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BLUE GREEN CITY NEWSLETTER



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Dear reader,

This is the second edition of the Newsletter series of the Blue Green City project that aims to promote green and blue infrastructures as an integral part of a local/regional natural heritage preservation strategy. It seeks to increase awareness and knowledge of the concept of ecosystem services and of the value of green and blue infrastructures through project events, such as workshops and training sessions.

In the following pages, you will find information on the latest developments and events organized within the project.

Stay up to date with Blue Green City news through the project website and social media channels!

The Blue Green City project team

Insights from Regional Stakeholder Meetings (I)

The **Southern Regional Assembly** held its **first stakeholder meeting on the 18th of March 2020**. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the group had no choice but to do a conference call. Participants included staff from the local authorities of Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Cork City Council, Waterford City and County Council. Representatives from Irish Water also participated.

Bryan Riney from the Southern Regional Assembly set the scene and outlined the purpose of the meeting. The Blue Green City project was presented and the relevant objectives contained in the newly adopted Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region were highlighted.

All participants were provided the opportunity to outline their current challenges, potential measures and policy responses in relation to Green Blue Infrastructure (GBI). Irish Water highlighted existing literature and national/international good practices of relevance. The group moved onto discussing the shared challenges and priorities and what other organizations could assist.

The group agreed that practical incorporation and implementation of GBI and Nature-based Solutions at project level is the key challenge. To move forward, it was proposed that each local authority represented in the group identifies one or more project/s in their functional area which are either being planned or developed and where there is willingness to incorporate GBI and Nature-based Solutions. The local authority will have the opportunity to examine this internally but also to come back to this group for wider discussion and input. This process will assist in identifying practical GBI and Nature-based Solutions which can be incorporated into the Blue Green City project. This will offer an example of how to incorporate and implement GBI and Nature-based Solutions on a practical basis.



On the 26th of January 2021, the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency organized online the 2nd Blue Green City stakeholder meeting.

The event brought together 25 representatives from central and local public institutions from the Bucharest-Ilfov region, academia and research and civil society, working in environmental protection and promotion of Green and Blue Infrastructures, and addressed the following topics of discussion:

- Progress of the Blue Green City project (activities carried out in the 2nd and 3rd semesters of implementation);
- EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
- Nature-based Solutions (definition, areas of application, challenges, examples);
- European Week of Regions and Cities 2020 and Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform - best practices at European level and sources of inspiration.

Insights from Regional Stakeholder Meetings (II)

The first Stakeholder meeting took place in Rijeka in July 2020. Due to the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting took place on two different days, July 24th and 28th, as individual 'one-on-one' meetings with key stakeholders. The first 'one-on-one' meeting took place at the premises of RDA Porin with representatives from the public institution 'The Institute for Physical Planning of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County'. The second 'one-on-one' meeting took place at the premises of the stakeholder Utility company 'Čistoća'. During both meetings, RDA Porin presented the Blue Green City project and delivered a questionnaire intended to collect more in-depth information about existing processes of Green-Blue Infrastructures and Nature-based Solutions in the region and the city.

Individual meetings initiated a discussion and exchange of experiences in a form of a small group. In order to collect relevant information on GBI and NbS, meetings focused on existing procedures, concepts and practices, detecting relevant current and future challenges, planned and developing projects, gaining insight into biological and landscape diversity preservation as well as climate change mitigation actions and concepts or practices for ecosystem improvement.

During the meetings, participants' expertise was collected and afterward both stakeholders delivered materials and information on the given questionnaires that brought important conclusions and gave further direction for project planning.



The main goal of the **2nd Stakeholder meeting organized in Rijeka** was to increase awareness and knowledge about the concept of *ecosystem services* and the value of Green Infrastructure through a 24 hours Hackathon, by exchanging experiences and good practices, and by creating strong cooperation in finding common solutions to climate change challenges. In order to spread the common understanding of the climate problems within the urban areas, the main challenge was to find a new concept of Green Infrastructure management where citizens participate as partners.

During the meeting, stakeholders presented existing challenges through the introductory lectures:

- Presentation of the project *Blue and Green Infrastructure for Sustainable Cities*, Interreg Europe (Silvia Nad, Rijeka Development Agency Porin)
- *Why is Green Infrastructure in cities more than decorations?*, H2020 project ReGreen (Sandra Vlašić, Green Energy Cooperative)

and together with citizens discussed opportunities of GBI and NbS implementation in the Rijeka region.

Insights from Regional Stakeholder Meetings (III)

On the 13th of July 2021, RDA Porin organized the 4th Stakeholder meeting in Rijeka in the form of a small conference of up to 20 people in line with Covid-19 restrictions.

During the conference, the RDA Porin representative presented the Interreg Europe Blue Green City project and detected problems in Green Infrastructure within Rijeka region while a Director of the Development, Urban Planning and Ecology Division from the City Department of Development, Urbanism, Ecology and Land Management, presented the Green Infrastructure of the City of Rijeka, in order to stimulate the discussion on how to improve the Green and Blue Infrastructure planning and implementation processes in the City of Rijeka.

The discussion focused primarily on the improvement of Urban Blue and Green Infrastructure by examining the possibilities of effective planning and connecting Green Infrastructures at strategic, spatial planning, implementation and financial levels in the City of Rijeka with the key question of recognizing the importance of implementing the *Green Infrastructure* concept in order to strengthen resilience and adaptation to climate change in urban areas and as a bearer of the identity of space that contributes to the development of the economy and society as a whole.

During the meeting, RDA Porin also conducted a survey to collect information from the key stakeholders (from City Departments, Regional Municipality, Nature Parks, University etc.) on *Green and Blue Infrastructure* concept understanding and knowledge of relevant existing BGI local documents, as well as to examine the interest in encouraging cross-sectoral cooperation or initiatives to establish a working group that would include all stakeholders in the field of establishment, planning and implementation of Green Urban Infrastructures.



Before the 4th Stakeholder meeting, RDA Porin organized a **one-on-one 3rd Stakeholder meeting in January 2021** in a form of a telephone call (due to then restricting Covid-19 measures) with the representatives from the City of Rijeka Department of Development, Urban Planning, Ecology and Land Management to discuss the recent Study of Green Infrastructure of the City of Rijeka, as an expert basis that represents an integral form of viewing open spaces and the basis for drafting the Strategy of Green Infrastructure of the City of Rijeka, with the aim of sustainable development of the city space that recognizes and gives importance to green and open spaces and their numerous functions (ecological, social, economic, protective and urban morphological).



Featured News from the Partners (I)

BGC presentation at Nature for City LIFE Forum, Marseille, 08.10.2021

The Lead Partner, Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolis / Euromed Cities Network, and Piedmont Region were invited by the Lead Partner's stakeholder, the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, to attend the Nature for City LIFE Forum organized in Marseille on the 8th of October 2021, gathering around 100 attendees.

During this event, the Lead Partner and Piedmont Region participated in a roundtable on European projects related to the role of nature in urban settings.

The Lead Partner and Piedmont Region presented the methodology of the Interreg Europe programme, and in particular the exchange of good practices shared amongst the partnership within the Blue Green City Project, and used to draft the Action Plans in order to improve the partners' regional policy instruments.



Blue Green City project presented at the University College Cork (UCC) Planning Conference (Southern Region of Ireland)

On the 25th of March 2021, University College Cork (UCC) Planning Society organised their annual planning conference. This is an annual tradition for the students and this year was the first online conference.

This year's conference discussed new opportunities for planning, with 3 sessions:

- Nature-based Solutions for planning
- Liveable cities
- An international perspective to inspire Irish planning

Bryan Riney from the Southern Regional Assembly presented his experience of Blue Green Infrastructure and Nature based Solutions. Bryan described the work being done through the INTERREG Europe Blue Green City project in developing these concepts in the Southern Region.

Good practices from Växjö, Sweden and Ingolstadt, Germany were detailed in the presentation. The Blue Green City presents an unique opportunity to transfer and incorporate these concepts into RSES implementation in the Southern Region. This will help create better placemaking and a greener, climate resilient society.

Developing Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) in the Southern Region

Opportunity
.....to investigate the shared challenges that pertain to the implementation of BGI and NBS in our Region

Purpose

- develop better BGI and NBS solutions
- enhance collaboration across a range of agencies



Featured News from the Partners (II)

Co-developing Green and Blue Infrastructure with the citizens of Ingolstadt

The importance of engaging local communities in the development of Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) is widely acknowledged in the scientific literature; yet, there is still a lack of adequate tools to capture the variety of opinions and feelings to be expected in a large and diverse urban populace. They seized the opportunity of a town fair in Ingolstadt to experiment with participatory management approaches to green spaces. It seemed that the "Donau-Lust"-Festival was the ideal opportunity to engage with the citizens on the subject of GBI, for the venue consisted of a large street adjacent to the Danube floodplain that had been closed for automobiles for ten consecutive days (2nd to 12th September 2021). As the fair offered catering as well as various activities (such as beach volleyball matches), they expected a huge and diverse crowd to attend the Festival.



The fair featured a beach volleyball court, laid turf and catering on a – usually quite busy – shoreline road that had been closed for motor traffic and turned into a “temporary park”.

Ingolstadt representatives' main focus was to lower the threshold for participation as much as possible in an effort to incorporate a wide range of community views in the further planning process. To this end, they developed a "hybrid" participation format that allowed citizens to exchange with the City Council through conventional "analog" ways of communication as well as innovative "digital" avenues.

Concretely speaking, they invited visitors of the town fair to write down their ideas and opinions about the Danubian floodplain on stickers as well as on a large whiteboard. The visitors could concurrently describe their preferences for further land use on the online platform **ingolstadt-macht-mit.de**, which featured an interactive map. Furthermore, in an effort to stimulate the visitors, they arrayed ten different posters alongside the Festival venue and used them to illustrate planned and implemented projects on the city's shoreline.



The "hybrid" participation format prompted citizens to exchange with the City Council through analog as well as digital means of communication.

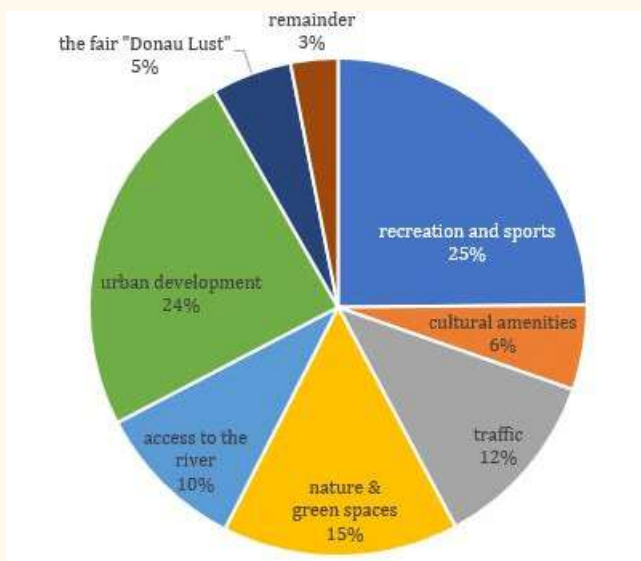


The fair offered the opportunity to popularize the Blue Green City project among the local community.

They are proud to say that their participatory project has been a huge success - they registered 562 contributions that can be analyzed to gauge the preferences and needs of the local community. A first analysis revealed that visitors widely recognize the significance of nature to their well-being. Numerous comments demanded that the City Council prioritize the development of green spaces over the construction of new sites. Furthermore, citizens widely appreciated the traffic abatement and developed creative ideas on how to permanently reduce the number of vehicles on the shoreline.

Featured News from the Partners (III)

In general, the participants made exciting suggestions on how to enhance the recreational value of the city's floodplain through the provision of cultural, leisure, and sports amenities. They are looking to harness this creative input in Phase 2 of the project.



Information about the Blue Green City project has been included in the brochure published by the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy.

It comprises of key points of the Interreg Europe funded projects which include Bavarian partners.

You can find the brochure [here](#). Only a German version is available.



Rijeka Development Agency Porin presented the Interreg EU Project Blue Green City within the event Climathon Rijeka 2020 that took place on November 13th and 14th as virtual Hackaton.

The Climate Hackathon or Climathon is a global movement of cities that sees climate change as an opportunity to connect and bring together a collaboration between cities and citizens, researchers, students, designers, developers and entrepreneurs around innovation and creative solutions to mitigate climate change challenges.

As a part of a global climate movement happening at the same time in more than 140 cities around the world, RDA Porin in collaboration with the City of Rijeka organized a local climathon event as an invitation to citizens to be part of the actions that can be taken in Rijeka Region, for the adaptation and mitigation of the effects of the climate crisis.

Out of the eight teams who got involved, the best three finalists-solutions are the following:

1. Urban bee gardens – aimed at increasing gardens with flowers in Rijeka, suitable for bees and pollinators.
2. RIgreen – aimed at organizing a digital platform for citizens to gather and collaborate around greening their cities.
3. Green promenade – aimed at greening the Rijeka waterfront and making it a green space for the gathering of citizens.

These three teams will receive support from the organizers and partners of Climathon Rijeka 2020 exploring the possibilities to help them towards the realization of their ideas and will have the opportunity to participate in the Climathon Global Awards that will take place on the 21st of January 2021.

<https://climathon.climate-kic.org/rijeka>
<http://www.porin.hr/climathonrijeka2020/>

Featured News from the Partners (IV)

An online course on ecosystem services for planners in Växjö

Action 5 in Växjö's Action Plan is finished - the online course on ecosystem services.

The course is mandatory for the staff that deals with detailed planning (planners, project leaders, ecologists, etc). This means some 40 employees at the Municipality will take the course at this first stage. As a second step, the course might also be communicated to other employees in the planning and building process, as well as to politicians.

The detailed plan is a legally binding document regulating the exploitation of building lands and the use of land and water zones. A good knowledge on ecosystem services among planners is a prerequisite for the integration and description of ecosystem services in the detailed plan.

The course contains four major modules:

- 1) A filmed sequence where the chairman of the Municipality's Sustainability Committee presents the course and the concept of *ecosystem services* (Figure 1).
- 2) A crash course on ecosystem services, defining the concept more in-depth, going through the four major ecosystem categories, and connecting them to real world examples (Figure 2).
- 3) Block 3 explains the importance and the benefits of integrating ecosystem services and Nature based Solutions into the planning and building process. Illustration of four local examples where nature based, multifunctional solutions have been used (Figure 3).
- 4) The fourth block explains how they intend to work with ecosystem services within the Municipality from this point forward. Illustration of the new routines, methods and sets of data that have been developed throughout the Blue Green City project (Figure 4).

An online course on ecosystem services directed to municipal land managers is under production.



Figure 1. Module 1. The chairman of the Municipality's Sustainability Committee presents the course.



Figure 2. Detailed planning team member taking the course, module 2. Examples of Cultural Ecosystem Services.



Figure 3. Detailed planning team member taking the course, module 3. Example of a nature based, multifunctional solution in Växjö city.

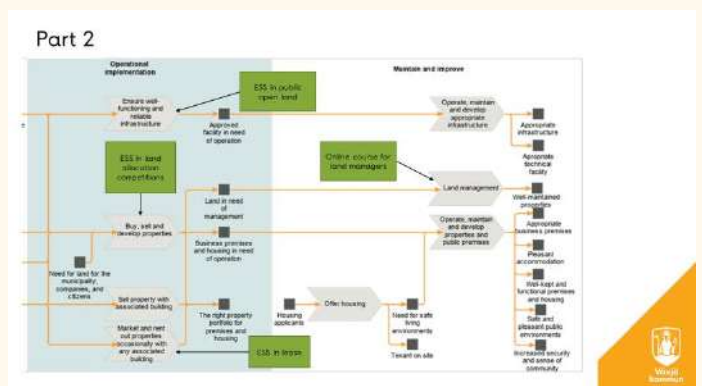


Figure 4. Module 4. The spatial planning and building process (here translated from Swedish). Illustration of the new routines, methods and sets of data developed during the Blue Green City project.

Online Workshop on Best Practices and Policy Change (2-3.11.2020)

Between the 2nd and 3rd of November 2020, the Blue Green City partners attended a virtual workshop organized by Piedmont Region, starting from the thematic topics identified within the **Methodology on Best Practices and Policy Change** developed by the Italian technical experts, as follows:

- **GBI multifunctionality and its application**
- **Ecosystem Services (analysis and management)**
- **Improving the consciousness of the GBI values through education and trainings**
- **Facilitating a new type of governance in this domain.**

The event represented the beginning of the inter-regional joint learning process in terms of sharing best practices and experiences, which is the basis for the development of the actions to be included in the Regional Action Plans.

Through the presentations and discussions held during the thematic sessions, the partners tried to illustrate the elements of transferability and inspiration that can be applied in other regions, as well as the aspects they wanted to deepen through the examples and solutions offered by other partners in the context of improving the mutual learning process and facilitating the exchange of knowledge within the project.

The Methodology proved to be a useful tool for the partners to exchange knowledge concerning best practices, share ideas and suggestions about opportunities and barriers in drafting the Regional Action Plans.



Animal-Aided Design Workshop (15.06.2021) (I)

On the 15th of June 2021, the Blue Green City partners and stakeholders attended to the webinar and online **workshop „Animal-Aided Design”, organized by Ingolstadt City and Technical University of Vienna, represented by Prof. Dr. Thomas Hauck.**



Animal-Aided Design (AAD) is a methodology for the design of open spaces which combines landscape architecture (aiming on humans) and nature conservation (aiming on biodiversity). The basic idea of AAD is to include the presence of wild animals in the planning process, such that they are an integral part of the design.

Animal-Aided Design Workshop (15.06.2021) (II)

For AAD, the desired and threatened species are chosen at the beginning of a project, depending on their occurrence. The requirements of the target species, i.e. their life-cycles, then set boundary conditions and serve as an inspiration for the design.

The **main aims of AAD** are:

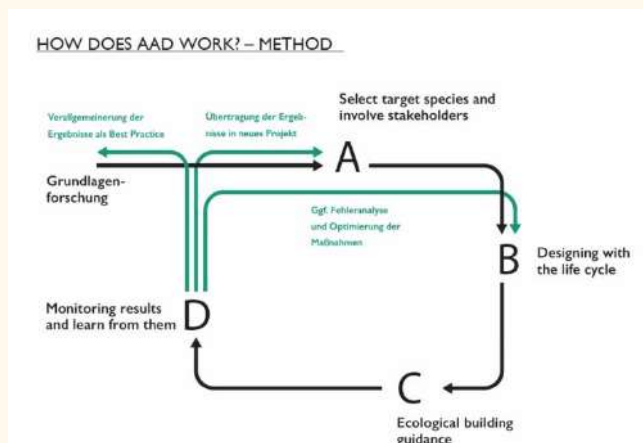
- Promoting the existence of animal species in urban areas by including the needs of these species in urban design and open space planning;
- New creative challenge in design;
- Extending the range of species in urban nature and species protection;
- Exploiting the potentials of digitalisation.

The Animal-Aid Design method has been successfully tested in several pilot projects at different planning levels. In Ingolstadt, Berlin and Munich, for example, the open spaces of residential neighbourhoods were over-planned and designed to be wildlife-friendly. In Ingolstadt, AAD was also tested on a large scale for the Donau City Park in 2017 as part of a student project, and then in Hamburg the Thörls Park was upgraded using AAD.

The participants had the opportunity to engage in discussions through working groups, share experiences and find out how this method works.

Find more information about the Animal-Aided Design at:

<https://animal-aided-design.de/>



Towards Action Plans (The Bucharest Project Meeting)



On the **28th of September 2021, Blue Green City partners attended an online project meeting on the Regional Action Plans**, organized by the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency's team. The main topic of the event was represented by the process of elaboration, by the partners, of the Regional Action Plans, resulting from the interregional learning and exchange of experience process carried out during the project implementation period.

Thus, in the first part of the meeting, the partners held presentations on the draft versions of the Regional Action Plans, detailing the way of their implementation, the correlation with the project indicators and the expected results.



The second part of the meeting was dedicated to the management discussions at the partnership level and to the presentation of the achievements regarding the communication and dissemination activities within the project under the responsibility of BI RDA.

Blue Green City Training Manuals



The 2nd and 3rd Training Manuals were developed by Mrs. Sarah Milliken, the representative of the University of Greenwich, the advisory partner within the Blue Green City consortium.

The 2nd Training Manual has been designed for practitioners to help them raise awareness about Green and Blue Infrastructure and can be used to train oneself and one's team, as well as to facilitate a workshop for stakeholders.



The Manual comprises of a methodology to map and assess current Green and Blue Infrastructure provisions and identify opportunities for future provision based on identifying connectivity and bottlenecks in the blue and green network and the need for supplying vital ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, flood control, and recreation.



The 3rd Training Manual provides a practical introduction to the key steps to be undertaken in valuing ecosystem services in a policy appraisal context.

These Manuals were developed in order to ensure that the project partners have the necessary knowledge to improve their policies and prepare solid Action Plans, thereby guaranteeing the viability of the project.



The Blue Green City Partnership



**Métropolis Nice Côte d'Azur -
Euromed Cities Network
(France)**

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**Piedmont Region
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**Municipality of Växjö
(Sweden)**

About us

**Blue Green City is co-funded by
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