

UPPER Latina

Issue #1 - December 2019

The first steps of the UIA Project



UPPER

URBAN PRODUCTIVE PARKS
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NBS RELATED
TECHNOLOGIES AND SERVICES



*Dear friends,
Welcome to our first e-newsletter dedicated to the UPPER Project.*

Happy reading!

UPPER Project TEAM

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The first steps of the UPPER Project

The UPPER project was officially launched on 1st September 2019 by the Lead Partner Municipality of Latina. Focused on the UIA Topic “**Sustainable Use of Land**”, UPPER will test an innovative use of urban green areas, by creating the first urban Productive Parks devoted to research, development and self-production of Nature Based Solutions (NBS) to tackle environmental, socio-economic and governance challenges. UPPER proposes a wider approach to the concept of NBS, which will include greenery and green infrastructures on one hand and innovative outdoor services and activities (social care, inclusive jobs, training, education, sports, creativity and entertainment) on the other hand.

The solution foresees the regeneration of three misused urban areas which will serve as Productive Parks, plus eight Demonstration Sites for the deployment and testing of the self-produced NBS (plants for phytoremediation of water and soil, indigenous trees to combat heat island effect and air pollution, filtering and reinforcing plants for soft engineering interventions on canal banks and coastal dunes).

The Productive Parks will be co-designed and co-managed by project partners with local citizens and stakeholders, while a People-Public-Private management scheme will be designed for their future maintenance and sustainability.

Furthermore, UPPER will test a collaborative initiative based on the participation of public and private landlords (the Green Areas Bank) to meet the demand and offer of the self-produced NBS. A job & skills programme for vulnerable citizens is integrated in the whole cycle of self-production, installation and provision of NBS to the city.

Finally, the project will support the creation of social enterprises and for profit startups to ensure market exploitation, further development and upscaling of the Productive Parks.

What is the main urban challenge that will be tackled by UPPER project?

The city of Latina is affected by multiple and interrelated urban challenges. In the past 50 years, the fast urbanization led to unregulated exploitation of common land and natural resources, with the establishment of dormitory neighbourhoods. The availability of accessible green areas per inhabitant is insufficient (12.6 sqm per person), the existing city parks are underused due to lack of security, adequacy and maintenance, while abundant wasteland and brownfield should be reconverted.

Additionally, the fragile ecosystem of city canals and rivers suffers from high concentration of water pollutants and hydrogeological risk due to the lack of maintenance. The city is also facing extreme weather events, such as heat waves and flash flooding, with several roads and bridges collapsing.

Furthermore, a wide range of socio-economic challenges arised, particularly long term unemployment and inactivity (the youth unemployment rate is 43%), brain drain towards other regions (70% of graduates leaving the province), illegal exploitation of migrants, social exclusion of both ethnic minorities (mainly Roma people) and persons with disabilities.

Shortage of public economic resources, lack of coordination among public and private actors as well as dispersion of specialized skills hamper the city's capacity to address ecosystems' recovery and long-term maintenance of its green and blue infrastructures.

What are our main goals?

Thanks to UPPER, the City of Latina will:

- increase availability, accessibility and inclusiveness of city public green areas;
- improve air and water quality in selected Demonstration Sites;
- decrease hydrogeological risk;
- decrease soil pollution;
- enhance citizens health and wellbeing;
- reduce social exclusion and risk of poverty for marginalized people;
- improve business development and marketability of NBS related products and services;
- improve local sustainable economic and cultural development;
- increase citizens participation, environmental awareness, sense of belonging and ownership of urban green spaces as a common good;
- enhance institutional capacity;
- increase self-sufficiency of the city in producing, installing and maintaining NBS;
- enhance multilevel governance, stakeholders coordination and planning capacity;
- enhance long term sustainability of urban green areas and infrastructures.

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What we will do. The project in numbers

- - 12,6 m2 of green areas for each inhabitant and 500.000 m2 of uncultivated land to be converted
- - 600 nature based solution (NBS) will be produced
- - 100.000 inhabitant will benefit from improved air quality, decreased heat island effect
- and flash floods risk, increased availability, accessibility and inclusiveness of city public green areas, as well as from the various social care, entertainment and green maintenance services
- delivered by the Productive Parks;
- - 10.000 students will benefit from the open air environmental education activities, social care and edutainment services
- - 50 unemployed people will have new job's opportunities.
- - 120 persons with disabilities will benefit from social assistance and cultural services.
- - 500 university students, would-be entrepreneurs, start up companies will join the development measures
- - 60 NGOs and neighborhood associations will be oinvolved
- - 20 neighboring municipalities, other institutions and organizations will share NBS

What are our key topics and who we will address

UPPER has identified 4 macro areas (**ENVIRONMENT, WELFARE, EMPLOYMENT, PARTICIPATION**) with 7 key topics:

1. Urban Green Qualities
2. Participative Management
3. Inclusive wealth
4. Training and Job opportunities
5. Education
6. Governance & Sustainability
7. Enterprise

The target groups

Through its awareness raising and dissemination activities UPPER will target:

- General public of citizens
- Neighborhood associations, NGOs representatives
- Potential users of the Productive Parks as volunteers, students, unemployed, migrants, persons with disabilities and their families
- Business sector representatives: SMEs, innovators, University graduates, social enterprises, start ups, venturers and investors, entrepreneurs associations
- Public decision makers at regional and national level

**Discover more in the UPPER Media channels
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NEWS FROM THE PROJECT

UPPER Project kick off meeting – 13/12/2019

On 13th December 2019 the Municipality of Latina will host the kick-off meeting of the UPPER Project. Preceded by a press conference, the UPPER KoM will foresee the general presentation of the project contents and of its partnership. It will then be followed by a networking meeting with the other 6 Italian UIA winning cities and by the first codesign workshop with the active participation of local stakeholders.

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