



UGB Newsletter Issue 1

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European cooperation for urban green spaces

15 organizations (municipalities, knowledge partners and associated partners) of seven European countries, led by the Municipality of 12th District of Budapest (Hegyvidék) have started a cooperation within the Urban Green Belts project. The overall goal is to find and pilot innovative solutions to protect, manage and develop existing green spaces in a sustainable way with the involvement of local communities.

The kick-off meeting of the three-year, European Union supported project was held in the MOM Cultural Center in the 12th district of Budapest on 12-13th July 2016. In his opening speech, the mayor of the district, Mr Zoltán Pokorni pointed out that even if the district has a relatively small population it has a lot for green spaces, even forests. ‘It is not our merit, we inherited this, but now we try to protect this.’- he added. He said that Urban Green Belts can contribute significantly to a learning process, where the participating cities can learn from each other, especially about the ways how local communities can be involved in the protection and management of the green spaces, and on how to make them understand that ‘our home is not ending at the door of our house’.



The deputy mayor, Mr Lajos Kovács, who in his other position is the president of the Association of the Climate-Friendly Settlements, highlighted that this is the first time that the district acts as a lead partner in an international project. ‘We can say the project is successful if its results can be used in everyday practice’- he said. As an example to the potential impact he mentioned the development of the district’s tree cadaster, the modification of the District’s Building Code in order to help the expansion of green spaces and also the adaptation to climate change.

The three-year Urban Green Belts project is supported by the INTERREG CENTRAL programme of the European Union, it has a total budget of 2.39 million euros. The partnership is led by the Municipality of 12th District of Budapest (Hegyvidék) and has partners from Hungary, Italy, Czechia, Austria, Slovenia, Poland and Croatia. Altogether 10 municipalities and knowledge partners are cooperating and assisted by a further five associated partners, that in Hungary includes the Municipality of Budapest and the Association of the Climate-Friendly Settlements.



During the kick-off meeting, participants introduced their organizations and the environment of their locations and established a common method of collaboration while getting to know each other in person in familiar surroundings.

Stakeholder Platform meetings in the Functional Urban Areas of the project

The UGB project tries to continuously involve of and network with the relevant target groups outside the partnership who could contribute to reaching all intended thematic project outputs. In the initial phase of the project partners establish a Stakeholder Platform (SP) along the quadruple helix approach by engaging relevant public authorities, knowledge institutions, enterprises and civil organisations. SPs cooperate through local workshops in national language, participate in generating project outputs and function as important actors of knowledge transfer both to and from the transnational partnership due to their practical knowledge and networks.

During the first half year of the project the Stakeholder Platform have been set up and the first meetings were organised.

Municipality of the 12th District, Budapest, Hungary

The stakeholder meeting regarding to the Urban Green Belts project took place in the building of the municipality in October 2016. Altogether 34 stakeholders participated including public authorities (local authorities, municipalities, government level institutions), knowledge providers (experts from the universities, research and development centers), civil society (NGO's, schools, kindergartens, households and individual citizens) and experts from the business sector.



In the first part of the meeting the content of the project and its first findings were presented, including the local assessment of urban green spaces governance. In the second part the participants were making problem tree analysis in three groups, during which they elaborated on urban green spaces development taking into account their own role in the process. They identified a problem, specified its roots and effects and drafted possible solutions. During the course of the problem tree analysis, participants could see their vested interest in green space management and the fact that they all have some tools that could contribute to the renewal of



green space management. The meeting was concluded with a short summary and the discussion of upcoming events and actions.

Based on the feedback received, participants considered the meeting useful and had a good time. They were happy to gain a deeper insight into the project details and welcomed group work where they could actively contribute to the work and had a chance to think and work together. The meeting created a strong basis for future collaboration.

Maribor, Slovenia

On October 4th, 2016, the first Stakeholder Platform meeting in the framework of UGB was organized in Maribor, Slovenia, by UGB project partner Maribor Development Agency in cooperation with the associated project partner the Municipality of Maribor (MOM). The event also had important media presence, as it was covered by the national radio broadcast system.



UGB-MRA-p1: Plenary session of the stakeholder platform.



UGB-MRA-p2: One of four workshop groups with mixed stakeholder representatives.



UGB-MRA-p3: Reporting on outcome of workshops.



UGB-MRA-p4: Giving statements for RTV Slovenia.

There were over 30 stakeholders attending the platforms, representing all four groups of the quadruple helix, upon which the project partnership is building its approach. The representatives of: local administration and regional offices of national administration, private and public companies owning the green areas or having a concession to maintain them, non-governmental organizations representing various social segments, and academia; have recognised the value of UGB project's activities and have stated that UGB shall be used as the participatory platform, showcasing the needs for wider and steered collaboration



between the stakeholders. The platform shall be an important source of inputs for the revision of the Municipal Spatial Plan, giving the stakeholder groups an opportunity to directly contribute, with special attention given to the owners of green areas, revealing their plans within the area.

As such, it was recognized that the stakeholder platform is an ongoing discussion forum and must be facilitated by MRA and Municipality of Maribor.

Małopolska Region, Poland



Małopolska Region initiated the work of its Stakeholder Platform on 26th October 2016. During this first meeting all participating stakeholder were informed about objectives, activities and methodology of the UGB project. Representatives of the project partners presented also the Spatial Development Plan of the Małopolska Region and the Krakow Municipal Greenery Authority outlined the future pilot

action, that will be implemented within the UGB project: the Witkowice - Green Living Lab. To make the meeting more efficient and useful an interactive session was also organized in world café style. This gave the participants opportunity and space to discuss about the needs and challenges, best practices used in the management of urban green areas in Malopolska.

Padova, Italy

The Stakeholder Platform (SP) in Padua was successfully attended by 40 participants representing different local institution, bodies and associations. Such great involvement has been possible also thanks to the valuable experience acquired by the local Agenda 21, active since 2002.

In line with the "quadruple helix" model, that includes the involvement of





four key areas for the development of innovative policies, public institutions (Veneto Region, Local Administrations, other public authorities such as “Genio Civile”, “Consorzi di Bonifica”), private sector representatives (Local agency of National Industry Association, Padova Industrial District Authority “Consorzio Zip – Zona Industriale di Padova”, Not for profit Social Cooperative “Federsolidarietà”, Local Agricultural Associations and Professional Associations), higher education institutes and high schools (University of Padova, IUAV-Venice University of Architecture, Agricultural Studies Professional High School) and civil society organisations (Legambiente, Comitato Mura, Lipu, Parco Agropaesaggistico) were invited to the meeting.

Two meetings took place so far. The first, held on 6th October, was dedicated to the presentation of the project itself, including timetable, main activities and expected results. During the second meeting, held on October 27th, all participants were involved in the Baseline Study survey to provide a first local assessment of the urban green system (public and private), together with an analysis on the green infrastructure strategies and governance.

Stakeholders’ contribution was essential, based on their own skills and knowledge. They have also been discussing difficulties and needs, evaluation methods and tools, experiences and good practices complementing the Municipal Administration's vision.

Zadar, Croatia

In Zadar the first Stakeholder Platform meeting was held on 29th September. The first part of the meeting, attended by the representatives of the local authorities, NGOs, business sector and research institutions (Quadruple helix approach), included welcome speeches of the Project Partner on the UGB project - Zadar County Development Agency ZADRA NOVA, represented by Ms. Marica Babić, Project Manager and Ms. Ana Zujčić, communication manager of UGB.



After presentations on the project, Ms. Babić opened an interactive session. First the current UGS maintenance and management situation in Zadar was discussed, then the difficulties, on which the representatives of public company “Nasadi d.o.o” gave an outlook. Representatives of City of Zadar spoke about their work regarding UGS and presented their plans for future. “Eko Zadar” represented NGOs and their two members spoke about their actions and plans, as well as examples of good practice

regarding this subject.



Transnational UGB project meeting in Padova

The first transnational meeting of UGB project took place in Padova, between the 14th and 16th of november, hosted at Informambiente offices of the Municipality.

Representatives from 15 organisations gathered to discuss and assess the results of the first 6 months of activities carried out in Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Poland and Czech Republic, which will be used as the baseline study for further steps into project implementation. Three thematic working groups addressed the issue at stake from three different, though integrated perspectives: GIS based design and assessment of urban green spaces, participatory tools and multi-level territorial governance.



“Such an enthusiastic start is likely to be the best premise to find effective solutions reflecting the real needs of our local communities” said Ms. Zsofia Hamza, representing the 12th district of Budapest Municipality as UGB project co-ordinator. *“The joint interest in identifying urban green spaces innovative management methods other than those currently applied by all partner cities, was in fact the main driver for this highly valuable cooperation spirit we experienced in the first 6 months of project life”*.