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NATURED

**NATURE-BASED
SOLUTIONS FOR A JUST
RESILIENCE IN THE
ADRIATIC-IONIAN CITIES**

Newsletter no. 4

We are pleased to share the fourth edition of the NATURED Newsletter. This issue presents the completion of the joint action plan on implementable Nature-based Solutions, the review of city public works plans now under way, the fourth meeting of the project partners in Montenegro, and the eleven pilot actions in preparation.

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1.7.2024 - 31.12.2026.

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Learn more about the NATURED Project and our Partnership!

The NATURED Project Offers Nature-based Solutions for the ADRION Region Facing Climate Change Crisis

NATURED brings together 12 partners and 3 associate partners from 9 ADRION region countries, including regional and local policy responsible authorities, supported by development agencies and higher education and research institutions to work on development and implementation of Nature-based Solution in their area. Our project partners will empower policymakers and stakeholders to prevent the effects of climate change on urban areas, particularly flash floods, and urban heat islands. The project seeks to promote a just, safe, inclusive and place-based resilience approach, anchored in a series of interlinked activities, which include understanding the interactions between climate and cities, creating databases and digital maps for climate vulnerability and hazards in different urban zones, and engaging citizens and stakeholders to define action plans for Nature-based Solutions. These solutions will be tested in pilot actions and subsequently integrated into the public work plans of cities, with the ultimate goal of replicating the most effective solutions on a wider scale.

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN UP TO...

Over the past months NATURED has moved from joint planning towards practical application: the joint action plan has been completed, cities have begun reviewing their public works through a nature-based lens, and the eleven pilot actions are taking shape.

From local priorities to a joint action plan for Nature-based Solutions

Building on the debates held with citizens and stakeholders across the eleven pilot cities, reported in our previous edition, partners have consolidated the outcomes into city-specific reports and portfolios of Nature-based Solutions, drawn from a common pool of 36 solutions assessed for their expected benefits, costs and management requirements.

Together with the climate vulnerability and hazard maps and the joint strategy for the resilience of cities, these portfolios provided the foundation for the joint action plan on implementable Nature-based Solutions, co-developed under the coordination of the Regional Development Agency of Northern Primorska Nova Gorica and the Region of Thessaly, with the contribution of all territorial partners.

The plan sets out an action framework for each of the eleven cities: how Nature-based Solutions can enter municipal public works plans and other planning instruments, who is responsible, what installation and maintenance are likely to cost, which funding sources are available, and how progress will be monitored.

Rather than proposing one solution for all cities, the plan follows the place-based approach at the heart of NATURED: each city works from its own vulnerabilities, spatial conditions, governance arrangements and local priorities, within a common transnational framework.



Looking at public works through a nature-based lens

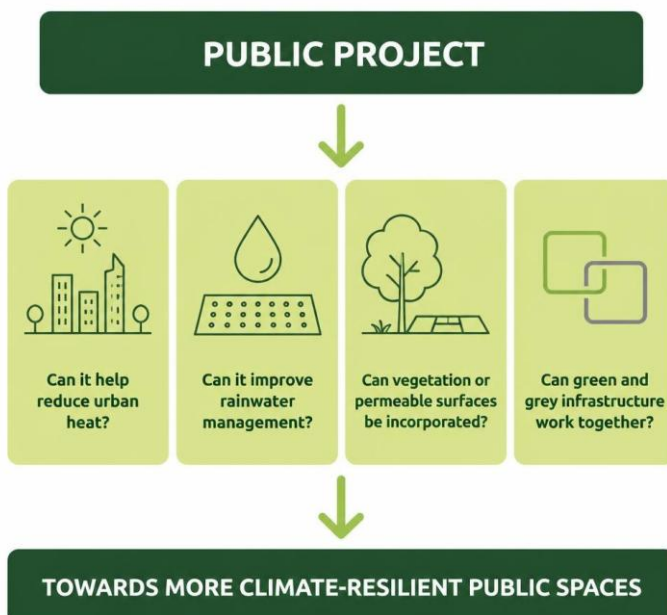
Cities invest continuously in roads, public spaces, buildings and drainage systems. These investments shape the urban environment for decades, and they also determine how well a city copes with rising temperatures and intense rainfall. NATURED is therefore asking a simple question of them:

When a public project is planned, can nature become part of the solution?

Under the coordination of the Municipality of Tirana, with technical support from CORILA and the International University of Sarajevo, the partners have agreed a common approach for reviewing planned public works and identifying where Nature-based Solutions can complement conventional infrastructure and add climate adaptation benefits.

A road or a public square may offer room for more vegetation and shade. A redevelopment project may allow permeable surfaces or better rainwater management. A public building may lend itself to green elements as part of its design or renovation. The aim is not to replace necessary infrastructure, but to find where green and grey solutions can work together to create urban spaces that are more resilient and more liveable.

The review builds directly on what the project has already produced: the climate vulnerability maps show where heat and flooding pressures are most significant, while the city portfolios and the joint action plan provide the basis for choosing appropriate responses. The reviews are being carried out across the partner cities, and their results will feed into the pilot actions and into the project's work on wider replication.



Fourth meeting of the NATURED partners in the Old Royal Capital of Cetinje

On 13 and 14 May 2026 the fourth face-to-face meeting of the NATURED project was held in Cetinje, Montenegro, hosted by the Old Royal Capital Cetinje at the premises of the Agency for Development and Business Support.



After the opening remarks, the Municipality of Tirana presented the template for the review of the public works plans at city level, followed by an open discussion among the partners. The Steering Committee then reviewed project management, reporting and communication. The second day was devoted entirely to the eleven pilot actions, with each partner presenting the intervention planned in its city, its local context and its timeline – the first partnership-wide overview of the pilots, and an opportunity to compare approaches.

Part of the programme was dedicated to the natural and cultural-historical values of the Old Royal Capital. Partners visited Rijeka Crnojevića, the setting for the Montenegrin pilot action, where a shaded green structure with a planted roof will be installed on the promenade –

connecting the discussions of the meeting with one of the local contexts in which the NATURED approach will be put into practice.

Eleven cities, eleven local pathways for nature-based action

The next chapter of NATURED brings the project's approach into real urban settings through eleven pilot actions, one in each partner city, now in preparation following the Cetinje meeting.

The pilot concepts reflect the different climate challenges and urban conditions identified across the partnership. They explore a wide range of approaches, including greener public spaces and urban gardens, greening of buildings, green corridors connecting existing green areas, street trees and improved growing conditions, shaded green structures, permeable surfaces and other water-sensitive solutions. Many are designed to respond to urban heat, while several also help cities manage intense rainfall by allowing more water to infiltrate into the ground rather than rapidly running off sealed surfaces.

The image illustrates this logic in a simple way. A conventional “grey” street can be re-imagined by introducing trees, vegetation and permeable surfaces. These elements can provide shade, reduce surface temperatures and allow rainwater to soak into the ground, while at the same time improving the quality and comfort of the public space. The objective is not to apply the same design everywhere, but to show how Nature-based Solutions can be incorporated into projects cities are already planning, working alongside conventional infrastructure rather than replacing it.



Eleven cities, eleven local contexts, one shared objective

This is also why the diversity of the NATURED pilots is deliberate. There is no single intervention that can simply be transferred from one city to another. Each pilot is shaped by the climate risks identified locally, the characteristics of the site, technical and planning conditions, and the priorities expressed by local communities and stakeholders. What can be transferred between cities is not necessarily the intervention itself, but the approach used to identify what works best in each context.

At the same time the pilots share a purpose. They will provide practical examples of how Nature-based Solutions can become part of everyday urban environments, and the experience gained will support the replication and wider uptake of nature-based approaches beyond the pilot sites themselves.

What comes next

Over the coming months, partners will complete the city-level reviews of Public Works Plans while continuing to advance the pilot interventions across the NATURED cities. The experience and lessons generated through these activities will be assessed jointly by the partnership and used to support wider transfer and replication.

The findings will feed into the project's replicability plan, exploring how Nature-based approaches developed and tested within NATURED can be adapted to other urban contexts across the Adriatic-Ionian region. A Memorandum of Understanding will also support continued cooperation and knowledge exchange among partners beyond the project lifetime.

The next newsletter and the project's closing event will provide the opportunity to present the outcomes of this final implementation phase and the main lessons emerging from the project.

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