



Let's do it together!

Quarterly Network Report #6
April – June 2025



URBACT



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg

The GreenPlace network

GreenPlace is an URBACT network consisting of ten partners who aim at developing a set of activities for "recycling" unused urban areas, using social participation tools. The project takes into account not only the regional specificities and conditions of each of the partners but also introduces greenery as a key factor in limiting climate change in urban areas. It is running from July 2023 to December 2025.

It is led by the City of Wrocław (Poland) and is composed of 9 Project Partners:

- Boulogne-sur-mer Développement Côte d'Opale - France
- Bucharest Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association - Romania
- Cehegin - Spain
- Limerick - Ireland
- Löbau - Germany
- Nitra - Slovakia
- Onda - Spain
- Quarto d'Altino - Italy
- Vila Nova de Poiares - Portugal

Find out more about GreenPlace [here](#).



GreenPlace areas

Each of the GreenPlace network's Project Partners will focus on one area which will be central to its Integrated Action Plan (IAP).

Partner	GreenPlace area
Abandoned buildings	
Löbau	Noodle Factory
Quarto d'Altino	Civic Centre
Forgotten buildings	
Wroclaw	Former Tram Depot Popowice
Bucharest	Victorei Tram Depot
Unused green areas	
Limerick	Medieval wall
Vila Nova de Poiares	Green Zone
Cehegin	Ejidos
Unused built area	
Onda	Green Lung
Boulogne-sur-mer	Station-Bréquereque area
Nitra	Martin's Hill

Highlights of the second trimester of the Preparing Implementation Phase

- Project Partners
 - Met again physically in Vila Nova de Poiares
 - Moved towards the finalisation of their IAPs
 - Took part in the URBACT City Festival, as many of them had received the URBACT Good Practice label.
 - Continued testing more actions
- Elected representatives gather to signed a commitment to further renovate with green solutions for and with residents
- The knowledge shared by Project Partners was shared in the fifth Quarterly Network report

In this quarterly Network report, you will find details about the following:

1. Where we are in the life of GreenPlace
2. The continuation of the work in person
3. The Peer review of another GreenPlace area
4. The URBACT Methodology journey
5. A Political meeting
6. Site visits in Vila Nova de Poiares
7. The activation of GreenPlace through (Testing) Actions
8. The study visits
9. Memories from the 2025 URBACT City Festival
10. The next steps



A group of people are seated in a modern, well-lit room with large windows and wooden paneling. Several individuals are holding up their smartphones to take photos or videos. A man in a white shirt and black vest is taking a photo of a woman in a brown jacket. Another man in a blue shirt is taking a photo of a woman in a dark blue top. A woman in a grey cardigan is standing and taking a photo. A man in a red jacket is sitting on the left. A laptop with the HP logo is visible on a table in the foreground. The room has a high ceiling with recessed lighting and large windows in the background.

1. WHERE ARE WE IN THE LIFE OF GREENPLACE?





2. CONTINUING THE WORK IN PERSON

A 2-day Core Network Meeting in Vila Nova de Poiares

CNM6 in Nitra – 13-14.05.2025

Topic covered: Political meeting

• **Places visited:**

- An app to enjoy nature while practicing sport
- From invasive greens to a central recreative park
- School of the environment

• **URBACT methodology covered:** IAP Peer Review, Testing Actions

What our Project Partners say about it:

- *"Very inspired by all the projects going on in VNP, considering the side of the city. Lots of done by a small staff, congrats!"*
- *"We learnt how a small town can develop innovative and sustainable projects, such as the environment school and the use of QR codes for educational routes."*
- *"We were inspired by how they involve the community in environmental educational projects."*
- *"You don't need to be a big city to do big things. The natural park we saw and the QR routes are great examples of how to make smart use of the natural environment"*
- *"We take home practical and replicable ideas which could easily be applied in our municipality."*
- *"Seeing a lot of small-scale actions was great, it was a lot more than we expected."*
- *"I did not expect that so small city will have so big offer for the community and work so close with inhabitants!"*
- *"Every time I take part in these visits with low to moderate expectations (what could be so great in this town?) but I am always surprised by how I learn from each visit. The highlight of this visit was clearly the school of environmental where small children learn local crafts."*
- *"How big projects can come even from small villages."*



Sharing experiences

- Preparing and following-up on Core Network Meetings:
 - Pre Core Network Meeting notes, preparatory meeting and homework
 - Post Core Network Meeting note and homework
- Using different supporting tools:
 - Learning grids
 - Takeaways cards
 - Site visits
- Combining multiple methodologies
 - Site visits
 - Presentations
 - Peer reviews
 - Critical friend
 - OPERA
 - Working with a substitute Lead Expert

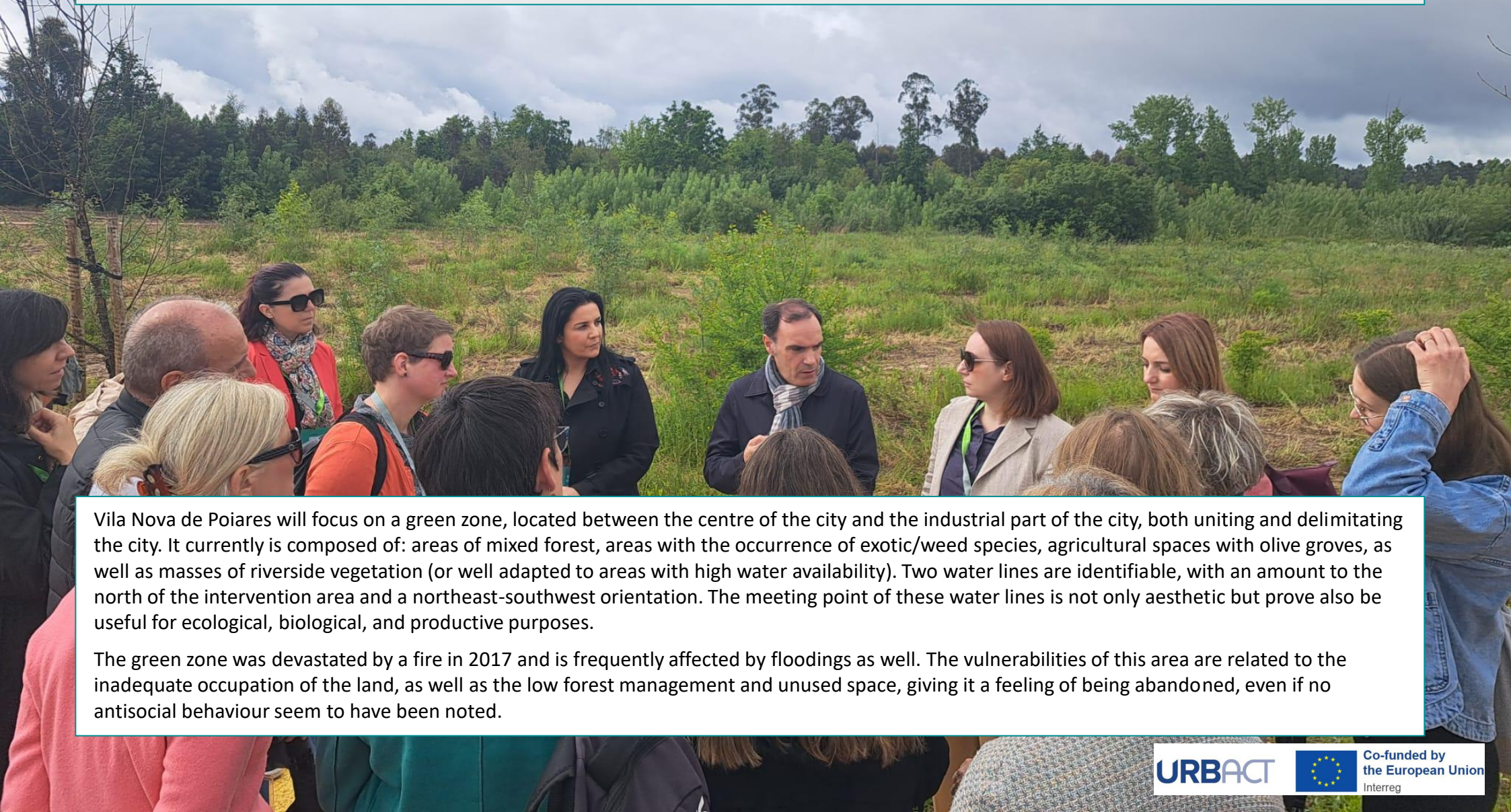


NATURE ← BALANCE
+ NATURAL SOLUTIONS

3. PEER REVIEW OF A GREENPLACE AREA

Green Zone – Vila Nova de Poiares, Portugal

Context



Vila Nova de Poiares will focus on a green zone, located between the centre of the city and the industrial part of the city, both uniting and delimitating the city. It currently is composed of: areas of mixed forest, areas with the occurrence of exotic/weed species, agricultural spaces with olive groves, as well as masses of riverside vegetation (or well adapted to areas with high water availability). Two water lines are identifiable, with an amount to the north of the intervention area and a northeast-southwest orientation. The meeting point of these water lines is not only aesthetic but prove also be useful for ecological, biological, and productive purposes.

The green zone was devastated by a fire in 2017 and is frequently affected by floodings as well. The vulnerabilities of this area are related to the inadequate occupation of the land, as well as the low forest management and unused space, giving it a feeling of being abandoned, even if no antisocial behaviour seem to have been noted.

Green Zone – Vila Nova de Poiares, Portugal

IAP Vision and Focus



Vila Nova de Poiares wishes to focus on reforesting the green zone, creating a buffer zone between the residential area and the industrial area, first removing spontaneous and disorganized vegetation and then planting native species. In the same framework, pedestrian and cycling lanes will be delimited, allowing to adopt soft mobility practices between the residential and industrial areas.

The green park would also contribute to protecting the residents from negative externalities of the productive activities of the industrial site, at the same time as making it available to the factory works.

The green zone is owned as majority by the municipality. Yet, some areas are in the hands of private owners, operating on the site (e.g. with olive fields). The IAP will support development collaboration mechanisms between the different parties.

Green Zone – Vila Nova de Poiares, Portugal

Project Partners' perceived main challenges

Project visioning

- The project should be thought of as a long-term task
- The project will need to be upscaled at the appropriate level
- Adequate communication and participation approaches will need to be implemented

Maintenance

- The model of maintenance need be thought through and local partners need to be found
- The costs of maintenance need to be anticipated
- "Don't follow the Romanian example to invest all your money in the development of the project with nothing left to maintain it!"
- The costs for maintenance will be very high

Ownership

- It will be difficult to get the involvement of private owners and an agreement amongst them
- Collaboration between public and private will need to be set up
- It will be challenging to create a green space with multiple overlapping functions on land with different ownerships

Constraints

- The site is huge for such a small city
- The accessibility of the site needs to be revisited

Safety

- Watch out for fires!

Invasive species

- They should be removed
- They should be kept under control

Events

- How many events will be organised each year?
- Will the residents organise the events on their own?

Green Zone – Vila Nova de Poiares, Portugal

Project Partners' proposed ideas and solutions

Participation and collaboration

- Involve BOTH resident AND companies of the industrial areas
- Consultations on what/where citizens would like to see existing or other amenities.
- Public consultation during the preparation of the Master Plan
- Build a community around some ideas (bottom-up)
- Main stakeholders should be the other owners and residents, children, teens, immigrants, local artists, cultural leaders, ...
- Work with ecologists, water retention/management experts, landscape architects and gardeners and biologists

Management

- Organise maintenance by citizens, volunteers, schools, NGOs
- Green « stewardship » programme
- Wetlands should be maintained by NGO managed local government (French example: « Syndicat Mixte », [Eden62](#))

Process

- Prioritise the actions
- Start with small steps
- Start with a small area and test single ideas.
- Targeted interventions and activities

Infrastructure

- Dedicated areas for children
- Playgrounds
- Dedicated areas for mothers (and children) – to create a support community
- Recreation areas around the rivers with fountains, water equipment, sports for children and adults

Prominence of (wild) nature

- Trust nature to do most of the work, carry out interventions only in limited areas
- Find the balance between the « wild forest » which is currently there and the new ideas for the space.
- Adapted light to natural area
- Accept periods of flooding
- Adapted lightings to the needs to sightseeing and plants and animals, especially at night.

Nature awareness-raising activities

- Beehives
- Awareness workshops
- Nature guide tours (flowers, birds)
- Education paths and classes for school curriculum.

Circular infrastructure

- Reuse: Using cut invasive trees to make wooden boards for paths (Acacia is hard and long-lasting wood.)

Local agriculture

- Collaboration with the owner of local Agriculture projects on site
- Sell fruits and vegetables grown on site to VNP markets

Tourism

- Ecological and temporary tourism
- Removable equipment (e.g. campsites)
- Information signs in the area : “something happened here get more information here”



A photograph of a workshop in progress. A man in a green shirt stands at the front, pointing at a whiteboard. Several people are seated at long wooden tables, some looking at the whiteboard, others at their laptops or papers. The room has large windows on the left and wood-paneled walls. A teal banner with white text is overlaid at the bottom.

4. A JOURNEY THROUGH THE URBACT METHODOLOGY

IAP Peer Review

Project partners were teamed in groups of 3 cities. They were tasked to read the IAPs of the other members of their group prior to the Peer Review meeting, while reflecting upon a peer review sheet. They then discussed about those during the physical meeting in Vila Nova de Poiares.

What our Project Partners say about it:

- *"we like the dialogue in groups and the interaction in real time : this was a super format!"*
- *"We like the focus on integration. This is a main focus for us."*
- *"it was good to share with other cities."*
- *"It was useful to see what our level is as compared to other."*
- *"It felt very productive also to just explain your own intervention logic to others."*
- *"I got a lot of ideas from other partners, I learnt some things from their own lessons learnt."*
- *"I enjoyed the opportunity for having philosophical discussions on the relevance of gender equality in our projects. Didn't initially think gender equality is a such a relevant issue for our project, I realised we should actually spend some more energy in this direction."*
- *"It is useful to go through a first draft again and cut a lot of the initial ambitions, and focus on keeping the actions that are realistic and actually doable in your local context. Less is more."*
- *"I got a feeling of fresh air and I will adjust my IAP to the suggestions."*



Speakers

- Sr.Presidente João Henriques, Mayor, Vila Nova de Poiares
- Marek Hattas, Mayor, Nitra
- Vicent Bou, Councillor, Onda
- Dan McSweeney, Councillor, Limerick
- Ana-Maria Boghean, Councillor, Bucharest

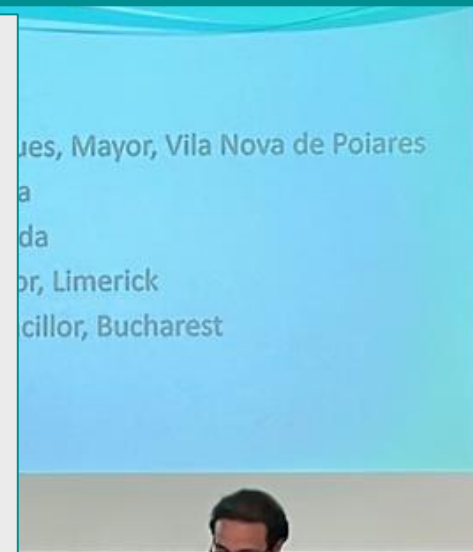
5. A POLITICAL MEETING

Political meeting

On 14 May 2025, elected representatives from the GreenPlace network committed themselves to further pursue their actions in this regard, and in particular to:

- Consider revitalisation as a priority, envisaging green solutions—be they in terms of Nature-Based Solutions, Circular Economy (and energy), or Cultural Heritage;
- Ensure that residents and users are taken into consideration throughout the entire development of local projects;
- Related to this, create local groups, based on URBACT Local Groups or newly created ones, to become key partners in the implementation of the solutions; and
- Ensure regular monitoring, feedback, evaluation, and readjustment of the solutions.

More information [here](#)



What our Project Partners say about it:

- *"It was good to see the different perspectives from each country as well as their priorities".*
- *"It was good to confirm the real commitment of politicians."*
- *"It was good to see the engagement from politicians; how they appreciated participant of residents and green solutions."*

D'outroira ao devir

Trilhos, caminhos e lugares de Poiares

Em todo o Concelho de Vila Nova de Poiares existem trilhos e caminhos com um enorme interesse histórico e cultural que nos levam à imersão no património, tradições e paisagens de grande beleza natural. O projeto "D'outroira ao devir - Trilhos, caminhos e lugares de Poiares" permite dar a conhecer todo este legado que representa a alma de um território.

Através da leitura de QR Códigos dispostos em placas ao longo dos trilhos, o visitante poderá aceder a conteúdos multimédia associados aos locais, viajando entre o passado, o presente e o futuro. Parta à descoberta! Este trilho espera por si!

Encontre as placas e fotografe os QR codes para descobrir o património, as histórias e as gentes de Vila Nova de Poiares

6. SITE VISITS IN VILA NOVA DE POIARES

An app to enjoy nature while practicing sport

Within the Erasmus+ Sport Nature 3.0 Project Vila Nova de Poiares has sought to enable sports to be used as an educational tool through outdoor sports activities.

It has developed a mobile application has been developed featuring the Pedestrian Routes, allowing users to interact and access elements of environmental education, wildlife, flora, as well as historical information about the three pedestrian routes in the municipality. The application is accessible via QR codes on pedestrian and cycling trails.

More information [here](#)

What our Project Partners say about it:

- "It is a very good motivation to walk through all the path"
- "The app can be used to rise the public awareness towards green solutions"
- "QR codes connecting visitors with the natural and cultural heritage in important and interactive."
- "The QR system is a smart and sustainable solution. No need to print anything."
- "The application is very user-friendly. It is a great tool to promote tourism sustainably".
- "We have had bad experiences with apps as the playstore and applestore might throw the applications out after a while to too few people use it. I highly recommend to use a website with QR codes instead as people hesitate to download apps."



From invasive greens to a central recreative park

An old primary school was renovated to host the environmental education activities for children of Planeta Aquarela. The main objective of this project is to raise awareness and bring children closer to Nature and the rural world. It gives the opportunity to observe and explore the animal and plant species found in the village. The activities promote, contact and the exchange of knowledge between, generations, around historical corners such as washing places and manual wheels. Olive picking and grape harvesting are key moments in the school.

More information [here](#).

What our Project Partners say about it:

- "I was inspired by the way the recreational park offers a space that combined nature, sport and education. I would replicate this idea."
- "The park is a great example of how to activate green space. I appreciated the balance between leisure and environmental awareness."
- "I loved the integration of natural elements with playful structures."
- How the park encourage community use
- "It is nice to see a company being part of the park and taking care of it."
- "We loved the geocaches and will hopefully install 1 or 2 ourselves."

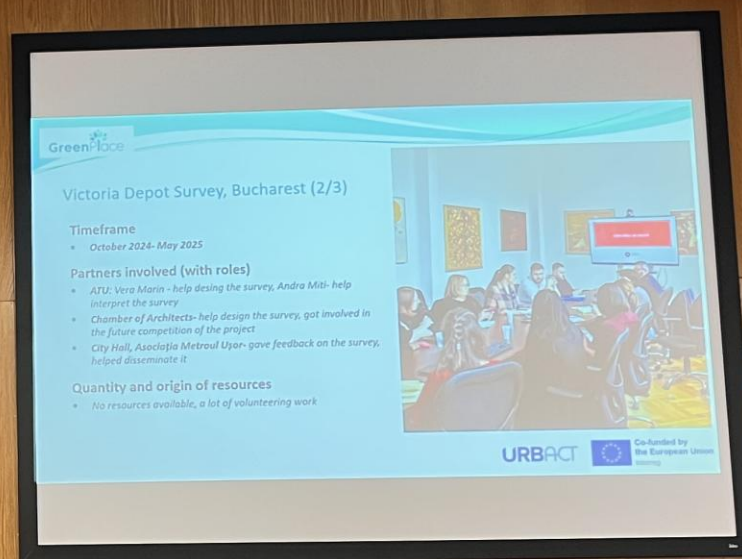
The School of the environment

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What our Project Partners say about it:

- *"It was great to see how an idea from one individual was supported formally by the municipality and the impact that this had."*
- *"We need to support citizen ideas and help the team to implement."*
- *"I loved the way this school engages with children in a lovely environmental and the activities there."*
- *"I would replicate it without doubts."*
- *"Teaching in a practical way is another way to learn where you can engage students."*
- *"I liked the school builds environmental responsibility, through participation."*
- *"I loved the idea and the enthusiasm of the teachers. We would love to adapt it with making pasta at our pasta factory."*
- *"It is a great idea that kids can learn how it was many years ago and they can use this knowledge later."*
- *"This project is great not only because it regenerates an old unused school, but because it manages to transmit local crafts and culture to children in a fun and engaging way. It is also cool that this is an infrastructure not only for Vila Nova de Poiares but for the whole region as well."*

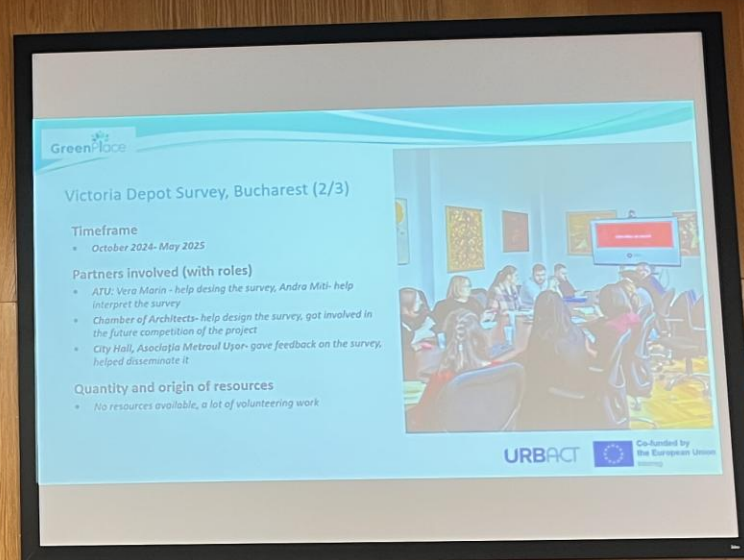




7. ACTIVATING GREENPLACE THROUGH (TESTING) ACTIONS

Presentation of the learnings of the latest Actions

The partners presented the learning from the latest (testing) actions they have carried out since the last time we met in person.

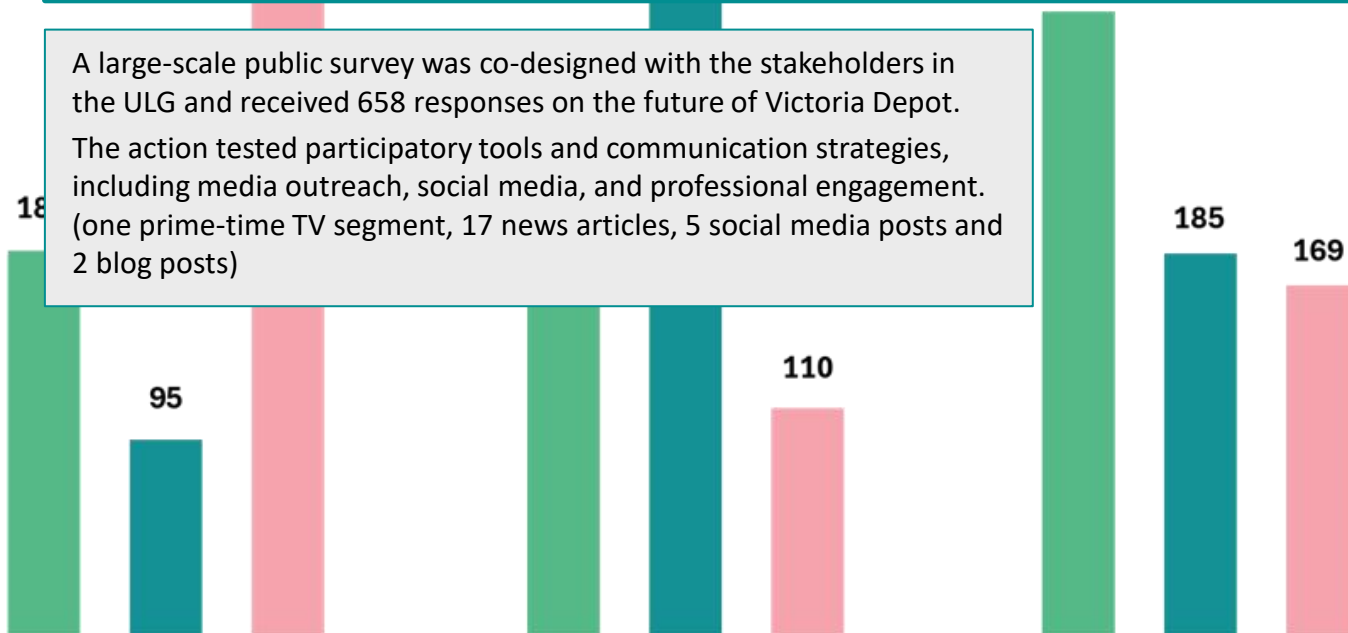


What our Project Partners say about it:

- *"It is very interesting to see how many different actions in our project we tested."*
- *"The survey organised by Bucharest: good result and interest in their site following it: give hope for our site."*
- *"Learning from Bucharest: Questionnaires should be short and precise: keeping people interested is not about money."*
- *"Onda's Children mural: perfect idea."*
- *"I like the mural: I will look for places for projects for kids in Limerick"*

Victoria Depot Survey, Bucharest

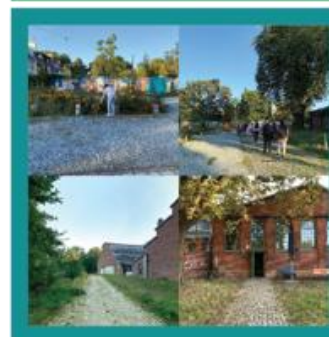
A large-scale public survey was co-designed with the stakeholders in the ULG and received 658 responses on the future of Victoria Depot. The action tested participatory tools and communication strategies, including media outreach, social media, and professional engagement. (one prime-time TV segment, 17 news articles, 5 social media posts and 2 blog posts)



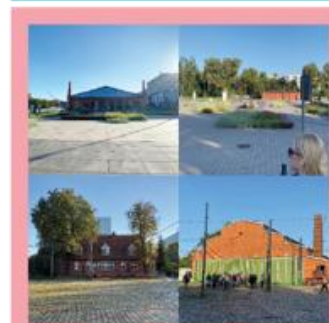
Rezultat final



Preferat



Mai puțin preferat



Cel mai puțin preferat



Community Clean up and Community Planting Day, Limerick

Intensive community clean up of the area in conjunction with a number of different LCCC Departments, Housing , Cleansing, Parks.

Area to be power washed , rubbish removed

Small green areas to be tidied and planted up with flowers by the local community.



Neues an der nudelei, Löbau

Presenting the concept of use

Letting people experience the ideas on site

Cooperation with numerous local stakeholders



Green Lung of Onda: Children's Mural Project, Onda

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds drew their ideas for the 'Green Lung' of Onda, expressing their visions through creative sketches.

Together, they selected the elements they wanted to feature in the final mural.



Green Leisure Zone near The Boiler House, Wrocław

Greenery inventory and site organisation.

Removal of the fence and creation of a barrier-free path.

Opening up the area around boiler house for recreational/integrative purposes, creating a place for other organizations to use.

Workshops on Creation of a community garden, rain garden and garden furniture.

Introduction of garden furniture, hammocks, garden sun shade sails, garden pavilion with lights, bicycle converted into flower bed.

Creation of a mural.

Utilisation of rainwater for plant irrigation.

Opening event for city residents and other stakeholders (including outdoor Cinema, entertainment for children and adults) which will be held on June 27.

8. STUDY VISITS

Study visit in Löbau

Covered topics:

- Regeneration of former industrial sites

Visited places:

- Landesgartenschau
- King Frederick
- Augustus Tower
- Schminke House by Hans Scharoun
- Noodle Factory



Study visit in Wroclaw

Covered topics:

- Green infrastructure and Nature-based Solutions
- Green solutions to the regeneration of parks

Visited places:

- The surroundings of st. Martin's church and A. Zienkiewicz's Boulevard
- Daliowa Island
- New Market Square
- Wroclaw Women Square (Skwer Wrocławianek)
- Dunikowskiego's Boulevard
- Slowackiego's Park
- Trees at Galeria Dominikańska and OVO hotel
- Sakwa Bastion (Bastion Sakwowy)
- Old Town Promenade and Old Town Garden (Ogród Staromiejski)
- Botanical Garden
- Eugeniusza Romera path
- Grabiszynski Park
- Krzycki Park
- Klecinski Park



9. THE URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

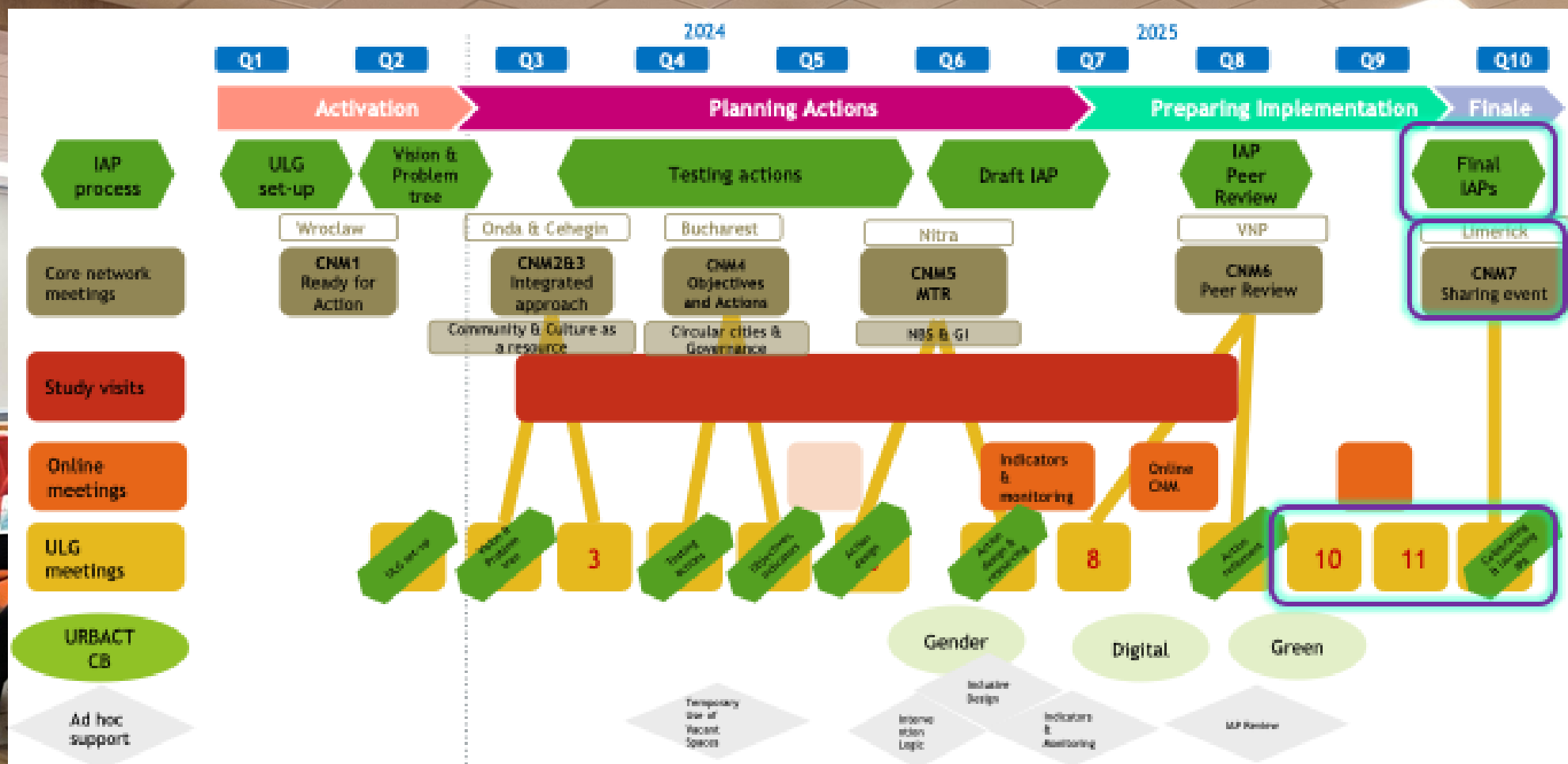






10. WHAT'S NEXT?

Where are we heading towards?



GreenPlace

Let's do it together!

Quarterly Network Report #6
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