

Public utility park in the Ion Creanga neighbourhood

≈ Good Practice Summary ≈

Before the creation of the public utility park, the area faced various problems as: high percentage of misdemeanours, lack of facilities for people with disabilities and the elderly, insufficient green space, lack of recreational areas, high air pollution, and lack of awareness on environmental protection. The area was, also, facing a very acute pollution problem being a place where garbage and wastes were stored improperly, with natural vegetation, very difficult to clean. Beside the environmental aspects and lack of green infrastructure, the area Ion Creanga was also facing the problem of Roma population integration. The creation of the park was a solution for the residents of the area in order to be given access to a modern green facility build at European standards that ensures interaction across ethnicity and age.

The public utility park was one of the objectives of the 2nd District Integrated Urban Development Plan, financed under the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013. The creation of the public utility park was the measure to be taken for the sustainable growth of the area in order to integrate the social needs of the community with the environment protection.

The project started on June 2, 2011 when District 2 Bucharest City Hall signed financing contract no. 1692 with Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism. The implementation period of the project was 12 months and the 2nd District Bucharest City Hall inaugurated the public utility park in May 2012 with a public event.

The park is functional today, being constantly monitored and maintained by 2nd District Public Domain Administration in order to keep investment in the best possible state for the beneficiaries and for indefinite lifespan.

The project is in compliance with the Regional Development Plan 2007-2013, the National Strategy for Regional Development 2014-2020 through improving the social and economic cohesion by optimizing the quality and the capacity of the public services and the National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2013-2020-2030 providing a high quality environment for the community; sustainable and rational management of waste by installing compartmentalized bins to educate the population to collect garbage differently and improvement of quality of the community's life. The project is in accordance with the measures stated by the Environmental Local Action Plan, the Sustainable Development Local Plan of the 2nd District Bucharest City Hall. .

The overall objective of the project was to increase life quality and social cohesion by improving urban infrastructure, and contribute to the overall objective of the Regional development, namely supporting the economic, social sustainable and balanced territorial development. Concretely, the project added value was achieved by the following results:

- ✓ Increased recreational spaces surface with 19.600m²
- ✓ Increased surface with 16.550m² of green space
- ✓ Increased life quality for 25.000 inhabitants of the area Ion Creanga
- ✓ Increased energy efficiency through photovoltaic panels and automatic irrigation systems
- ✓ Active promotion of the principle of non-discrimination and social inclusion, by connection the different ethnicities and cultures.

The innovative aspects of the public utility park stand in the energetic efficiency, ITC facilities such as info points, outdoor facilities such as fitness, air skate, and mountain bike.

The results of the project were assessed by the monitoring team from the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration and were stated in The Report of the Sustainment of the Investment.

In the context of the Regional Development policies and the economic and environment challenges that Europe faces nowadays, the project can be reused to ensure that Europe's limited space is utilised in as efficient and coherent way as possible and can be transferred to smaller or larger area, both at district level or broader territorial contexts. Therefore, the good practice would be interesting to be implemented in other areas that face Ion Creanga area problems and where it is vital to create green area for increasing the quality of life of the community and for changing and improving the neighbourhood.

In terms of upgrading the project, if the area of the developing offers enough space the outdoor activities can be encouraged by creating cultural hubs and sport hubs, study areas and market areas for handmade crafts.

In the context of the development of smart cities, Europe faces the challenge of combining competitiveness and sustainable urban development simultaneously. Therefore, the project could be upgraded through technology in a manner that positively impacts the local community, through open district HUBs where the voices of the citizens become an instrument in social design, allowing for better results and creating faster and more targeted improvements.