

Rewild

the City



09.12.2025

A strategy for Ghent



HO
GENT

VRP VLAAMSE VERENIGING RUIMTE
ruimte & planning

ESPON



URBACT



Co-funded by
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provincie
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INITIATIVE

1. Setting the scene...





Studio Brussel

GEENTENAAUW

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Rewild _ Ghent _ Urban Greening and No Net Land Take, HOGENT, 09.12.25









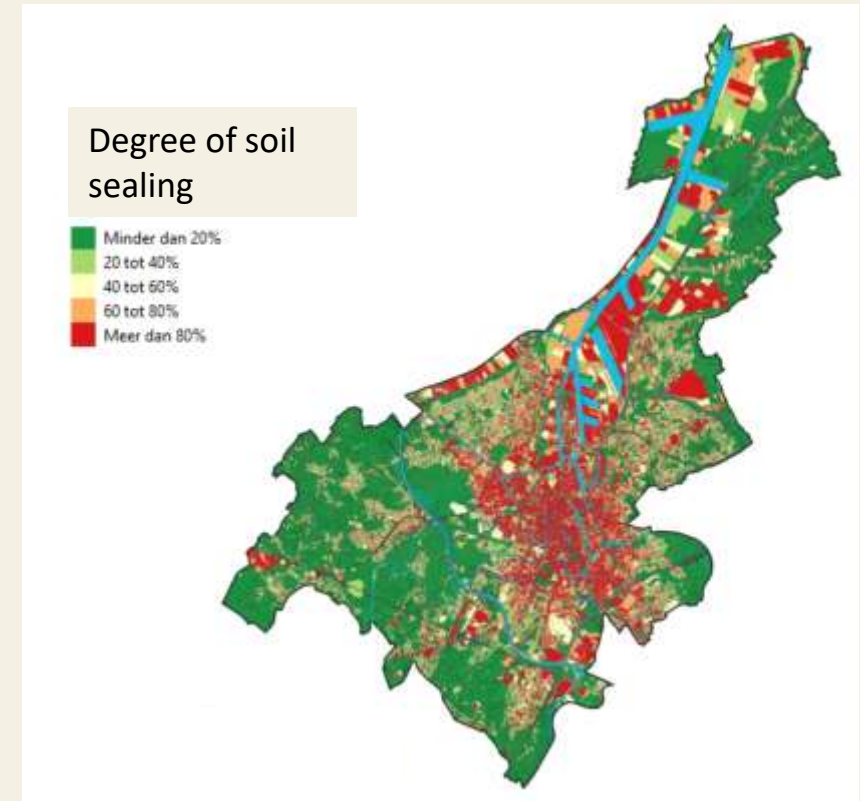
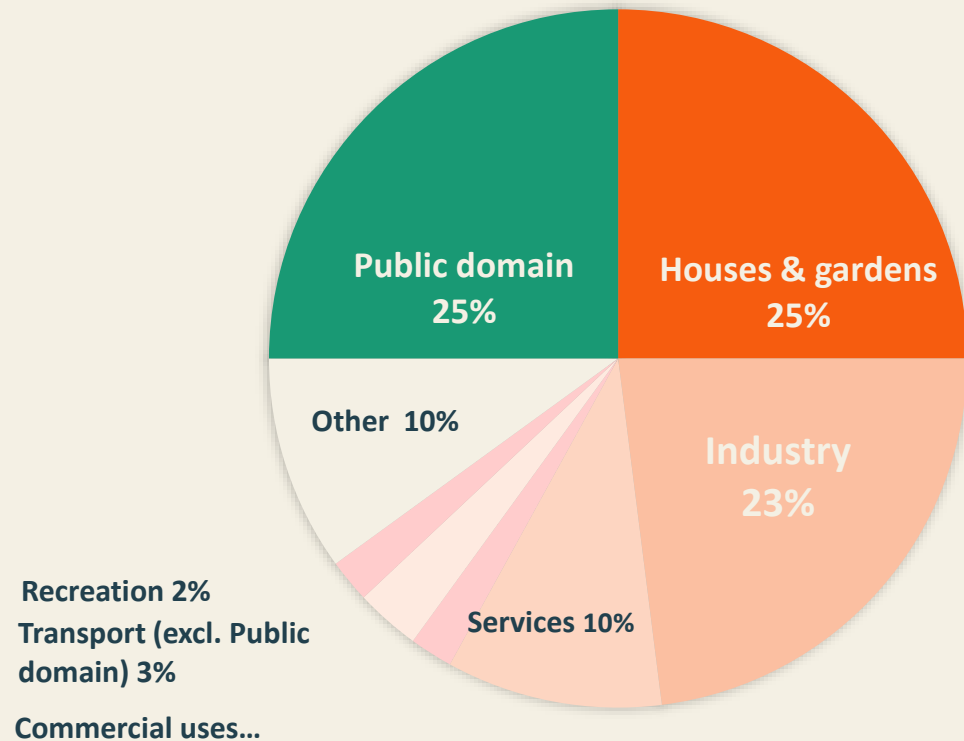






Ghent: set in stone?

- 39% soil sealing (data: jaarbak 2023)
- 70% of the public domain is sealed = 25% of the sealed off surface



Soil sealing objectives

Spatial policy plan Flanders

By 2040: NNLT

by 2050:

- hard zoning : status quo compared to 2015
- soft zoning: -20% compared to 2015

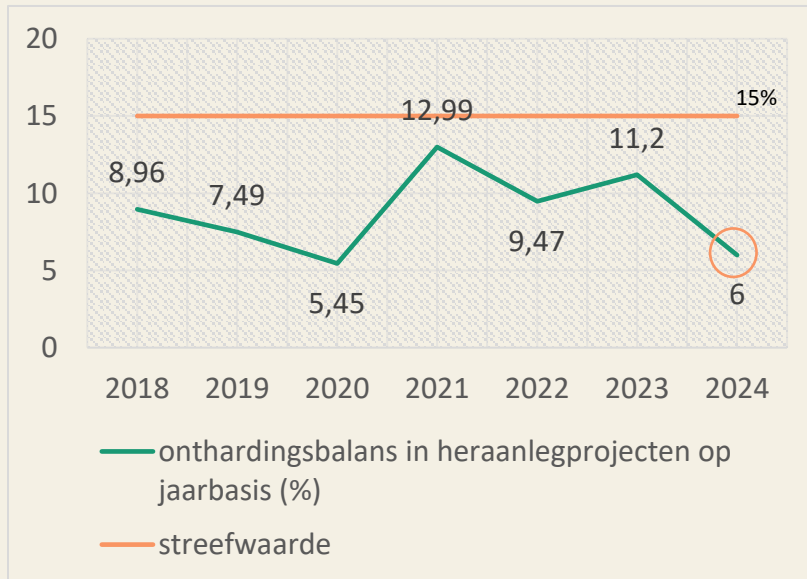
=> Develop within existing land take, while limiting soil sealing.



Specific soil sealing objectives in Ghent



Redevelopment of public domain



Objective:

15% soil desealing on a yearly basis in street redevelopment projects



2. Pilots

2 examples of instruments for downzoning, densification and desealing



RUP169: RUP GROEN



Downzoning plans

Objectives:

- protection of existing green space and biodiversity values
- Increase of green space where possible

Proces:

- initiative of spatial development service, advice or input by Parks and public gardens Service and Environment and Climate Service
- Long term development- strategic instrument
- new calculation method for downzoning compensation tariffs

Outcome:

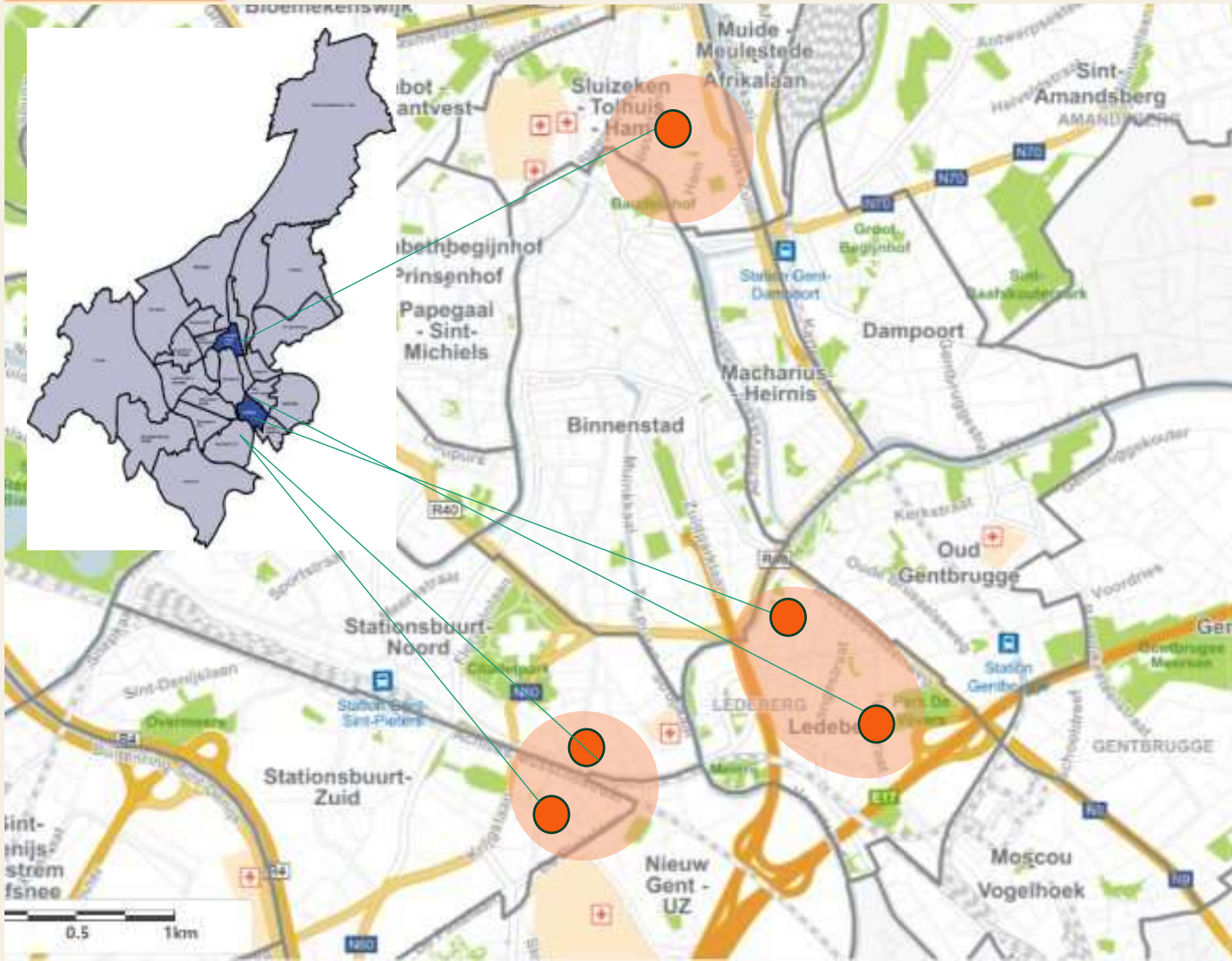
- dedicated zoning for parks and (urban) green space
- main success: prevent certain developments from taking place



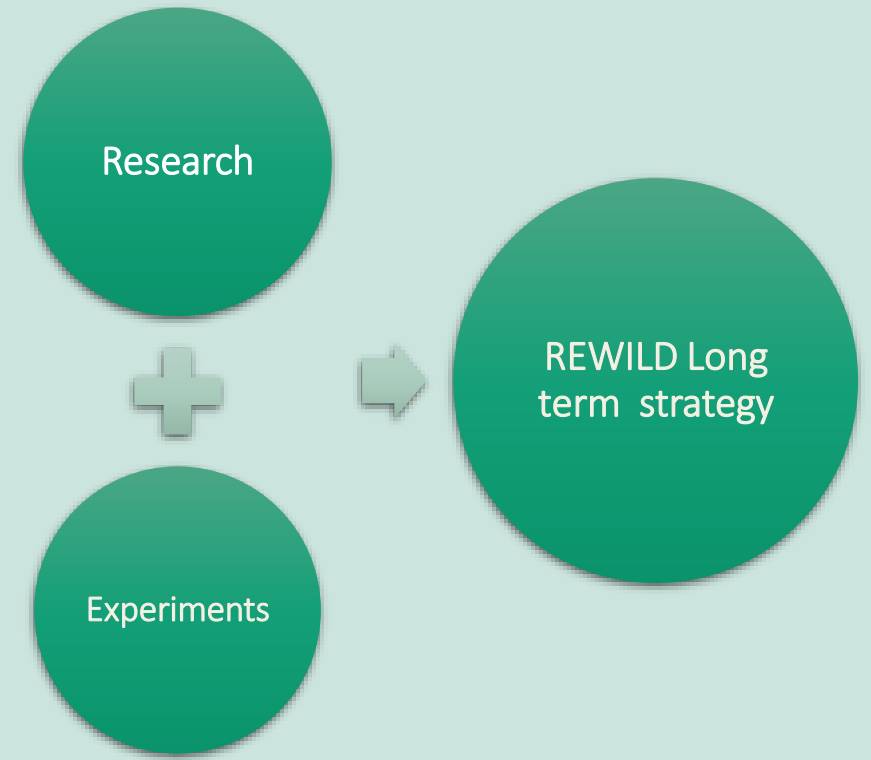
3. Rewild

towards a soil desealing strategy?





How to accelerate soil desealing and greening in the city?







Private domain

- ‘Koerkrakers’= the rewilding brigade
- Online tool to deseal and rewild private plots
- Specific activities towards enterprises

Engaging residents

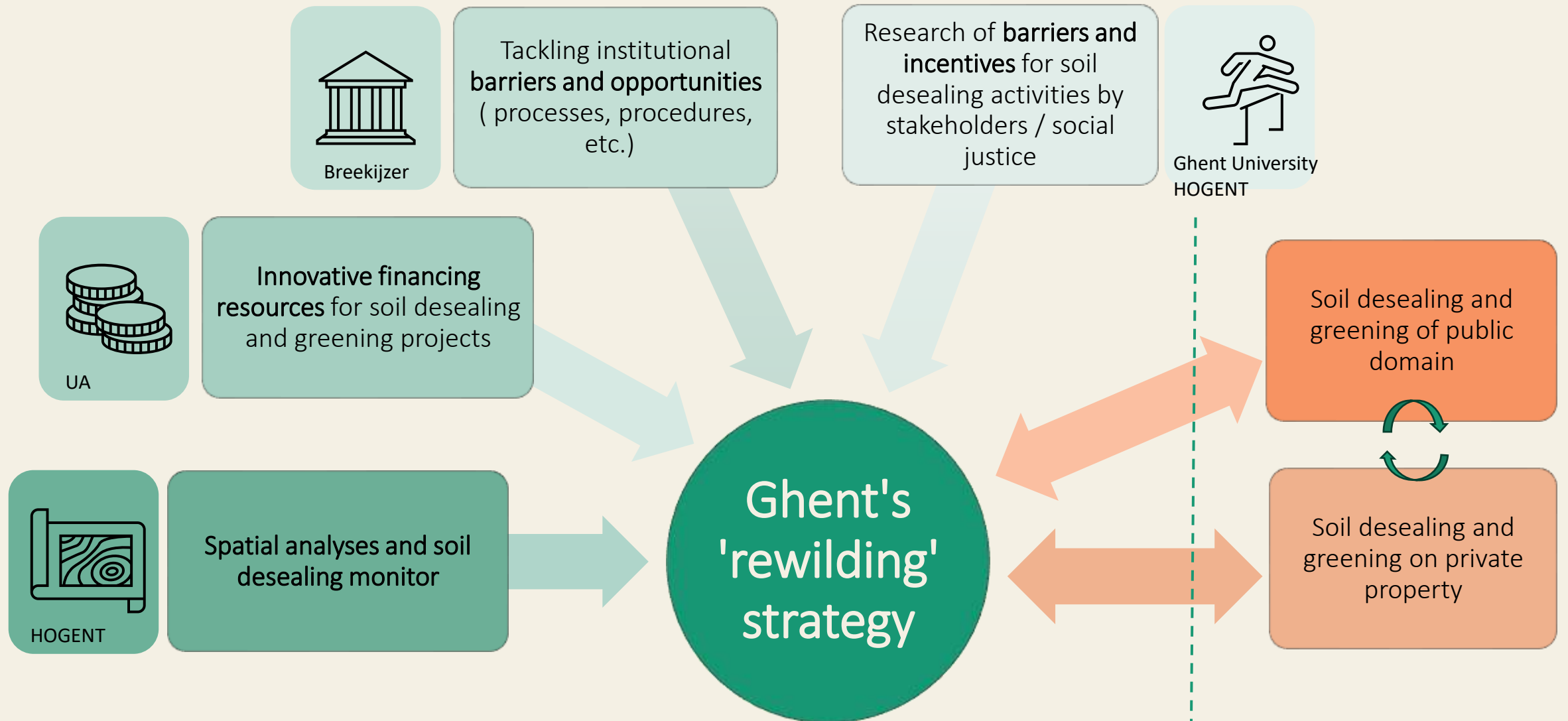
- Adopt a planting bed in the street
 - o Greater community engagement and ownership (less littering & vandalism)
 - o More diverse and creative plantings
 - o Social interaction and community building
- Encourage residents to start de-sealing private property



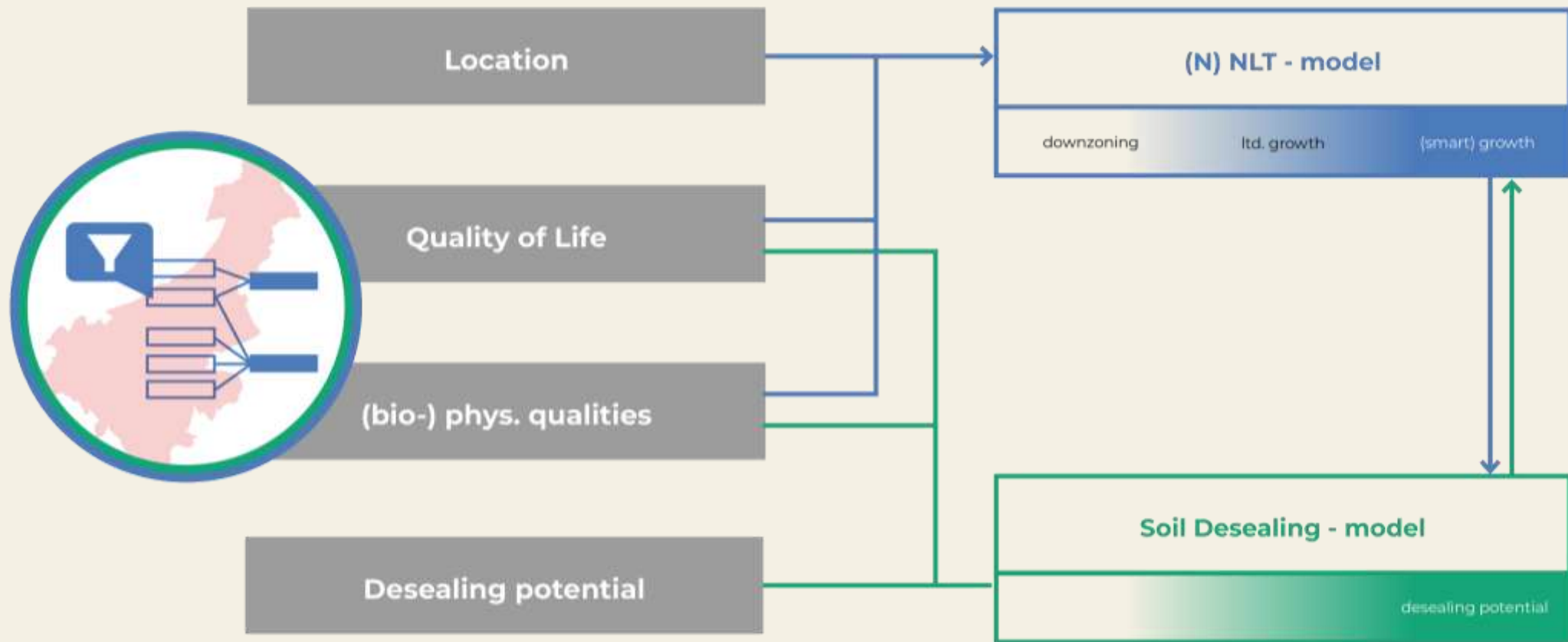
Collaboration between city services + GMF + lessons-learnt from research Eco-city



Rewilding Strategy



1. NNLT & Soil Desealing GIS-models



2. Extra means & realise more with what we have?



Experimenting with other ways of desealing (Imec-UGent)

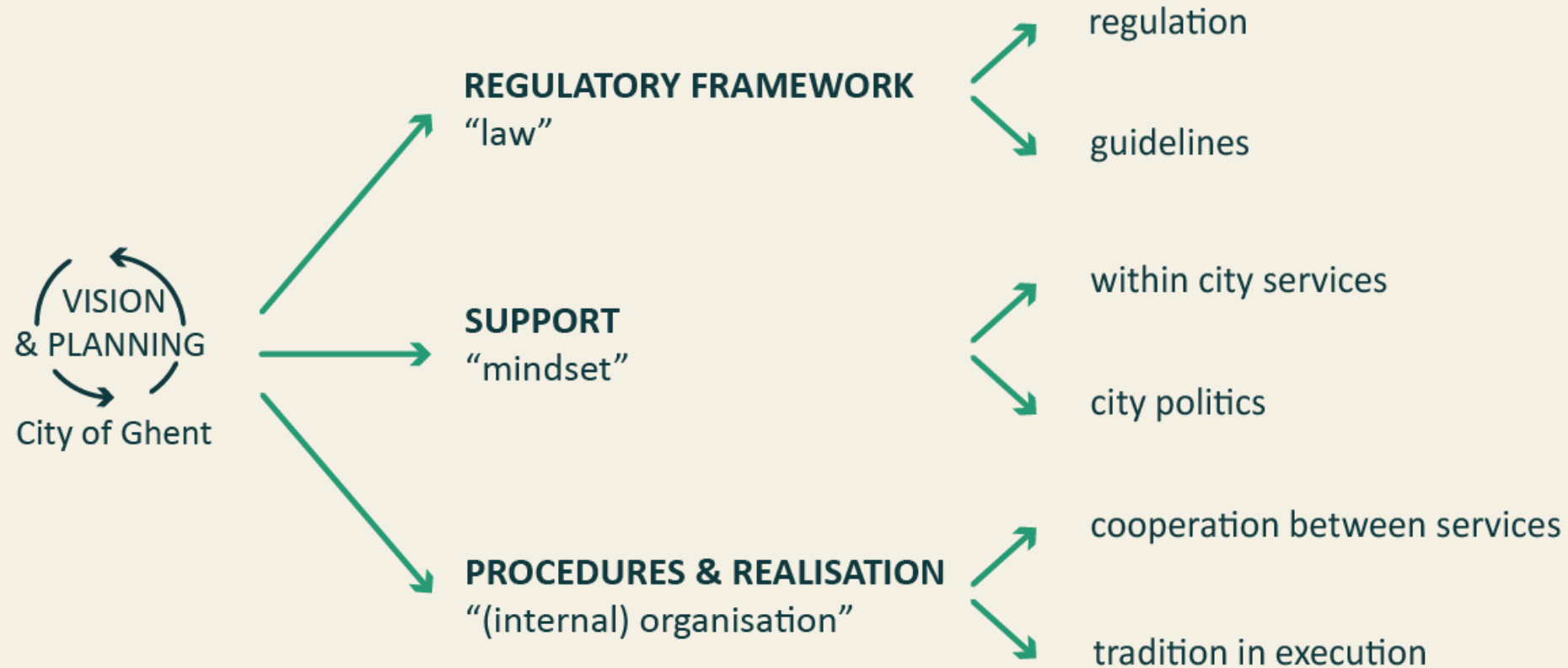


Innovative financing models: how to finance NNLT and Green climate axis (UA)



Neighbourhood green maintenance teams (HOGENT)

3. Institutional barriers & opportunities



- 5 cases selected out of a longlist of issues
- Example: defining a SMART objective on soil desealing or addressing public vs private parking space

4. Engaging citizens and enterprises

1. Adapting messages to people's life situation and changes

2. Focusing on gains, avoiding threats and risks

3. Increasing awareness of consequences and personal impact

First outcomes- to be finetuned

4. Fostering community through ecological concern and the bigger picture

5. Highlighting advantages, offering solutions for disadvantages

6. Sharing and experiencing greening to increase sense of capability

5. Towards a city strategy?



5. Towards a city strategy?



Limited capacity and budgets



Keep/ get everybody on board for the overall objectives: both private parties, different city services and departments, politics



Growing the city while keeping soil sealing at bay in a smart way



Integrating solutions in (existing?) policies and instruments



Have a fun Tuesday!



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