 'main' Work Programme 2026-2027](#) (pages 10-18) and relevant definitions published under the Q&A of NEB Facility topics for [2026](#) and [2027](#) on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal. The aim is to make it easier for interested applicants to access information on relevant definitions.

Disclaimer

This document is provided for information purposes only and is not intended to replace the relevant legally binding documents published on the Funding and Tenders Portal or the consultation of any other applicable legal sources. Interested applicants are invited to check all the relevant reference documents for their topic, including the [General Annexes of the Horizon Europe 'main' Work Programme 2026-2027](#), the [NEB Facility part of the Horizon Europe 'main' Work Programme 2026-2027](#) and the Model Grant Agreement indicated in the Funding & Tenders Portal for the topic in question.

Glossary entries

Beauty

Beauty is one of the three core values of NEB¹. Beauty in the built environment results from a highly positive aesthetic, spatial and atmospheric impact on the observer who experiences the place emotionally. Beauty goes beyond mere functionality and aesthetic/visual pleasure as it reflects the quality of the whole spatial experience. Projects are in line with this value if they are genuinely attentive to the built environment's cultural, historical and social context as well as surrounding (natural and cultural) landscape. They contribute to people's physical and mental well-being, foster a sense of belonging and enhance the quality of individual and collective experience. These projects promote a high-quality living environment and activate the cultural, social, natural and spatial qualities of a place.

Bio-based products

Bio-based products are wholly or partly derived from materials of biological origin (such as plants and trees, animals, enzymes, and microorganisms, including bacteria, fungi and yeast)². For example, bio-based plastics, as defined by the European Union, are made from biomass. This biomass originates mainly from plants grown specifically to be used as feedstock to substitute fossil resources. If sustainably harvested and used in long-lasting (construction) products these products can constitute carbon removals. Other sources are organic waste and by-products, such as used cooking oil, bagasse and tall oil³.

Built environment

Built environment refers to human-made spaces, buildings and infrastructures that provide physical settings for human activities. This includes, but is not limited to, public and private buildings, streets, transport and energy infrastructure, common spaces, public spaces, blue and waterway corridors, and green open spaces⁴. The built environment plays an essential role in addressing the basic needs of society, such as having places to live, work, learn, consume, travel and entertain. A quality built environment can contribute to a more just and cohesive society by accommodating the needs of diverse individuals and groups^{5 6}, for example, by facilitating social interaction and integration, and by fostering their physical and mental health (e.g. by encouraging physical exercise and helping reduce stress).

Circular economy

Circular economy is a business concept aiming to create a closed-loop system and maintain the value of products, materials, and resources for as long as possible by returning them into the product cycle at the end of their use, while minimising the generation of waste. In this economic system, 'waste' can become a feedstock source for another process or value chain.⁷ Resource value retention options (R strategies) form one of the circular economy's fundamental principles. The 10 R strategies can be classified into three clusters:

¹See definition of "NEB core values" in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

²European Commission, 'Bio-based products', Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, accessed 5 August 2025, https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/biotechnology/bio-based-products_en

³European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. EU policy framework on bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics', COM/2022/682 final, 30 November 2022, accessed 5 August 2025, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0682>

⁴Thompson, S. M., & Kent, J. L., 'Human Health and a Sustainable Built Environment', Encyclopedia of Sustainable Technologies, 2, 2017, pp. 71-80, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-409548-9.10178-2>

⁵Seyedrezaei, M., Becerik-Gerber, B., Awada, M., Contreras, S., & Boeing, G., 'Equity in the built environment: A systematic review', Building and Environment, 245, 2023, pp. 1-19, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2023.110827>

⁶Roof, K., & Oleru, N., 'Public Health: Seattle and King County's Push for the Built Environment', Journal of Environmental Health, 71(1), 2008, pp. 24-27, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26327656>

⁷Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking, 'Annual Work Programme and Budget 2022', 2022, https://www.cbe.europa.eu/system/files?file=2023-03/CBEJU_AWP_2022_3rd_Amend.pdf

1. R strategies closely related to consumer/customer alternatives (refuse, reduce, resell/reuse, repair); 2. R strategies referring to various forms of upgrading used products on the side of users but dominantly carried out by business actors (refurbish, remanufacture, repurpose); 3. R strategies referring to aggregate material flows, often resulting in downcycling (recycle, recover, re-mine)⁸.

Co-creation

Co-creation refers to the process of participation, interaction, collaboration and co-production of solutions with inhabitants (organised or non-organised), political representatives, public officers, private and public stakeholders and researchers⁹.

Co-governance

Co-governance refers to processes and structures of public decision-making and management that engage people across the boundaries of public agencies and different levels of governance¹⁰.

Community

Community is a social unit. Interactions that occur in the built environment¹¹ can foster a sense of community¹² and belonging in many ways¹³. Interaction enables people to build communities, commit themselves to each other, and knit the social fabric¹⁴. The perception¹⁵ and locally based¹⁶ are essential to define a coherent social unit as a community. The coherence of a social unit, that is a community, includes the capacity to act, a shared social reality, and a relatively stable culture and identity¹⁷.

Construction ecosystem

Construction ecosystem covers contractors for building and infrastructure projects, construction product manufacturers, engineering and architectural services, urban planners and designers, construction workers, engineers as well as other relevant actors and economic activities (e.g., rental and leasing of machinery and equipment, employment agencies)¹⁸ involved in the design, construction, maintenance, refurbishment, renovation and demolition of buildings and infrastructure^{19 20}.

⁸Reike, D., Vermeulen, W.J.V., Witjes, S., 'Conceptualization of Circular Economy 3.0: Synthesizing the 10R Hierarchy of Value Retention Options' In: Alvarez-Risco, A., Rosen, M.A., Del-Aguila-Arcenales, S. (eds), Towards a Circular Economy, CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance, Springer, Cham, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94293-9_3

⁹European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Andersson, I., Ferreira, I., Arlati, A., Bradley, S. et al., Guidelines for co-creation and co-governance of nature-based solutions – Insights from EU-funded projects, Ferreira, I., Lupp, G. and Mahmoud, I. (eds), Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/15706>.

¹⁰European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Andersson, I., Ferreira, I., Arlati, A., Bradley, S. et al., Guidelines for co-creation and co-governance of nature-based solutions – Insights from EU-funded projects, Ferreira, I., Lupp, G. and Mahmoud, I. (eds), Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/15706>.

¹¹See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

¹²See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

¹³Thompson, S. M., & Kent, J. L., 'Human Health and a Sustainable Built Environment', Encyclopedia of Sustainable Technologies, 2, 2017, pp. 71-80, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-409548-9.10178-2>

¹⁴See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

¹⁵Zanbar, L., 'Sense of Belonging and Commitment as Mediators of the Effect of Community Features on Active Involvement in the Community'. City & Community, 19(3), 2020, pp. 617-637, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12420>

¹⁶Horak, M., & Vanhooren, S., 'Somebody to Lean On: Community Ties, Social Exchange, and Practical Help during the COVID-19 Pandemic', City & Community, 23(1), 2024, pp. 3-25, <https://doi.org/10.1177/15356841231159370>

¹⁷Whitham, M. M., 'Community Entitativity and Civic Engagement', City & Community, 18(3), 2019, pp. 896-914, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12385>

¹⁸European Commission, 'Annual Single Market Report', 2021, https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-05/swd-annual-single-market-report-2021_en.pdf

¹⁹Adner, R., 'Ecosystem as Structure: An Actionable Construct for Strategy', Journal of Management, 43(1), 2017, pp. 39-58, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316678451>

²⁰Vigren, O., 'Ecosystems in construction management and urban development: a comprehensive review of conceptualizations and contributions', Construction Management and Economics, 42(2), 2023, pp. 162–181, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01446193.2023.2247496>

Frugal innovation

Frugal innovation describes the process of innovating in conditions of constraint, to produce solutions that are substantially more affordable than alternatives, and accessible to a broader range of people, while meeting user needs as – or even more – effectively. The frugal innovation process is a problem-oriented, creative approach to problem solving which starts from user needs and works from the bottom up to develop contextually appropriate solutions. It tends to be frugal both in ends and means, e.g. relying on the recombination of existing knowledge and technologies from previous efforts rather than substantial, dedicated R&I investments²¹.

Green transition

Green transition is a concept of moving from a carbon-based economy to a more sustainable²² economy while transforming environmental challenges and climate related difficulties into prosperous opportunities that benefit everyone in society. The green transition fosters welfare and well-being through a new sustainable economic model, while ensuring socioeconomic systems remain within ecological planetary boundaries.

Homelessness

Homelessness encompasses, according to the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion²³ the following situations: rooflessness (people living rough and people in emergency accommodation); houselessness (people in accommodation for the homeless, in women's shelters, in accommodation for migrants, people due to be released from institutions and people receiving long-term support due to homelessness); living in insecure housing (people living in insecure tenancies, under threat of eviction or violence); living in inadequate housing (living in unfit housing, non-conventional dwellings or in situations of extreme overcrowding)²⁴.

Housing-led approaches

Housing-led approaches describe all policy approaches that identify the provision and/or sustaining of stable housing with security of tenure as the initial step in resolving or preventing situations of homelessness²⁵. These approaches treat housing as a fundamental right and a prerequisite to solving other problems, such as social, health and employment issues. Housing-led approaches should not consider policy formulations that entail conditionality, temporariness, or disciplinary mechanisms through the backdoor and that risk legitimising minimal interventions that fall short of transformative change. 'Housing-led' represents a significant departure from the 'staircase' or 'continuum of care' approach. According to the 'staircase' or 'continuum of care' approach, stable housing is the end goal in the reintegration process whereby homeless people, particularly those with complex support needs, should move through various stages in different residential services before becoming "ready" for re-housing²⁶.

²¹Kroll, H, et al., 'Study on frugal innovation and reengineering of traditional techniques', European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, 2017, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/94587>

²²See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

²³FEANTSA, 'ETHOS - European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion', accessed on 26 August 2025, <https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion?bcParent=27>.

²⁴FEANTSA, 'About Homelessness', accessed on 26 August 2025, <https://www.feantsa.org/en/about-us/faq>.

²⁵See definition in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

²⁶FEANTSA, 'European Consensus Conference on Homelessness: Policy Recommendations of the Jury' (2010), https://www.feantsa.org/download/2011_02_16_final_consensus_conference_jury_recommendations_en-22191246727835177211.pdf

Inclusive

Inclusive is a core value of NEB²⁷ that revolves around the essential idea of granting and securing equal access to opportunities and resources for all and encouraging exchanges among people with a different culture, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristic, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, and physical and psychological functional variations. The basic ambition addresses the physical, social and economic inclusion of all members of the society which also includes affordability for all and accessibility. The second level targets the broader concept of social justice, to be achieved not only by specific, temporary solutions at project level but through institutional setups, governance and business models, and structural safeguards. The third and highest level of ambition refers to fundamentally equitable societal models based on solidarity and cooperation. A part of these ideas and ambitions is directly linked to the physical characteristics of the built and natural environment²⁸.

Intergenerational fairness

Intergenerational fairness is defined in the UN Declaration on Future Generations as the commitment to meet the demands of the present in a way that safeguards the needs and interests of future generations, while leaving no one behind²⁹.

Local knowledge

Local knowledge is a collection of facts and relates to the entire system of concepts, beliefs and perceptions that people hold about the world around them. This includes the way people observe and measure their surroundings, how they solve problems and validate new information. It includes the processes whereby knowledge is generated, stored, applied and transmitted to others³⁰.

More-than-human

More-than-human is a theoretical concept established as a counterpoint to the dualistic ontology that understands humans as exceptional and defined in opposition to nature³¹. It acknowledges human life and society as being deeply interconnected with non-human entities, such as animals, plants, technologies, and natural systems³².

Motorway

Motorway means a road specially designed and built for motor vehicle traffic, which does not directly provide access to the properties bordering on it, and which: (i) is provided, except at special points or temporarily, with separate carriageways for the two directions of traffic, separated from each other either by a dividing strip not intended for traffic or, exceptionally, by other means; (ii) does not cross at grade with any road, railway or tramway track, or footpath; (iii) is specifically designated as a motorway³³.

²⁷See definition of 'NEB core values' in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

²⁸See definition of 'built environment' in the Glossary section of the NEB part of the HE WP26-27.

²⁹United Nations, 'A Declaration on future Generations', United Nations Summit of the Future, <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/declaration-on-future-generations>

³⁰FAO, 'What is local knowledge?', <https://www.fao.org/4/y5610e/y5610e01.htm>

³¹Bernardes de Souza Júnior, C. R., 'More-than-human cultural geographies towards codwelling on earth', *Mercator - Revista de Geografia da UFC*, 2021, accessed 22 May 2023, <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/2736/273665153007/273665153007.pdf>

³²Lorimer J. & Hodgetts, T., 'More-than-Human', Routledge, 2024

³³EEA, 'motorway', Glossary, 1999, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/help/glossary/eea-glossary/motorway>

Multi-level engagement

Multi-level engagement refers to the implementation of an effective exchange between peers and others who operate on a different scale or level of governance, bridging the local, regional, federal, European and global dimension³⁴.

Nature-based solutions

Nature-based solutions are inspired and supported by nature. They are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help improving buildings' and neighbourhoods' resilience and climate adaptability. Implementing nature-based solutions such as green infrastructure, water-efficient landscaping, and erosion control will enhance soil, thus ecosystem stability, which will bring more and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions³⁵.

Nature positive

Nature positive refers to a societal goal aiming at halting and reversing nature, including improving and maintaining biodiversity³⁶. It means also restoring nature for its intrinsic values while benefitting human and planetary well-being³⁷.

NEB thematic axes

NEB thematic axes³⁸ link the initiative to the people and their interests, needs and motivations in order to foster dialogue, collaboration, creativity, bringing together different disciplines and different stakeholders. The first axis is about reconnecting with nature and going beyond a human-centred to a life-centred perspective. This reflects widespread awareness and willingness to address climate change (mitigation and adaptation) and to reduce exposure to pollution. In this context, education and culture play a key role in the shift of paradigm towards new behaviours and values. The second axis is about regaining a sense of belonging and magnifying and linking collective and private experiences and building bridges between people. This path ranges from intergenerational solidarity over cultural heritage to proximity economy. The third axis is about prioritising the places and people that need it the most and ensuring that beauty and sustainability are affordable and accessible to all. Exclusion, lack of accessibility, segregation, or poverty are real threats in many built environments, which the NEB must encounter and help to overcome. The fourth axis is about the need for long-term, lifecycle thinking in the industrial ecosystem and tackling unsustainable use of resources, including obsolete buildings or infrastructures, and waste. NEB projects promote a thorough circular economy mindset and address these challenges in terms of design, materials, technologies, processes and behaviours.

NEB core values

NEB core values: The commitment and the support of innovative solutions are rooted in the three intertwined NEB values sustainable, inclusive and beautiful³⁹. See their respective entries in this glossary.

³⁴For more detailed information, see the NEB Compass and the NEB Investment Guidelines.

³⁵European Commission, 'Nature-based solutions', European Commission website, accessed 5 August 2025, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/environment/nature-based-solutions_en

³⁶Nature Positive Initiative, 'What is Nature Positive', Nature Positive Initiative website, accessed 1 October 2025, <https://www.naturepositive.org/what-is-nature-positive/>.

³⁷GoNaturePositive!, 'Concept note. Framing the Nature-Positive Economy. Version 1.0.', October 2024, accessed 1 October 2025, <https://www.gonaturepositive.eu/s/GoNP-Concept-Note.pdf>.

³⁸For more detailed information, see the NEB Compass and the NEB Investment Guidelines.

³⁹For more detailed information, see the NEB Compass and the NEB Investment Guidelines.

NEB working principles

NEB working principles are an addition to the three NEB core values. They describe the process through which a project should operate and work to achieve the highest level of ambition in the three core values. A NEB project should embrace three working principles: participatory process, multi-level engagement and transdisciplinary approach⁴⁰. See their respective entries in this glossary.

Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods are understood as comprehensive residential systems in rural, peri-urban or urban areas with mixed functions. A neighbourhood ideally includes public and private functions and infrastructures such as education institutions (e.g. kindergartens, primary schools), healthcare facilities, cultural facilities, community centres, youth centres, retirement homes, post offices, banks, stores, parks, and workplaces. Neighbourhoods are where people live, socialise and find services to meet a substantial part of their daily needs. In contrast to communities, which are social units, neighbourhood refers to a physical unit where one can address local-level challenges through coordinated development and planning initiatives. For the purpose of the NEB Facility implementation, a neighbourhood will be understood as an area that either has a maximum of 25 km² or a maximum of 10,000 inhabitants. A neighbourhood should also be part of or represent the lowest level of a public administration or elected body such as a quarter, borough or district.

Participatory process

Participatory process consists of concrete steps and activities that are an integral part of a project's preparation and operation. Participatory processes ensure that stakeholders have a voice in projects that affect them in addressing transformational change. Participatory processes require a careful and transparent implementation in order to ensure that they are genuinely inclusive and impactful. Successful participatory processes strengthen social cohesion and foster a sense of co-ownership and co-responsibility. Participatory processes may include a range of approaches, such as co-creation or participatory budgeting⁴¹.

Regenerative design

Regenerative design aims to actively restore, revitalise and enhance ecosystems and create sustainable, thriving environments for local communities and nature⁴². It is based on a holistic worldview that sees humans and economies as an integral part of nature. It is about sustaining qualitative growth for the well-being of all life on earth in cooperation with nature. Applied to the built environment and following regenerative design criteria⁴³, regenerative design offers pathways to develop construction and renovation methods and designs that go beyond conventional approaches. Regenerative designs will contribute to long-term ecosystem resilience and improved soil quality in urban and rural NEB neighbourhoods, creating a more harmonious coexistence between the built environment and nature, while saving and sustainably producing resources and making the built environment more resilient, sustainable, inclusive and beautiful⁴⁴, therefore enhancing the local quality of living.

⁴⁰For more detailed information, see the NEB Compass and the NEB Investment Guidelines.

⁴¹For more detailed information, see the NEB Compass and the NEB Investment Guidelines.

⁴²Tainter, J. A., 'Regenerative design in science and society', *Building Research & Information*, Vol. 40, Issue 3, 2012, pp. 369–372, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09613218.2012.671998>

⁴³European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Schellnhuber, H., Widera, B., Kutnar, A., Organschi, A., Hafner, A., Hillebrandt, A., Murphy, O., & Nakicenovic, N., *Horizon Europe and new European Bauhaus NEXUS report: conclusions of the High-Level Workshop on 'Research and Innovation for the New European Bauhaus'*, jointly organised by DG Research and Innovation and the Joint Research Centre, Publications Office of the European Union, 2012, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/49925>.

⁴⁴Arup, *Arup Explores Regenerative design*, London, 2020, pp. 4-11.

Social fabric

Social fabric is knitted through interactions between people and within communities (see the entry for Community). It is crucial for a sense of belonging and placemaking. The interplay between economic and social factors drives the improvement or deterioration of the social fabric of a place. Therefore, social fabric requires actions to take place at local or community level, rather than regional or national level⁴⁵.

Social infrastructure

Social infrastructure refers to the institutional and spatial frameworks that support collective civic life, including community facilities and public spaces that foster social interaction, community development, and social cohesion.

Social sciences and humanities (SSH)

Social sciences and humanities (SSH) conduct broader research on societies and the members and their interactions within societies. The sustainable societal impacts sought by policy makers often depend on the contributions of SSH researchers working in multi- and/or interdisciplinary scientific collaborations. SSH encompasses a wide range of disciplines such as sociology, economics, political sciences, anthropology, ethnology, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, communication sciences, law, the arts, history and more⁴⁶. Within the scientific field, SSH will play an important role in the R&I component of the NEB Facility to emphasise the holistic nature of the initiative.

Sustainable

Sustainable is a core value of the NEB. In alignment with the European GreenComp framework, sustainability is about preserving and prioritising the needs of all life forms and of the planet by ensuring that human activity does not exceed planetary boundaries⁴⁷ which define a safe operating space for humanity based on the intrinsic biophysical processes that regulate the stability of the Earth system⁴⁸. Particularly, construction methods and materials that are resource-efficient and avoid damaging local soils, while using bio-fabricated materials or recycled components, minimizing waste and reducing the need for land and the extraction of raw resources, should be encouraged. The basic sustainability ambition is concerned with conventional features like the ability to preserve or prolong usability, and the next level considers the entire system of a project. The highest ambition is to regenerate and reconnect to nature (see additionally the entry for regenerative design).

Transdisciplinary approaches

Transdisciplinary approaches aim for higher integration of formal and informal knowledge and go beyond technical disciplines while addressing in particular social, artistic and design expertise. They should ground scientific expertise in society by drawing on the knowledge of non-academics, the public and public administrations. This contributes to the construction of knowledge and solution of social problems that go beyond disciplinary boundaries and provide a systemic, global and integrated perspective⁴⁹. Within the

⁴⁵Tanner, W., O'Shaughnessy, J., Krasniqi, F., & Blagden, J., The State of our Social Fabric: Measuring the changing nature of community over time and geography, Onward, London, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ukonward.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The-State-of-our-Social-Fabric.pdf>

⁴⁶European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Integration of social sciences and humanities in Horizon 2020 - Participants, budgets and disciplines 2014 - 2020 - Final monitoring report, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/075642>.

⁴⁷Bianchi, G., Pisiotis, U., & Cabrera Giraldez, M. (2022). GreenComp. The European sustainability competence framework (Y. Punie and M. Bacigalupo, Eds.). Publications Office of the European Union. <https://doi.org/10.2760/13286>

⁴⁸Steffen, W., Richardson, K., Rockström, J., Cornell, S. E., Fetzer, I., Bennett, E. M., Biggs, R., Carpenter, S. R., de Vries, W., de Wit, C. A., Folke, C., Gerten, D., Heinke, J., Mace, G. M., Persson, L. M., Ramanathan, V., Reyers, B., & Sörlin, S., 'Planetary Boundaries: Guiding human development on a changing planet', Science, Vol. 347, Issue 6223, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1259855>.

⁴⁹Darbellay, F., 'Rethinking inter- and transdisciplinarity: Undisciplined knowledge and the emergence of a new thought style', Futures, Vol. 65, 2015, pp. 163-174, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2014.10.009>

scientific field, the social sciences and humanities (SSH) will play an important role in the R&I component of the NEB Facility to emphasise the holistic nature of the initiative.

Urban, peri-urban and rural areas

Urban, peri-urban and rural areas⁵⁰: Although there is no universal definition for these terms, there is an international harmonized approach developed by Eurostat together with the European Commission, UN Habitat, FAO, ILO, OECD and the World Bank, which is based on the “degree of urbanisation”. This approach provided by Eurostat is considered as good approximation of these terms⁵¹.

Applicants are encouraged to use the Eurostat grid cell classification for level 2 of the degree of urbanisation classification (see interactive map) as follows:

- ‘Urban centre’ should be considered ‘**urban areas**’ as referred to in NEB Facility topics.
- ‘Suburban cluster’, ‘Semi-dense urban cluster’ and ‘Dense urban cluster’ should be considered ‘**peri-urban areas**’ as referred to in NEB Facility topics.
- ‘Very low density urban grid cell’, ‘Low density rural grid cell’ and ‘Rural cluster’ should be considered ‘**rural areas**’ as referred to in NEB Facility topics.

For areas that are currently not included on the Eurostat interactive map, applicants are encouraged to refer to the GHSL interactive map as follows:

- ‘Urban centres’ should be considered as ‘**urban areas**’ as referred to in NEB Facility topics.
- ‘Dense urban cluster’, ‘Semi-dense urban cluster’ and ‘Sub-/periurban area’ should be considered ‘**peri-urban areas**’ as referred to in NEB Facility topics
- ‘Rural cluster’, ‘Low-density rural area’ and ‘Very-low density rural area’ should be considered ‘**rural areas**’ as referred to in NEB Facility topics.

Vernacular knowledge

Vernacular knowledge encompasses local, community-based understandings that often operate outside formal scientific or academic frameworks. It is deeply rooted in cultural, historical, and environmental contexts and is transmitted through generations’ multiple communication strategies such as oral traditions and daily practices. Vernacular knowledge is shared and shaped by communities⁵² and can apply to various domains such as architecture.

Vertical space

Vertical space in the context of this work programme refers to the currently unused or under-used spatial layer located above existing buildings, streets, and infrastructure in cities, towns, and rural settlements alike that can offer untapped potential for sustainable housing, green spaces, and public amenities.

⁵⁰ This definition is not included in the NEB Facility part of the Horizon Europe ‘main’ Work Programme 2026-2027. It has been published in the Funding & Tenders Portal as a Q&A for the relevant topics of the Work Programme in question.

⁵¹For more information see the following publication: [Applying the Degree of Urbanisation - A methodological manual to define cities, towns and rural areas for international comparisons \(2021\)](#)

⁵²Valk Ü. and Bowman M. (eds), Vernacular knowledge. Contesting Authority, Expressing Beliefs, Equinox, 2022.