Webinar on Financing Greener Cities

Financing Greener Cities preparatory webinar
Tuesday 23 July 2019 - 14:00 to 16:00 (CET)
Organised by ICLEI

1. Welcome & introduction to the workshop (ICLEI/EKLIPSE) - See slides in the Annex

- Collaboration between EKLIPSE, ICLEI, NATURVATION, Municipality of Athens.
- Aim of the workshop: capacity building; connect science, policy and society; and cover topics related to biodiversity, ecosystem services and Nature-based Solutions (NBS).
- Date: 8-9th October 2019 in Athens (Serafio Centre).†
- Aim of the webinar: meet each other; prepare for the workshop; share knowledge; and understand better participants' needs and expectations (see programme of day 1& 2 in Annex).

2. Why is financing key for NBS? Presenting the NBS Financing Landscape (Naturvation)

- Financing for Urban NBS: sharing outputs from Naturvation
  - Naturvation is a Horizon 2020 4-year project working with 6 Urban Regional Innovation Partnerships (URIPs), including 14 European project partners (universities, municipalities...).
  - Goal: improve our understanding of the value of nature-based solutions (NBS), enabling innovation; enabling / upscaling nature-based solutions in urban areas.
  - The dynamics of 24 NBS case studies in the EU and internationally has been undertaken top-down and bottom-up qualitative research on urban NBS. This combination helps us to understand the integration of financing into urban development.

- One of the Naturvation outputs is the Urban Nature Atlas (UNA). Main results (read morehere):
  a. In most NBS domains local public authorities are the most common funding source, except for external building greens (corporate investment) and green indoor areas (v. small in general).
  b. Differences between ecological domains to value capture the financing for NBS as different NBS are amenable to different value capture and different businessmodels.

†See more at http://www.serafio.gr/ or contact info@serafio.gr.
c. Hybrid governance (and finance) is common practice...

- Some of the barriers to NBS financing were found in:
  - No convincing cash flows resulting from NBS.
  - Evidence of NBS effectiveness (impact) often missing.
  - NBS typically become cost-effective based on multiple benefits.
  - NBS compete for scarce (expensive) urban space.
  - NBS investments are often small scale and not standardized.
  - Health benefits of NBS exist, but health spending is usually not preventive.
  - Maintenance and monitoring more complex than grey infrastructure...

- In this sense, some of the (preliminary) pathways have been:
  - Measurement & accounting for NBS impact improves perceived value of NBS.
  - NBS as standardized component of real state development.
  - Reroute existing (local government) budgets to include NBS.
  - Develop public-private financing structures for risk sharing and capture of multiple benefits.
  - Facilitate community-based action & governance.

- Besides mainstreaming NBS in the finance, the team is continuing with this work to also mainstream the outputs in the political and regulatory fields (see i.e. https://bluelabel.net/En/).

Q & A:

- NBS effectiveness is not easy to identify - Is there any good practice/tool to promote and monitor this issue? Do you have any evaluation of how NBS contributes to different aspects?
- One of the NBS contributions focuses on a specific NBS (e.g. flooding, Newcastle). The aggregation is useful but it needs to be localised. Practitioners should be able to assess the NBS of the precise city and have an assessment framework to identify how the project on NBS contributes (see i.e the benefit assessment tool Urban Nature Index).

3. Assessing participants' needs and expectations via online polls (ICLEI)

ICLEI asked several questions through Slido to capture the answers to the following three questions:

1. What types of NBS are you most interested in? (see Figure1 below)
   Grey infrastructure with green features was the preferred option by 73% of the participants.
2. **What is your top challenges for financing NBS?**
Some of the answers included combining public budgets or public servants not being aware of the financing tools; political interests and priorities; ongoing maintenance; lack of understanding; accountability; fire hazards; and lack of resources (regulations, budget...).

3. **How do you finance NBS projects?** (see Figure 2 below)
Most responded with local funds (83%), together with regional and EU funds in the second place (70%).
4. Athens' NBS Efforts & the NCFF (Municipality of Athens, NCFF)

- **Athens Resilience Strategy NCFF & NBSs:**
  - The city’s strategy for 2030: Athens Resilience Strategy for 2030, developed with the support of 100 Resilient Cities - pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation - was officially launched in June 2017 and is framed by four pillars, 65 actions and 53 supporting actions.
  - The Athens Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Action plan was produced through the collaboration between C40 and 100RC.
  - Athens Resilient Vision implies that “by 2030 Athens strives to be a responsive, embracing and inspirational city that is proud, green and citizen-led. Athens nurtures creativity and innovation, creating prototypes of belonging, bridging history and progress. Athens is a city that listens and speaks with the world.”
  - Green City Pillar: 70% of green and open spaces owned by the city (limited available land for new green areas). There is a plan to expropriate private owned lands to:
    - Integrate natural systems into the urban fabric
    - Make the city cleaner
    - Promote sustainable mobility and co-create public spaces
    - Foster sustainable food systems
    - Establish sustainable and equitable energy system
  - Resilience Athens Strategy – Climate Change related Shocks (Heat waves, flash floods, poor air quality). The period 2005-2014 Athens experienced 32 days per year with daily maximum temperature over 35°C.
○ Spatial analysis of surface temperatures and income distribution: The hottest parts of the city were along the northern and western edges of the city at 2016 heat wave. Cooler parts of the city tend to congregate around the city’s larger green spaces. Lower income areas are more affected by the heat. This strategy also approaches to social, economic depression and holistically, technicalities, design...

○ Greener infrastructure in school complexes and courtyards - based on the Resilience strategy, the city has also gained a 55 mil. loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB): Resilient Athens and Integrated Development, which among others, includes the expropriation of building lots and the energy upgrade, climate adaptation measures and earthquake protection of 5 municipal buildings, including schools.

○ EIB offered 1 mil. Technical Assistance for 2 projects:
  ■ NCFF Natural Capital Financing Facility TA (open spaces) - 5 million (LIFE)
  ■ URBIS TA (5 municipal buildings)

○ The project list includes:
  ■ Lycabettus Hill
  ■ Green corridor Lycabettus-Strefi Hill
  ■ Eleonas- Plato’s Academy Area
  ■ Square of the Greek Worker (Labrini area)

○ Pilot project Cool Neighbourhoods and C40 City Solutions Platform - Athens is looking to utilize existing municipal buildings like schools and abandoned building lots to transform them into green spaces to improve the city’s microclimate. Ultimately, the solution should be holistic, incorporating multiple aspects such as lowering energy consumption and increase food resilience.

○ One of the most special green areas in Athens is the Athens Historical National Garden that includes the Digital Tree Inventory.

Q & A:

- For those non pilot projects, did you implement local regulations to replicate already started projects? Guidelines are not always applied until they become regulations. Without the law, Romania e.g., has difficulties to implement projects.
  ○ All the projects involving neighbourhoods and replicability address obstacles to be able to have a documented report on how to move forward with better regulations on NBS. The Cool Neighbourhood and the City Solutions Platforms are indirect processes bypassing bureaucracy (e.g. studies, tender documents to be passed, partnerships’ approval, etc.) to both finance these projects and make the implementation easier.
• Maybe Athens partners can attend the workshop to be there in person to answer to your questions face-to-face.

• Even when the regulations regarding green spaces and the infrastructure are there, the problem tends to be the implementation part, and to know how to monitor these processes. In Athens the Resilience Officer became Deputy Mayor for climate change adaptation (2018) and helped to deal with these issues holistically, internally and externally. Cities need to work politically and bureaucratically.

• During the general elections, green spaces and infrastructure were already one of the top subjects in the politicians’ agendas. Some of the campaigns included tackling waste management involving citizens’ routines.

• A new law in the Municipality of Alexandroupolis allowed the involvement of citizens and experts to participate in the elaboration of the projects. The problem is that for the smallest communities, most of the times there is no capacity on the ground to form a nominal consortia, so that all the funding has to be channelled through official channels, and thus, this process faces bureaucratic challenges.

• The capacity building in smaller towns is a challenge: the staff does not necessarily speak the language of sustainability. There is a tendency to follow what comes from above (top-down approach).

• Need to identify new pathways to identify infrastructure challenges from scratch to build resilient strategies.

• Cities need incentives (with financial dynamics) for these types of plans and strategies. This can be voted by the Board and then applied in the cities.

• The workshop does not need to base only on big cities, but also in smaller cities.

5. Summarising needs & expectations, closing (ICLEI)

• Financing tools such as those designed for municipalities to increase their resilience in climate change in a wide range of infrastructure could be included in the workshop. Also bigger portfolios to reach out to more people making sense of the interventions.

• What is the criteria to identify whether this contributes to the city to make a difference and what are the boundaries in terms of the population?

• When planning green infrastructure and identifying its benefits, we may lack of the indicators for developers. Hence, analysing best practices of cities for private and public investors would be useful.

• It would be great to share and understand what others do with regard to the institutional structure, legislations and their singular contexts - an assessment of benefits on how these can be transformed into capital, besides dealing with health and tackling climate change.
Several greening projects in urban planning are mainly funded by public money, so how is it possible to find arguments addressing common welfare (including neighbourhoods, vulnerable groups, public buildings...) to raise their value not only monetarily, but in our lives. How do we measure this at the European level addressing the SDGs?

- Maintenance costs / financing maintenance of NBSs & green infrastructure; monitoring and assessment tools for NBS (Naturvation) should also be taken into account.

Next steps:

- If you are eligible for travel reimbursement, please make sure you read carefully the Reimbursement Form before submitting your documents so that ICLEI can proceed with the payments.
- Read current version of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). If new questions arise, this document will be updated. You can find the current document in the Financing Greener Cities section of the ICLEI website (end of the page). Before asking, please make sure whether your question(s) is already answered or not in the FAQ document.
- ICLEI asked participants to mention by July 28th if they would NOT like their email address details to be shared with the rest of the (webinar and workshop) participants. ICLEI did not receive any request.
- For further updates, please follow the ICLEI website.
Financing Greener Cities

Preparatory webinar

23rd July 2019 – starting at 14:00
Who are we?

Team:

• Mr. Alexandru Matei - alexandru.matei@iclei.org

• Ms. Bettina Wilk - bettina.wilk@iclei.org

• Mr. Matthew Bach - matthew.bach@iclei.org

• Ms. Intza Balenciaga - intza.balenciaga@iclei.org
What is it?

• Capacity building event

• Linking science, policy and society

• Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Nature-based Solutions
How is this financed?

• The event is funded by multiple sources including ICLEI European Secretariat, EKLIPSE Mechanism and NATURVATION project and Municipality of Athens.

• EKLIPSE Mechanism has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 690474.

• The NATURVATION project is funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 730243.
Objectives of the Webinar:

• meet each others

• prepare for the workshop

• share some knowledge

• understand better participants' needs and expectations

• next steps
Webinar Agenda:

• 14:00 Welcome & introduction

• 14:15 Presenting the NBS Financing Landscape

• 14:45 Assessing participants' needs and expectations - polls

• 15:15 Athens' NBS Efforts & the NCFF

• 15:45 Summarizing needs & expectations;

• 15:50 Q&A; Comments
• 16:00 End of webinar
Workshop:

• 40-50 participants

• 20 Countries:
  • Estonia → Spain
  • United Kingdom → Georgia
Workshop:

• 8 & 9 October – Athens (Greece)

• Sarafio Center (Sport, Culture & Innovation) [www.serafio.gr](http://www.serafio.gr)

• [At this hyperlink you can see the location in Google Maps.](http://www.serafio.gr)
Workshop Draft Programme Day 1:

• 11:00 – Registration & Introduction

• 13:00 – Lunch

• 14:00 – Most urgent financing challenges – presentation & interactive discussion

• 16:00 – Financial landscape for investing in biodiversity, ESS & NBS projects

• 17:30 – Plenary discussions
Workshop Draft Programme Day 2:

• 9:00 – Making the case for investing in biodiversity, ESS and NBS
• 11:30 – Financial arrangements & blended financing I
• 13:30 – Lunch
• 14:30 – Financial arrangements & blended financing II
• 16:30 – Conclusions
Successful Workshop:

• Result of the involvement of all participants

• Make the most of this opportunity

• Be active

• Enjoy!
Next Steps:

• Read **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

• Read the **Reimbursement Form & conditions**

• Follow the website **http://bit.ly/financinggreenercities**
Next Steps:

• By 5 August – ICLEI:
  • Webinar report & polls
  • Webinar recording
  • Practical info Athens
  • List of participant (with emails ➔ request NOT to until 28 July)
Next Steps:

• September – new information - ICLEI

• 8-9 October – Workshop in Athens

• by 8 of November- payment request & supporting documentation
Questions?
Thank you for your attention!