PESTLE and SWOT Analysis Report

Pilot Area – Wimereux, Inner City

Prepared by: City of Wimereux

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Project Overview

The Cool Neighbourhoods Project aims to mitigate heat risks and enhance liveability for residents in Wimereux, particularly during summer months. This report provides a PESTLE analysis (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental) for the inner city of Wimereux, focusing on the greening of Place Albert 1er and adjacent buildings. Additionally, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis is conducted to inform strategic planning and implementation.

Summary

Wimereux's central area faces increasing heat stress, particularly affecting vulnerable populations such as the elderly and children. To enhance the liveability of its residents, the municipality plans to implement nature-based solutions to green the main square (Place Albert 1er) and adjacent buildings, including the tourist office. This initiative aims to create a refreshing gathering space with increased greenery, shaded areas, and innovative materials that promote cooling.

The project prioritises community engagement, ensuring that local citizens, especially vulnerable groups, are actively involved in the planning and implementation processes. Despite challenges such as limited financial resources and heritage restrictions, Wimereux is committed to fostering resilience against heat waves through this greening initiative.

Additionally, the project aligns with a neighbourhood heat stress action plan, incorporating training programs and citizen science initiatives to monitor the greening efforts' impact. By creating a model for community-driven climate adaptation, Wimereux aims to demonstrate how local action can effectively mitigate the impacts of climate change while improving urban liveability.

Image 1 – Artist impression on the greening of Place Albert 1er

PESTLE Analysis

Political

- There is national and regional awareness of climate change, driven by ambitious laws.
- Local coastal towns experience a slower awareness response, despite being hit harder by climate issues.
- Sustainable planning laws are often viewed as constraints due to rising costs and decreased public grants.
- Public and political engagement has been slow but is gradually improving.

Economic

- National funds exist to support ecological transitions (Fonds Verts, Ma Prime Rénov) for public and private sectors.
- The Hauts-de-France region innovates with the REV3 fund, focusing on environmental resilience.
- Local funding is scarce, relying heavily on state resources.
- Implementing the Neighbourhood Heat Stress Action Plan (NHSAP) locally may be financially challenging due to austerity measures.

Social

- Wimereux has a rich social fabric with many associations, facilitating the spread of ideas.
- The older town centre houses a more affluent population, better equipped for action.
- Proximity to schools benefits community engagement, as teachers are involved in the project.
- Less affluent populations, often hardest hit, are challenging to engage due to competing priorities.
- There is some resistance to environmental policies, perceived as restrictive.

Technological

- Previous innovations include shell-based paving stones to enhance soil drainage.
- Basic structures like shades and tree canopies will be introduced to combat heat stress.
- Heritage protection may limit modern structures such as green roofs.
- The town lacks technical expertise for maintaining innovative projects.

Environmental

- Wimereux faces climate change challenges with projections of hotter, drier summers and rising sea levels.
- The pilot project aims to elevate parts of the town to counter flooding risks.
- High costs limit the feasibility of long-term solutions.
- Administrative complexity in France hampers environmental actions.

Legal

- Implementing the NHSAP locally presents no significant issues, assuming effective citizen participation.
- Changes to local regulations could complicate project execution.
- The limited staff capacity in Wimereux could impede the management of multiple daily projects.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Well-designed project with a competent team connected to the community.
- Strong political commitment to addressing climate issues.
- A small-town environment fosters close community ties and cooperation.
- Engagement with schools to raise awareness among youth.

Weaknesses

- Slow progress in environmental awareness, particularly regarding urban heat.
- Lack of qualified personnel for technical aspects.
- Political instability at the state level may threaten funding.
- Difficulty engaging vulnerable populations effectively.

Opportunities

- Participation in the Cool Neighbourhoods project promotes collective intelligence and local knowledge enhancement.
- Previous experiences with innovative technologies can be reused in the community.
- Opportunities to learn from other municipalities' experiences.

Threats

- Upcoming elections (2026 municipal and 2027 presidential) create uncertainty regarding environmental funding.
- Rising sea levels and increased flooding could shift focus from urban heat adaptation.

Picture 1 – Aerial of Improvement Area

Conclusion

The PESTLE analysis of Wimereux reveals significant challenges and opportunities in addressing heat risks and improving urban liveability. While political commitment and community engagement present strengths, slow awareness and resource limitations pose notable weaknesses. The pilot project aims to create a greener and more resilient urban environment through participatory design, despite facing external pressures like funding uncertainties and environmental changes.

Recommendations

Enhance Public Awareness

- Increase efforts to raise awareness about environmental issues, particularly urban heat, through community workshops and educational campaigns.

Strengthen Technical Expertise

- Invest in training for local staff and volunteers to develop the technical skills necessary for implementing and maintaining green infrastructure.

Foster Community Engagement

- Develop inclusive engagement strategies to involve vulnerable populations in project design and decision-making processes.

Explore Alternative Funding Sources

- Seek out additional funding opportunities at regional, national, and EU levels to support the NHSAP and related initiatives.

Collaborate with Neighbouring Municipalities

- Share knowledge and resources with nearby towns to enhance collective capacity for addressing climate adaptation and urban greening.