

# DELIVERABLE D.T3.3.4

## REPORT OF PILOT ACTION OF URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL ACUPUNCTURE

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Alessandria

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Fabrizio Furia, Angelo A. Ranzenigo, Jody Marco Abate, Giuseppe Zicari





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## 1. Introduction

The SALUTE4CE pilot action in Alessandria envisages the design of strategies for applying the principles of environmental acupuncture in urban areas. The principles are carried out with small, low-cost interventions on four small areas, with the aim of improving the quality of city green spaces through the creation of islands of native plants adapted to climate change.

The interventions stem from the desire to shift the focus of public greenery from "ornamental greenery", which is not fundamental, to "functional greenery", with the aim of regenerating four degraded places through ecological-functional, socio-cultural, economic, urban planning and aesthetic-perceptive criteria.



Four different actions called "The urban orchard", "The refuge forest", "City's green lung" and "Greenery in the city centre" have been implemented.

These actions include small requalification interventions, through the planting of plant species, which, in addition to improving the quality of life of citizens, make a useful contribution to increase biodiversity, reduce the heat island effect and decrease soil degradation.

The four green areas in the pilot action also offer opportunities for social cohesion, increase the possibilities for environmental education, improve the health and well-being of residents (e.g. outdoor recreation for young people) and increase the value of the urban areas.

The SALUTE4CE project is therefore part of a broader vision of improving the quality of the city's urban spaces, which has long been promoted by the municipal administration.

## 2. Summary description of the pilot action

The pilot action in Alessandria is structured in four different actions called "The urban orchard", "The refuge forest", "City's green lung" and "Greenery in the city centre":

2.1. The urban orchard: via De Gasperi - via Galvani, coordinates 44° 54'02.611 N - 8° 37'120.511 E. The area is a portion of approximately 1.600 m<sup>2</sup> of flat grassy plot, rectangular in shape, located on the corner of the intersection between via De Gasperi and via Galvani, in the Europa district. On the west side of the area is the Villaggio Europa primary school. The area has long been uncultivated and unequipped. The soil was clayey with a high-water retention capacity. Thanks to the project fruit trees and sowing wildflower mixtures has been planted, for the benefit of pollinating insects. Moreover benches, litter bins, a fence, notice boards and information signs were installed.









2.2. 2.2 The refuge forest: via Benedetto Croce, coordinates 44° 55'103.611N - 8° 37'142.511E. This urban functional area is a not perfectly flat grassy plot, of irregular shape, which extends for about 1.225 m<sup>2</sup>. This area is separated by a large concrete strip which is in front of the Morando Primary Institute. The soil is clayey with a high-water retention capacity. Trees and berry bushes has been planted, which are be able to support wild birdlife. Benches, litter bins, a fence, notice boards and information signs were installed.











2.3. City's green lung: via Teresa Michel, coordinates 44° 55'17.21"N - 8° 37'42.81"E.

2.3. This urban functional area is a rectangular grassy plot, flat in the centre and with depressions at the edges, of approximately 2.000 m<sup>2</sup>. The soil is clayey with a high water retention capacity. The area is bounded to the south by a tree-lined pedestrian and cycle path, and to the north by the extension of the Urban Cemetery of Alessandria. Tall, native trees with thermoregulatory and air-purifying functions has been planted. Benches, litter bins, a fence, sport equipment, notice boards and information signs were installed.













#### 2.4. Greenery in the city centre: coordinates 44° 54'48.21"N - 8° 36'58.11"E

The area of interest is widespread as the project involves the redevelopment of dozens of flower boxes in all the main streets of the centre of Alessandria. The historical centre is in fact characterised by a very low density of vegetation, due to the almost total lack of green areas. The project has foreseen the redevelopment of small planters in the city centre of Alessandria to house native shrubs and Mediterranean shrubs.

Different types of plants have been used in order to compare their ability to resist the effects of climate change and urbanisation.

The pilot action is included in the project's Investment I3 with a total cost of € 109.800,00.





### 3. Expected impact and benefits of the pilot action for the concerned territory and target groups and leverage of additional funds

The investment demonstrates how traditional restoring solutions and adoption of new technologies can be both addressed at the revitalization of small green urban areas, according to the UEA and respecting the continuity of the FUAs green infrastructure.

The pilot action has contributed to the creation of attractive public spaces by revitalization of 3 semi-abandoned areas and 1 large area in the city centre for the installation of about 100 planters equipped for environmental monitoring.

The investment contributed to the project specific objective 2 and 3, as it recovered sites regarding environmental management through native vegetation and contributed to the protection of land resources by rehabilitation of damaged areas.

The analysis of the air pollution filtering benefit by the planters can facilitate the spreading of new technologies in other cities participating in the project.

The investment is presenting a mixing of traditional restoring solution and adoption of new technologies, both addressed at the revitalization of Alessandria FUA.

Through the involvement of stakeholders, the Municipality of Alessandria proceeded to the selection of the four functional urban areas and, in coherence with the project methodology conceived through the European partnership, proceeded to the analysis of the environmental criticalities of the city's urban areas and disseminated the scientific data through the promotion of meeting occasions with direct stakeholders.



The representatives of the Municipality, after carrying out inspections and assessing the context and feasibility of possible restoration work, selected eleven sites potentially suitable for the application of urban green acupuncture. By processing the data collected

during the meetings with the stakeholder and integrating them with the data from the scientific surveys, the Municipality of Alessandria proceeded to define the four action plans to be applied on the FUAs.

Following this preliminary phase, the final choice of sites and projects was made with the approval of stakeholders, through information sharing and public stakeholder consultation.

#### **4. Sustainability of the pilot action results and transferability to other territories and stakeholders.**

The management of green areas is complex and requires specific planning and management tools, in order to give substance to enhancement and protection policies. For this purpose, three sector instruments have been identified for the management of urban green areas: Census, Regulation, Plan.

One of the main objective of Salute4CE project was the implementation of a specific

Action Plan for Alessandria context: this Plan is fundamental for the elaboration and updating of the municipal Green Plan.

The municipal Green Plan is established by municipal resolution, is a tool designed to create the green system in the urban environment and provides a medium-long term strategic approach.

The municipal Plan:

- Identifies the responsible persons;
- Provides for the type of interventions and their frequency;
- Indicates how to involve stakeholders, in particular schools and volunteers;
- Indicates the financial resources dedicated after the end of the project;
- Indicates whether private sponsorships is possible.

The Green Plan promotes the collaboration between citizens, enterprises and administrations to carry out activities for the care and regeneration of the urban commons and can be easily replicated in other territories and by other administrations.



In this context, a crucial role is played by the training of operators, the communication of the project results and the active involvement of citizens in the shared management and enhancement of green areas.

## 5. Lessons learned and added value of transnational cooperation of the pilot action implementation

The decision to plan, design, build and maintain green infrastructures according to 'sustainable management' criteria must be shared with local communities, in order to give them an overall vision of the objectives set and how to achieve them. A crucial issue for public administrations in managing their relationship with citizens is external communication, which has to be simple, correct and constantly updated, in order to avoid problems linked to citizens' dissent and to make them participate in the management of public goods. The promotion of public green policies allows to stimulate the development of good practices by citizens and to obtain an improvement in the management of private green areas as well.



The SALUTE4CE project is integrated in the activities of public green promotion, citizens' involvement and environmental dissemination carried out by the Municipality of Alessandria, the Botanical Garden and environmental associations such as RNA (Associazione Natura e Ragazzi).

Urban green spaces can become opportunities for experimenting with innovative forms of management by involving public and/or private bodies with the aim of redevelopment and/or experimental research. Entrusting experimental organisations with some green areas or areas that are state-owned would allow research activities to be carried out in the vicinity of their premises, while at the same time promoting the control and sustainable management of the green areas. In addition, there are many initiatives to entrust green areas to the

management of citizens, through which the citizens themselves, generally gathered in associations, take care of the green area.

#### **6. Contribution to/ compliance with:**

- relevant regulatory requirements
- sustainable development - environmental effects. In case of risk of negative effects, mitigation measures introduced

The municipal Administration of Alessandria implements a punctual management of public green areas in line with the dictates of the programmatic framework regulated by:

- National Law 11 February 1992, n. 157 “Regulations for the protection of homeothermic wild fauna and for hunting collection”;
- Legislative Decree 22 January 2004, n. 42 “Code for cultural heritage and landscape”;
- National Law 14 January 2013, n. 10 “Regulations for the development of urban green spaces”.

Salute4CE project and, in particular, Salute4ce Action Plan, gives crucial contribution to the production and implementation of the Municipal Urban Green Regulation through:

- Management and maintenance of small green areas;
- Preparation of green regulations;
- Promotion of the national tree day;
- Census of municipal trees;
- Protection and safeguarding of monumental trees;
- Compliance with “one tree for every newborn child (art. 2 of Law 10/13 amending Law 113/92)”;
- Green Balance Report;
- Shared management of urban green spaces;
- Census of municipal green areas (art. 2 paragraph 1 letter c and art. 6 paragraph 4 of Law 10/13).





Far-sighted planning and programming of green areas and their maintenance can make the difference between living well in a city or living badly. In many ways: in terms of health, liveability, sociality and increasing the resilience of cities, i.e. the ability of an urban area to react to increasingly violent and destructive climatic phenomena.

SALUTE4CE project intervenes in public space by using it as a tool to foster connections and new opportunities for confrontation for the societies, aiming to counteract the tendency towards isolation and exclusion.

Urban green is a vehicle for wellbeing thanks to the eco-systemic services provided by nature, such as landscape improvement and contributions of a social, recreational and functional nature.

A green revolution in city planning and design would bring significant benefits to the community, which is why the creation of green urban areas should be increasingly encouraged.

Reclaiming those spaces made of earth and greenery unconsciously takes us back to our deepest origins. Creativity and manual dexterity are developed, the brain is relaxed in a



completely new and satisfying serenity. This internal relaxation also helps social relations and the desire to be with others, which is why urban acupuncture aimed at improving public green spaces can be an effective strategy for achieving many positive effects in the cities where we live.