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NATURED

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

Newsletter no. 2

We're happy to share the second edition of the NATURED Newsletter! It contains the latest news, including project updates, team successes, latest events, and much more.

Project budget in EUR

1.269.913,13 €

INTERREG funding in EUR

1.079.426,13 €

Project duration

1.7.2024 - 31.12.2026.

Project is co-funded by the European Union through the Interreg IPA ADRION programme.

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...

NATURED's knowledge-sharing journey across the Adriatic-Ionian region

After the successful implementation of three transnational seminars in late 2024, the NATURED project has entered its next phase: local training seminars across partner cities. Between December 2024 and June 2025, more than 35 local seminars have been planned or already held in 11 cities across the Adriatic-Ionian region, reaching hundreds of participants including local authorities, professionals, educators, civil society organizations, and citizens.

The transnational seminars, focused on urban heat, flood risk, and planning tools for Nature-based Solutions (NbS), provided a common knowledge base for all partners. Building on this shared framework, local seminars were developed to reflect specific urban and environmental challenges and vulnerabilities in each city.

In **Faenza (Italy)**, seminars targeted both hill and lowland municipalities, focusing NbS approaches on flood risk and hydrogeological instability. **Niš (Serbia)** hosted five seminars, engaging planners, civil society organisations, and local officials in interactive discussions on climate adaptation and NbS. **Gostivar (North Macedonia)** focused on climate education with five thematic sessions targeting schools, civil servants, and public services, under the theme “Building for Tomorrow”.



Zrenjanin (Serbia) offered four seminars, exploring urban NbS for public services and administration. In **Tirana (Albania)** events focused on emergency planning and the use of digital tools for climate resilience, while in **Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)** international examples of green cities and standards for sustainable construction were explored, involving both students and professionals. **Larissa (Greece)** also launched seminar activities focusing on the challenges and solutions related to the flooding of urban areas.

Overall, the local seminars reached over 400 participants, enhancing climate awareness and supporting cities in shaping locally adapted Nature-based strategies, Nature-based strategies. They represent one important step within the NATURED project: by involving cities and communities directly, NATURED aims to support the development of Nature-based Solutions and contribute to building greener, more resilient urban areas across the Adriatic-Ionian region.

EU and local partners in action for more resilient Niš, Serbia

With valuable support from the EU Delegation to Serbia and the European House in Niš, the Regional Development Agency South implemented a series of local seminars as part of the transnational project NATURED – Nature-based Solutions for a Just Resilience in the Adriatic-Ionian Cities, funded by the Interreg IPA ADRION Programme, co-financed by the European Union.

Three out of five seminars were held at the premises of the European House in Niš, in February and March 2025, creating both a symbolic and practical link between local climate action and European values. A representative of the EU Delegation to Serbia, Antoine Avignon, also participated online in two events, where he addressed the relevance of the European Green Deal and its implementation in Serbia. Furthermore, the Delegation supported the promotion of the seminars through announcements on their official website, helping to raise visibility and encourage public engagement.

The events brought together citizens, local institutions, experts, and decision-makers to explore how nature-based solutions -such as green roofs, rain gardens, and permeable surfaces- can strengthen Niš's resilience to climate change impacts, particularly urban flooding and heatwaves.

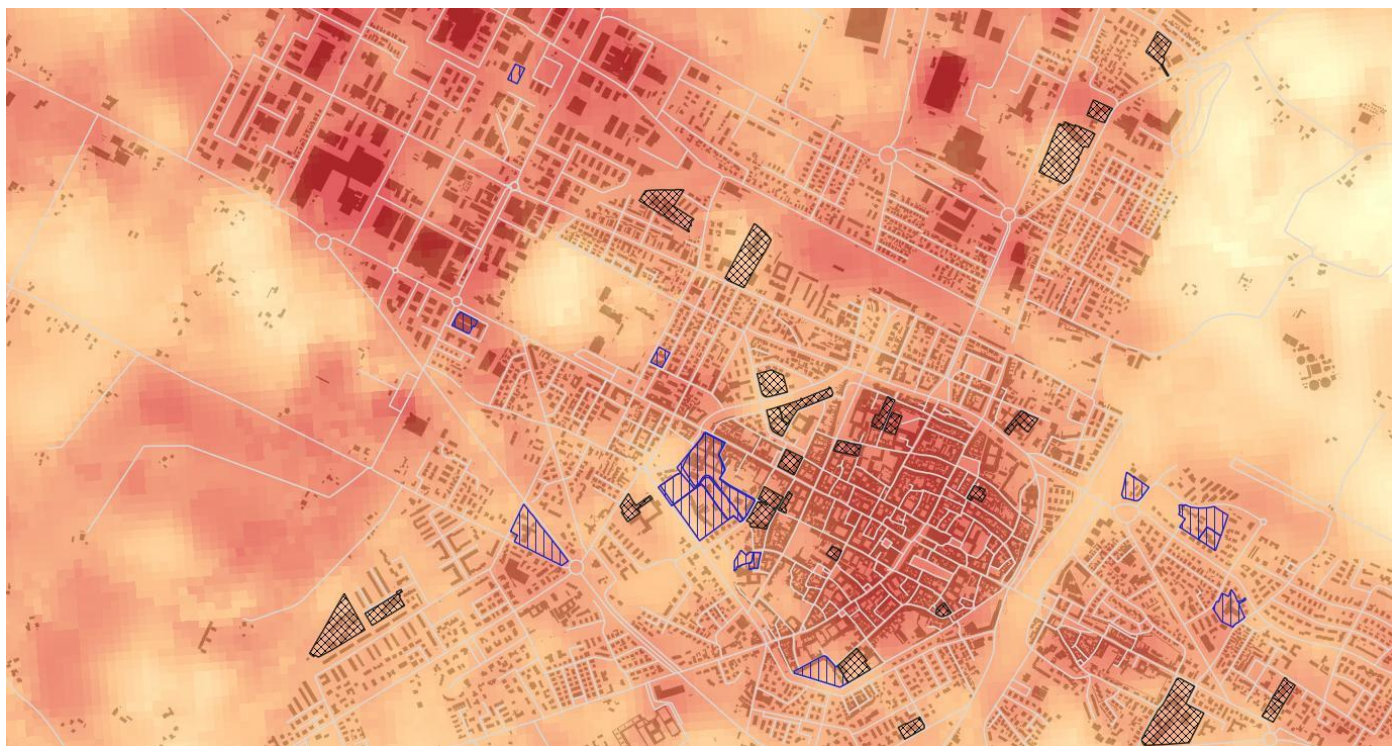


Participants emphasized that resilience is not only about infrastructure, it also relies on social cohesion, knowledge sharing, and inclusive participation. The seminars underscored the

importance of aligning local initiatives with broader European strategies, demonstrating how the EU supports green, inclusive, and climate-resilient development at the local level. Joint action-grounded in communication, coordination, and commitment was reaffirmed as essential for embedding nature-based solutions into urban development and building climate-resilient communities.

Creation of databases and digital maps for a climate characterization of the cities

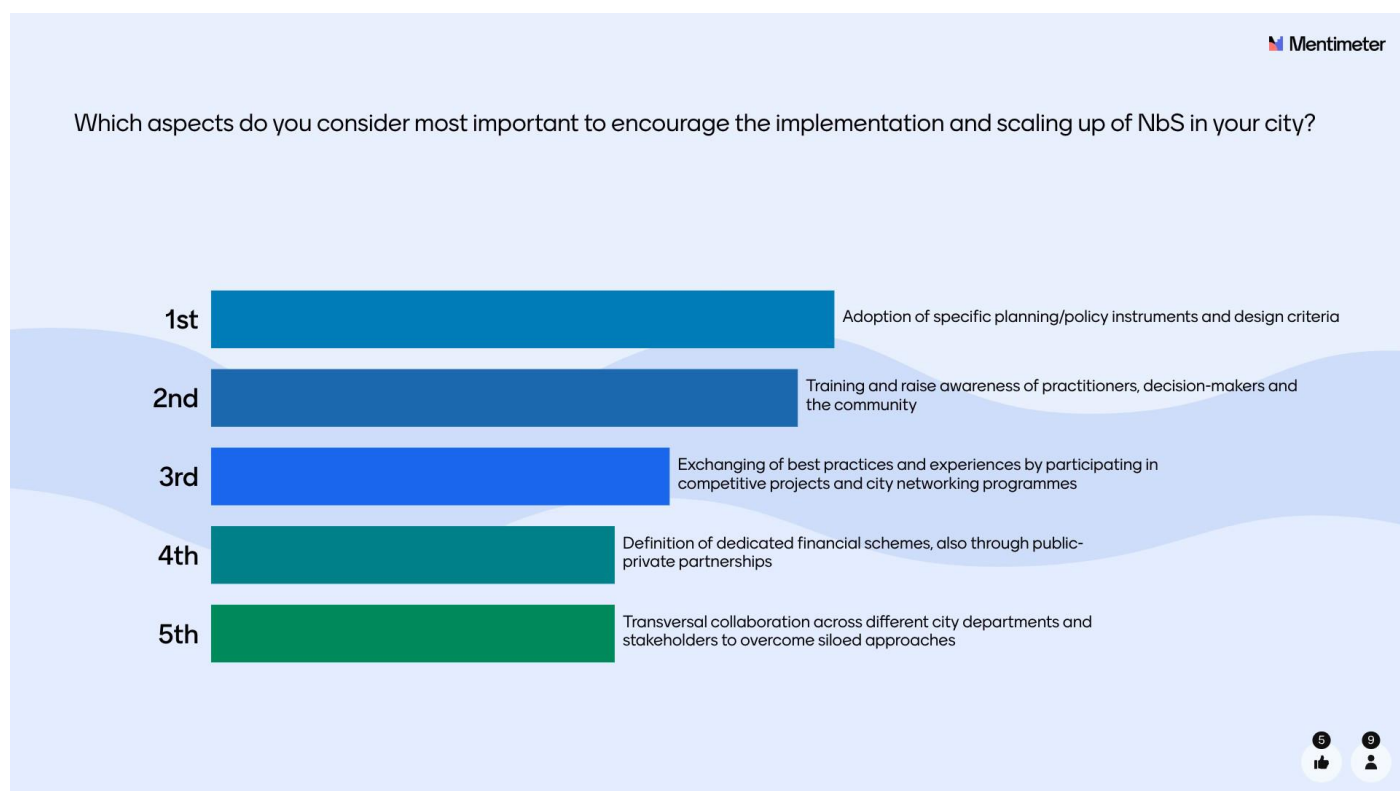
Starting from January 2025, the technical partner CORILA, in collaboration with all other project partners, has started collecting, harmonizing, and elaborating spatial data to build relevant information about urban structure and climate-related dynamics that may pose urban populations and assets at risk. Data collected comes from both open-source European/global platforms, such as the Copernicus platform and Landsat satellite mission, and local datasets, when available at the municipal level. These data are then used to develop digital maps that combine different spatial information and indicators to depict climate vulnerabilities and exposures in all partner cities, with particular attention to the issues of urban heat island and urban flooding due to extreme precipitation. The digital maps reveal which city areas are potentially more prone to suffer from these two climate-related effects because of vulnerability and exposure distributions, offering the municipal administrations a tool that can be used to analyse and showcase local adaptation needs, as well as to plan and prioritize interventions.



The figure above shows the distribution of satellite-derived land surface temperature in the central area of Faenza (Italy), which depicts how hot the surface of the objects on the Earth is. It comes with a yellow to red gradient that shows cold spots (yellow) and hot spots (red), superimposed with the location of some sensitive areas, such as healthcare facilities (in blue) and schools and kindergartens (in black).

Joint strategy to enhance the resilience of cities to climate change

Also stemming from evidence of the digital maps about climate-related vulnerabilities and exposures in the partner cities, CORILA is coordinating the development of a joint strategy for enhancing their resilience to the effects of climate change and extreme weather events, with a particular emphasis on the use of nature-based solutions as a sustainable climate adaptation approach. The strategy will provide a common vision and a set of mid-long-term goals towards a more resilient urban landscape that the partner cities are committed to achieving for a desirable future in which nature-based solutions play a major role in mitigating climate impacts and ameliorating the quality of life of citizens. It is being developed through periodical transnational meetings, knowledge exchanges, and discussions among the project partners, also with the involvement of local experts and stakeholders. This co-creation process will lead to the definition of key aspects and shared objectives to address in the strategy document that will be released in the coming months.



The figure above shows the response by the project partners to a question asked during the process of co-creation of the joint strategy, which will provide tangible inputs to inform the development of the strategy content.

Second NATURED F2F meeting – Gostivar, North Macedonia

The second in-person meeting of the project “NATURED – Nature-based solutions for a just resilience in the Adriatic-Ionian cities” took place on June 4th, 2025, at the Youth and Community Center in Gostivar, North Macedonia.

This meeting gave project partners the chance to meet face-to-face after a series of online sessions. It was a valuable moment to reflect on the progress made so far, complete the first two phases of work (WP1 and WP2), and begin planning the next steps (WP3).

The mayor of Gostivar, Mr. Valbon Limani, welcomed the participants, and Mr. Zudi Xhelili, a guest speaker, gave an overview of the impacts of climate change in North Macedonia. Project partners presented updates on ongoing work, including local training programs, city-level climate risk assessments, and a joint strategy to improve resilience in urban areas.



The next phase of the project was introduced by teams from Slovenia and Greece. A total of 31 people took part, with all project partners represented either in person or online.

During the meeting, the project's lead partner highlighted the need for stronger teamwork and better communication among all involved. All partners were encouraged to stay actively engaged as the project moves forward. Gostivar will continue to play an important role in helping shape climate adaptation efforts in the region



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