



Co-funded by  
the European Union



JUSTGREEN



## WELCOME TO OUR FIRST JUSTGREEN NEWSLETTER

**WE HAVE  
OFFICIALLY  
STARTED!**

After a successful project launch on April 11th and 12th in Rotterdam, we are excited to announce that our journey has begun. Together, we are now fully committed to enhancing and advancing greening policies!

In this first edition, we'll take you through the origins of JUSTGREEN, highlighting the key questions and challenges that shaped our project. We'll give you a recap of our April Partner Meeting in Rotterdam, where we connected and explored best practices. Finally we'll introduce two of our partners and elaborate on one of our main tools: the Scorecard.

### IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- [JOURNEY TO JUSTGREEN](#)
- [RECAP MEETING ROTTERDAM](#)
- [PARTNER INTRODUCTION](#)
- [JUSTGREEN: THE SCORECARD](#)



# THE JOURNEY TO JUSTGREEN

## HOW IT ALL STARTED >>>>>

About two years ago, **Müge Demir** and **Maria Kluijtenaar**, both members of the **Strategy and Policy** department of the **City of Rotterdam**, began to question why **greening** and **climate policies** were mainly initiated and led by the city's **technical departments**. The City of Rotterdam had engaged the consultancy agency **Systemiq** to develop a **Green Digital Deal** Rotterdam, building on the **EU Green Deal**. Müge and Maria were asked to provide feedback on various drafts of this plan—Müge from an **international social perspective** and Maria from a local social perspective. What struck them both was the lack of consideration for **inequality** in the proposed green and digital transitions.

Rotterdam is internationally recognized for its expertise in **technical water management**, offering **innovative** and even **iconic solutions** to various aspects of the **climate crisis**. However, these solutions often lacked the **social expertise** needed to truly benefit the **citizens of Rotterdam**, despite being designed with them in mind.

Inspired by their work on the **Green Digital Deal Rotterdam**, Müge and Maria began discussions with colleagues across various **social departments** about the **climate crisis** and its impacts. Through these conversations, they connected with **Miranda Nauta** and **Marianne van Wijngaarden**, who were working on the "**Rotterdam Goes Green**" program. Miranda and Marianne were also searching for ways to develop a more **socially inclusive greening strategy**. While the program had successfully added **20 hectares of green space** to the city, they faced challenges in engaging citizens from **diverse backgrounds and perspectives**.

The greening initiatives were largely successful among a **homogeneous group of citizens**. However, in neighborhoods with **lower-income residents**, the addition of green spaces sometimes led to rising **property prices**, which, while appearing to improve the area statistically, did not necessarily enhance the **quality of life** for existing residents. In fact, the increased property values often made these neighborhoods less accessible to people with lower incomes.

To address these challenges, "**Rotterdam Goes Green**" had already begun collaborating with **Rosemarie van Ham**, **Michelle ter Haar**, and **Luke Davids** from **Inclusive Climate Action Rotterdam (ICAR)**. ICAR is a movement within the city focused on raising awareness about how the climate crisis exacerbates **social inequalities**, providing a voice and platform for those most vulnerable to its effects.

Together, **Miranda**, **Marianne**, **Rosemarie**, **Michelle**, **Luke**, **Müge**, and **Maria** laid the foundation for what ultimately became the **JUSTGREEN** project.





# RECAP MEETING ROTTERDAM

## FIRST PARTNER MEETING >>>>>>

### ROTTERDAM 11TH - 12TH OF APRIL 2024

The **EU Interreg project JUSTGREEN** officially began its mission to enhance urban greening policies during its launch in **Rotterdam, the Netherlands**, on **April 11th and 12th, 2024**. Over two dynamic days, representatives from **Rotterdam, Burgas, Ghent, Katowice, Murcia, Tallinn**, and the **Regional Development Fund of Attica** joined forces to kick off this Interreg collaboration. Together, they set the stage for advancing **environmental resilience** and **green initiatives** across **European cities**.

### HIGH FIVES - LOW FIVES

The **partners** engaged in discussions on **policy instruments** and **strategies** to improve **greening policies**. A highlight was the interactive "**high five and low five**" exercise, where participants identified the **strengths** and **weaknesses** of existing policies. This activity fostered open and constructive **dialogue**, paving the way for meaningful improvements. The exercise proved to be an accessible and effective method for recognizing both **successes** and **challenges**, allowing partners to **inspire** and **learn from** each other.

Additionally, **Erasmus University of Rotterdam** played a key role in familiarizing the partners with the **methodologies** used, creating a **shared understanding** that will be crucial in the upcoming period. This shared foundation will facilitate the **transfer of knowledge and experiences** between partners, strengthening our **collaborative efforts**.

### SUSTAINABLE GARDEN VISIT

During the second and last day the partners visited **Rotterdam's sustainable neighborhood initiatives**. The **City of Rotterdam** team showcased some of Rotterdam's successful green **interventions** where **citizens** played a leading role. Visiting these initiatives was crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of the **Rotterdam context**. The **JUSTGREEN project** is just beginning, but it represents a significant step toward making our cities better for everyone. By **working together** and **sharing ideas**, we aim to make cities **greener** and more **resilient** for the future.



# PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

GETTING TO KNOW THE PARTNERS >>>>>>

gent:

## CITY OF GHENT

Through a series of articles and video's we introduce our JUSTGREEN partners. This time we are getting to know the city of Ghent. Read the article underneath and [watch the video](#) for the interview with Ghent colleague Joke Charles.



Ghent, a pocket-sized city in Belgium with the buzz, bustle and bravado of a metropolis, is renowned for its stunning medieval architecture and romantic canals. It also boasts a lively cultural scene with numerous festivals, museums and a dynamic university population.

Behind this ancient look is a place that **focuses on the future**. Driven by its true nature of rebellion and quirkiness, **Ghent experiments with innovative policies and looks for cutting-edge solutions to tomorrow's challenges**. Ghentians strongly believe in doing things together. **Co-creation and participation** have been key to its successful approach over the years. **Citizens, organisations, businesses and educational institutions** shape its **climate-neutral future** with initiatives in the fields of **circular economy, renewable energy, housing, sustainable mobility, food and greening**. In addition to being a joint effort, Ghent's climate policy is also **social and equitable**. The City of Ghent wishes to **leave no-one behind and make the fight against energy poverty a priority**.

Greening the city is something Ghent has been doing for quite a while now. Their first greening policy plan dates back to 2012 and nowadays Ghent works on multiple greening targets through the **Green Structure Plan**. Examples of successful greening targets are focused on having sufficient green spaces in walking distance of people's homes, adding at least 20 square meters of green space per house in housing developments, greening school yards and creating new forests and opening private green property to the public throughout the city. These actions have resulted in successfully **increasing the number of city parks and green areas**.

# PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

gent:

While making significant improvements in urban greening, the City of Ghent also faces several challenges:

- Today, urban greening efforts do not take into consideration **socio-economic data**.
- Opportunities to acquire land for new parks in densely populated and lower-income neighbourhoods, are missed due to high competition with housing and other stakeholders. Greening these neighbourhoods is thus not happening as fast as desired.
- **Densely populated neighbourhoods** also experience nuisances such as littering in parks, which affects their appreciation and usability.
- Additionally, Ghent lacks comprehensive data on park usage, particularly among vulnerable groups. Current participation methods are not effectively inclusive.
- Moreover, climate change impacts, like heat, drought and flooding, are making urban greenery increasingly vulnerable, with old trees collapsing and younger trees struggling to provide adequate shade.

These issues highlight **the need for more integrated, inclusive, and resilient urban planning** to enhance Ghent's green infrastructure and quality of life for all its residents.

To improve its greening policy, Ghent will focus on **integrating physical and social data** to develop a **more inclusive and socially focused decision-making process**. Through JustGreen, Ghent aims to create **accessible and inclusive parks and green areas**, ensuring that all residents benefit from the city's Green Structure Plan.





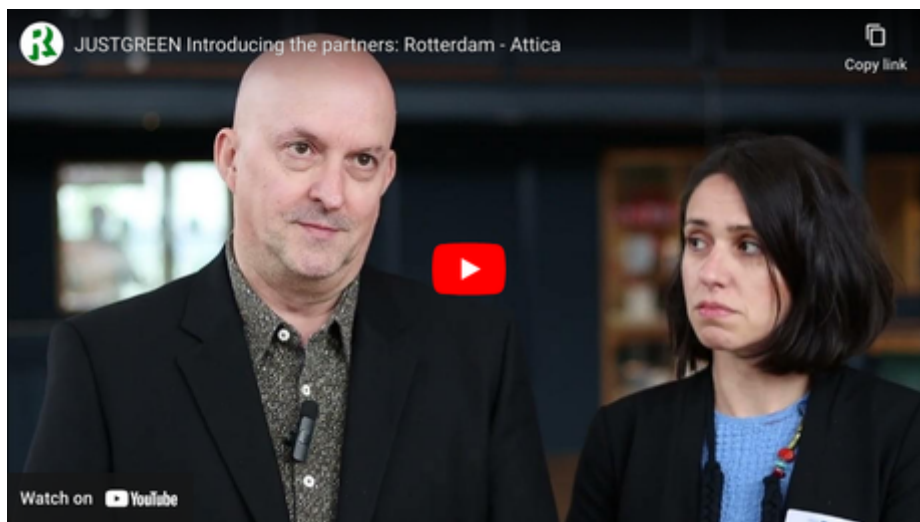
# PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

GETTING TO KNOW THE PARTNERS >>>>>>



## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND OF ATTICA

Through a series of articles and video's we introduce our JUSTGREEN partners. This time we are getting to know the Greek region of Attica. Read the article underneath and [watch the video](#) for the interview with Attica colleagues Kostas Karamarkos and Eleni Karantanou.



Nestled in the heart of Greece, Attica is a region where ancient history meets modern vibrancy and urban life integrates with nature's presence through a beautiful landscape of both mountains, sea and a rich biodiversity. As the cradle of Western civilization and the birthplace of democracy, this region is now taking significant steps toward a **green transformation**, balancing its **rich cultural heritage with contemporary environmental initiatives**. Attica faces substantial challenges posed by climate change, necessitating **adaptive and innovative responses** from policymakers. Attica faces climate challenges such as **rising temperatures, heatwaves, and water scarcity**. The urban heat island effect exacerbates summer heat, making life increasingly uncomfortable and sometimes hazardous for residents. In response, various measures were implemented to mitigate heat absorption, alongside **expanding green spaces to create cooler microclimates**.

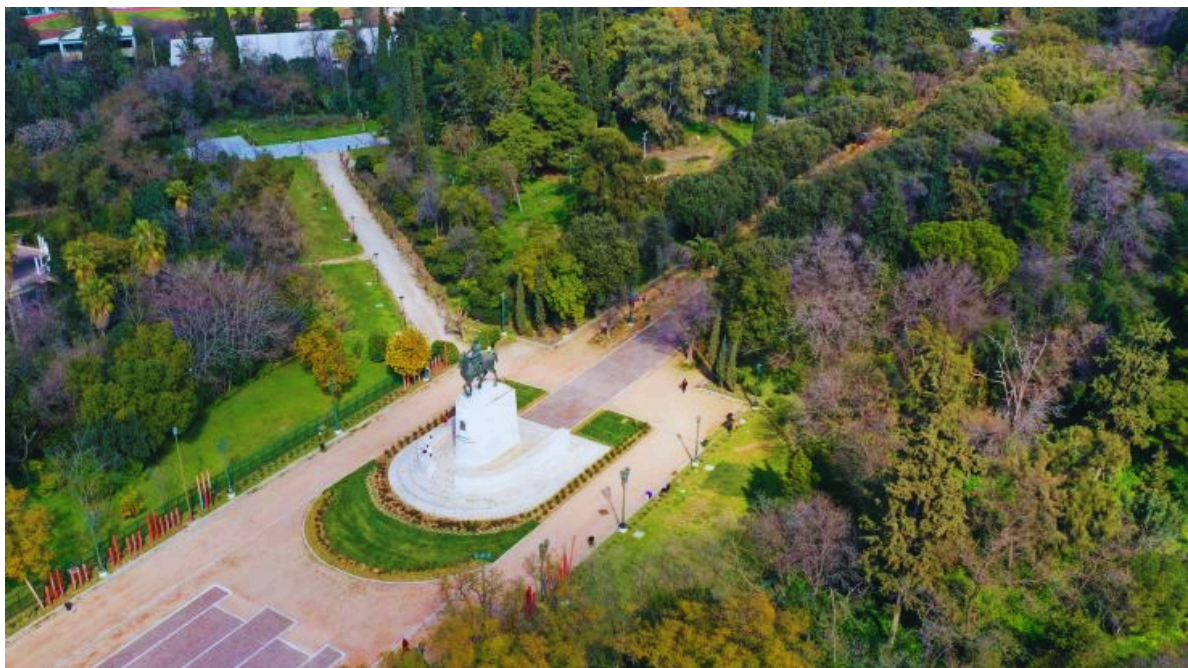
**The social fabric of Attica is diverse and dynamic**, with age-old traditions coexisting alongside a contemporary cultural scene. Street art decorates historic neighborhoods, festivals enliven the area with music and activities, and markets are hubs of social interaction. **Community initiatives foster solidarity, inclusivity, and mutual support**. Some neighborhood projects bring residents together to plant trees and create green spaces, while social enterprises promote **sustainability and social justice**.

# PARTNER HIGHLIGHT



Key initiatives, like the National Garden and "Attikon Alsos", provide **green spaces for relaxation and community activities**. Beyond urban centers, Attica's greening efforts extend to its villages and coastlines, which embrace **eco-tourism and sustainable living**. Local communities work to preserve their natural surroundings, from the pine-covered hills of Mount Parnitha to the clear waters of the Saronic Gulf. However, these areas face threats from wildfires and sea-level rise, intensified by climate change. **Community-driven reforestation and coastal protection projects** are critical to restoring and safeguarding these ecosystems.

There is however still room for improvement: the amount of square meters in free space per inhabitant is higher than the amount of square meters of green areas. Also urban green is not as valued as it can be yet. JUSTGREEN therefore, is helpful in **promoting green infrastructure and sustainable urban development to create healthier, more resilient communities**. Through JUSTGREEN, Attica aims at further improving greening solutions - infrastructures for the Athens metropolitan area urban parks, aiming to improve environmental quality and social well-being.



# JUSTGREEN: THE SCORECARD

## METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUMENTS EXPLAINED >>>>>>

The JUSTGREEN Scorecard is a crucial tool designed to support the knowledge exchange and best practice sharing process within the project. This **self-assessment monitoring tool** is built around the key success factors for each of the three core project themes: **distribution, procedure and recognition**. The Scorecard is both a **guide and an iterative** tool that provides a **visual understanding of progress**, helping partners track and align their efforts over time. The development of the JUSTGREEN Scorecard has been a **collaborative effort**, co-designed with input from all partners and guided by our expert, **Eddy Adams**. To ensure that it meets the needs of everyone involved, **bilateral meetings with all partners** were organized in May 2024. These meetings drew on input provided in the application form as well as insights from the **"High5 Low5" posters** that were discussed during the Rotterdam meeting in April. Following these discussions, the draft Scorecard was reviewed with all partners during an online meeting. Afterwards the design was finalized and the partners received practical tips on how to effectively use it in their **local stakeholder group meetings**. During these meetings each partner completes the Scorecard with input from their stakeholder group and takes this input to **the second international partner meeting in Athens in October 2024** where it will be discussed with the other partners.

The JUSTGREEN Scorecard is a very effective way for the partners **to work in their own regional context with a shared methodology**. As a self-assessment monitoring tool that was co-created, it helps focus on the three main project themes and fosters a **shared set of values across the partnership while working on the local context**. The scorecard serves as a driver for **local co-production**, and is specifically designed to be **non-competitive**, emphasizing **collaboration rather than competition** among partners. During the international meetings the Scorecard will be used to frame **peer-to-peer exchanges**, facilitating deeper collaboration and knowledge sharing. In the next newsletter you can read all about the local stakeholder meetings that took place.



JUSTGREEN

### JustGreen Scorecard

Themes	JustGreen pillars linked to the theme	The Scorecard Statements
Alignment of environmental and social data	Distribution	"Social data are available and equally valued so that our greening decisions are based on both demographic and technical considerations."
Participatory processes linked to climate policy and implementation	Procedure	"We have effective participatory processes to engage all citizen groups in climate policy implementation"
Equal/Universal access to quality green spaces	Recognition	"All citizens have easy access to quality green spaces"
Climate Resilience	Procedure	"Our territory is well-prepared to tackle all the consequences of the Climate Emergency for the most vulnerable citizens"
Departmental silos	Recognition	"We have an integrated approach to greening policies that fully involves all relevant public departments"
Investment distribution	Distribution	"The distribution of funds to implement our greening plans is equitable and just"
Valuing different needs and perspectives	Procedure	"Our greening policies value and take into account all the different abilities, perspectives and needs on greening in the city/region"
	Recognition	

#### Optional Statement

Infrastructure to support blue/green innovation		"Innovation in the Blue and Green economies contributes to our JustGreen goals to be more equitable in our greening policies."
---	--	--

The JustGreen pillars

- ☐ **DISTRIBUTION:** an equity-based distribution of our greening plans and funds through a better alignment between socio-economic and spatial data
- ☐ **PROCEDURE:** a more inclusive procedure of our greening interventions with the meaningful engagement of communities most vulnerable to climate crisis
- ☐ **RECOGNITION:** a better understanding and consideration of diverse perspectives on greening



**THANKS FOR TUNING IN**  
**SEE YOU IN**  
**THE NEXT**  
**EDITION OF**  
**THE**

**Interreg  
Europe**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

**JUSTGREEN**

**NEWSLETTER**