

BLUE GREEN CITY NEWSLETTER # 1

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Kick-off meeting in Nice, France (24-25 September 2019)

The Blue Green City project kick-off meeting was organized and hosted by the Lead Partner – Nice Côte d’Azur Metropolis / Euromed Cities Network. The agenda included the presentation of the project, the partners and expected outputs, defining the concrete contribution of each partner to the implementation of the project.

In this context, the methodology for the stakeholders’ involvement was presented, helping the partners and their stakeholders groups in defining their strategy of collaboration for the following years of the project.

Furthermore, the event represented the start of the interregional learning and exchange of experience through a **session of training** regarding the **Scenario analysis for climate change adaptation strategies**.

This analysis focuses on different methodologies for identifying the drivers of change, creating scenarios and showing case studies which demonstrate how scenario analysis can be used to inform climate change adaptation strategies.

The representatives of Nice Côte d’Azur Metropolis / Euromed Cities Network are grateful for the satisfactory participation and look forward to the next project meeting in Italy!



Insights from Regional Stakeholders Meetings

In the first two semesters of the implementation of the Blue Green City project, **Nice Côte d’Azur Metropolis / Euromed Cities Network (France)** held the two planned meetings with its local stakeholders.

During the two stakeholders meetings, Nice Metropolis, together with its Associated Partner - Sud Provence Alpes Côte d’Azur Region (partner of the Nature 4 City Life project), explored the idea of creating synergies between the two projects, in order to understand how the Blue Green City project could influence the instrument of regional policy.

Following the exchanges that took place during the first stakeholders meeting, Nice Metropolis decided to redirect the reflection regarding the Blue Green City project, toward “the development of green and blue infrastructures as nature-based solutions”. This would enable the adaptation of urban and peri-urban areas to climate change, as well as the fight against biodiversity erosion.

During the second stakeholders meeting, it was proposed to consider green and blue infrastructures as a structuring element, in the context of territorial development, for the adaptation to climate change and the improvement of biodiversity, and therefore to consider it as a transversal and integrated reinforcement to the investment axes of the new ERDF 2021-2027 Operational Program.

This analysis would, on the one hand, address regional issues, and, on the other hand, comfort the European Commission's vision of a greener Europe, investing in the fight against climate change and strategically oriented towards favoring this adaptation.



Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (Romania) organized the first stakeholders meeting on the 29th of January 2020, in Bucharest.

The event brought together 35 major representatives from central and local public authorities, academia and research, civil society and the private sector, working with Blue & Green resources in Bucharest-Ilfov region.

Through this event, the organizers aimed to present the Interreg Europe program and the Blue Green City project activities & expected outputs to a larger audience; to introduce, involve and map the role of the stakeholders in the lifecycle of the project; to analyze the regional context through discussions about relevant European and national regulations on biodiversity, urban biodiversity and protected natural areas; to present local initiatives concerning protected natural areas in Bucharest-Ilfov region.



On 30th of January 2020, **Piedmont Region (Italy)** organized a seminar called "From LOS_DAMA! to Blue Green City – Green and blue infrastructure for sustainable development". Its goal was to present to the local stakeholders the Blue Green City project and to start the activities for the Action Plan's definition, envisaged by the project.

The general objective of the Piedmontese Action Plan is to implement the methodology for sustainable planning of green and blue infrastructures, defined for a part of the Turin's metropolitan hinterland.

The seminar was attended by about 60 local stakeholders who took an active part in the working group coordinated by Mrs. Sarah Milliken from the **University of Greenwich (London) – Blue Green City Advisory Partner**.

The aim of the working group was the shared construction of scenarios for the adaptation strategy to climate change, highlighting the important role that green and blue infrastructures can play.



On 20th of February 2020, the first stakeholders meeting took place in **Ingolstadt (Germany)** at the premises of the Brigk digital incubator.

20 participants from authorities, companies, NGOs and associations met at the invitation of the project manager - Thomas Schneider to get to know each other and exchange ideas.



The meeting was moderated by Maria Bartholomäus and Tamara Fink from the project "People on the Move" from the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. After the presentation of the Blue Green City project, a get-to-know session followed. Afterwards, the exchange of experiences was intensified in small groups. The participants' expertise and motivation was then collected in a pool of experts and knowledge.

During the first reporting period, **Rijeka Development Agency Ltd. - RDA Porin (Croatia)** worked on mapping potential stakeholders.

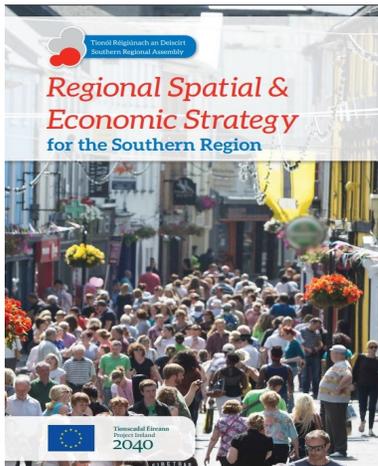
The recent Covid-19 pandemic affected the implementation of the project activities, so targeted focus group events with relevant stakeholders, planned for April and May 2020, have been further postponed.

At this moment, RDA Porin is arranging one-on-one interviews with identified stakeholders to decide on the possibility of their role within the project as well as to collect relevant information regarding their experiences and practices within the scope of blue-green infrastructures in the City of Rijeka, with the later purpose of drafting Action Plan and proposals for the Policy development.



Featured news from the partners

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



The Blue Green City project has provided an unique opportunity for the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) to investigate and understand the shared challenges that pertain to the implementation of BGI and NBS in the Region.

Therefore, SRA has started an initiative to develop Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) in the Southern Region of Ireland. The purpose of this initiative is to work with stakeholders in the Region to identify and define shared challenges and to work together to find ways to make progress and move forward.

Blue and Green Infrastructure (BGI) and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) are a key component of making areas attractive. Place-making, which can be enhanced through BGI and NBS, is a key component for enterprise development. Place-making is a significant policy focus for National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.

Shared Challenges

From discussions and feedback with stakeholders in the Southern Region, it was agreed that practical incorporation and implementation of BGI and NBS at project level is the shared challenge.

Changing mindsets and attitudes was recognized as a key obstacle. Also, meaningful change in practice remains a challenge.

Attenuation and hard engineering solutions (such as water attenuation tanks) still prevail. Greater in-house knowledge and a broadened understanding of BGI and NBS are needed.

Agreed Approach and Actions

It was proposed that each local authority identifies one or more project/s in its functional area which are either being planned or developed and where is willingness to incorporate GBI and NBS.

This process will assist in identifying practical GBI and NBS which can be incorporated into the project and in providing added value and co-benefits to each project.

There is also a process of learning and developing collaboration networks (very important for competitive place-making applications under Project Ireland 2040).

Deliverables

- * **Production of a “Cookbook”** with recipes for BGI and NBS for various types of projects e.g. greenway, public realm improvements etc. This would prove to be a better, more understandable communication tool and platform than traditional Government “guidelines” and it would be of more practical use. It would also be more engaging for community groups and give them ideas of what can be achieved and who they can potentially work with.
- * **Identifying Tangible Benefits.** To assist bidding capacity for funding applications and to communicate the benefits to society, the demonstration of the positive impacts is required. Indicators of success may vary in relation to each project, but it is imperative to investigate how progress is monitored. This will be the key in getting continued buy-in for future BGI and NBS while also providing evidence-based data for funding.

Featured news from the partners

The results of the materiality analysis and identified development areas in Växjö, Sweden

Växjö Municipality has just finished the materiality analysis to understand **where it is most efficient to work with ecosystem services in the local spatial planning and building process.**



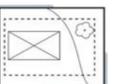
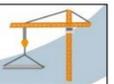
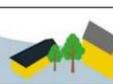
The materiality analysis has been done together with internal stakeholders with expertise from all relevant departments. It is important to focus on the right things in order to get a significant effect.

A lot of work, close to ecosystem services has already been done and the most significant effect will probably be seen if the ecosystem perspective will be taken in account.

For example, Växjö Municipality is already working with an ARC Gis tool in many situations and intends to add layers to this tool to make it easier finding information about ecosystem services.

To make the Blue Green City project successful, the Municipality intends to work multiple angles, from building knowledge to actions needing political consensus. What has been realized so far is that the different steps are well linked with each other and working with one part will require other parts of the process to follow.

Results of the materiality analysis and identified development areas for the project

	 Comprehensive plan	 Pilot study, Plan clearance	 Detailed development plan	 Markanvisning, markägarbyte	 Building permit and building process	 Management
Current situation	Green structure strategy, outdoor plan Inventory in the local Arc GIS map tool	The process between the comprehensive plan and the detailed development plan is different from case to case	Nature inventories are made	Certain terms are given for sale Land allocation competitions	Non permit building cases can have a negative impact on EST	Maintenance plans, big impact potential on own land
Development actions	A section in the comprehensive plan explaining Växjö Municipality strategy with ESS New layers in the local Arc GIS map tool special for ESS Make a local plan for ecological compensation Integrate ESS in current Green structure strategy	Make sure that the ESS perspective is taken into account in the steps before the detailed development plan	Investigate what can be regulated in the detailed development plan that will secure ESS Extended nature inventories with ESS Increase knowledge among detailed development administrators	Update guidelines Maintenance requirements when selling?	Regulate with water-fee to motivate ESS-actions Strengthen the teamwork between departments for better communication	Educate the stakeholders Communicate the values of working with ESS Requirement to work with ESS in some way when renting land from the Municipality



Featured news from the partners

Romanian legislative proposal on the regime of urban protected areas & the preservation of urban biodiversity

The representatives of the **Văcărești Natural Park – the first urban nature park in Romania** – and one of the key stakeholders of Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency in the Blue Green City project, have contributed to the elaboration of a **legislative proposal on the regime of urban protected areas and the preservation of urban biodiversity**.



Foto credit: Văcărești Natural Park

The purpose of this law is to protect the urban natural heritage, by adopting local biodiversity strategies, integrating them into urban plans and establishing new urban protected natural areas. Moreover, it will create the basis for the inclusion of urban biodiversity in the development strategies of

Romanian urban areas, leading to the establishment of natural areas in all big cities and to the **creation of a national network of protected urban areas**.

In the context of the human-generated climate crisis of the 21st century, which also affects Romania, protected urban natural areas can play a relevant role in stabilizing the climate in urban areas. Also, they can provide valuable ecosystem services, have an educational role and encourage outdoor movement, making people more aware of biodiversity and the need to protect it.

Blue Green City Ingolstadt team on site visit

On 6th of July 2020, the **Blue Green City core team from Ingolstadt** undertook an excursion to the Isar, an important tributary of the Danube. The aim of the excursion was to **network with actors from other EU projects**, which, like the



"Stadtpark Donau" project in Ingolstadt, deal with the renaturation of rivers in the vicinity of cities.

Due to existing fishing rights, the involvement of the State Fisheries Association in the planning of the Isar renaturation was particularly interesting.

Experts from the Landshut Water Management Office presented the Dingolfing and Landau sub-projects of the LIFE project "River Experience Isar" close to cities. In particular, the co-existence of local recreation and natural development on the renaturalised river banks provides valuable information for the further development of the "Stadtpark Donau" policy. The impressions and approaches of the colleagues from Landshut will play an important role as input in the next stakeholders workshop in Ingolstadt planned for 23rd of July 2020.

Blue Green City Virtual Project Meeting

On 6th of July 2020, Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolis / Euromed Cities Network organized a project meeting within the Blue Green City consortium. The meeting took place virtually, in compliance with the COVID-19 protective measures.



The partners had the opportunity to discuss the implications of COVID-19 on planning the future project meetings, the progress of project activities at partnership level, financial issues and also the Interreg Europe recommendations regarding the importance of achieving Policy change.

Moreover, the Irish partner held a very interesting presentation on how to develop Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) in the Southern Region of Ireland.

The partner in charge with the project communication – BI RDA (Romania) shared with the project partners the communication & dissemination activities carried out and the results achieved in the first 2 semesters of project implementation.

Blue Green City and COVID-19 implications

As expected, most interregional cooperation projects – including Blue Green City – are dealing with the challenges the COVID-19 preventive measures have put in place, affecting work plans and delaying the implementation of the scheduled activities.

The Blue Green City consortium, in close collaboration with the Joint Secretariat officers, is examining and implementing risk mitigation measures, to ensure the smooth and successful implementation of the project amid the pandemic.

The Blue Green City partnership



Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolis / Euromed Cities Network (FR)



University of Greenwich (UK)



Piedmont Region (IT)



Southern Regional Assembly (IE)



Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (RO)



City of Ingolstadt (DE)



Rijeka Development Agency Porin Ltd. (RDA Porin) (HR)



Municipality of Växjö (SE)

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About us

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