



PROJECT PARTNERS MET IN BOLZANO & MERANO, ITALY, BETWEEN APRIL 9TH AND 11TH 2024 FOR THE FIFTH PROJECT MEETING AND THIRD COLLABORATIVE CIPEL WORKSHOP.



The JUSTNature Consortium at the EURAC Research Headquarter, during the first day of the 5th Project Meeting in Bolzano, Italy, on the 9th of April 2024.

In April 2024, partners of the JUSTNature project met in person in the cities of Bolzano and Merano, Italy, to attend to the 5th Joint Project Meeting and 3rd Collaborative CiPeL Workshop. Throughout the course of three days, representatives from JUSTNature's seven cities and partner organisations exchanged experiences and views on the implementation of the project, including updates from the different work groups and reflections on the next steps to come.

## DAY 1

Hosted by our partner EURAC Research, the three-day event kicked off on April 9th with the **5th Project Meeting**. In the morning, project partners received a warm welcome by the **Mayor of Bolzano, Renzo Caramaschi**, who celebrated the existence of the JUSTNature project and highlighted the importance of defining clear targets and measurements for cities, in order to better understand where we stand and what our plans and policies aim to achieve. The Consortium also received **Chiara Rabini**, Council Member of Bolzano and Advisor for topics such as Environment and Integration Policies. Rabini gave us an overview of Bolzano's current Green Plan and made emphasis on the significance of the social impact of

the JUSTNature project. She also expressed how valuable the collaboration with EURAC Research is for the city.



The meeting then carried on with a presentation by the Project Coordinator Sonja Gantioler, who introduced us to the main topic of the Project Meeting: **What Key Innovative Results to Exploit and How?** In line with the project's current phase, she focused on the identification of **Key Exploitable Results (KERs)** that arise from the implementation of innovative practices and guided us through the questions of how and when the solutions we are currently working on can be best scaled-up and disseminated. Her presentation also addressed matters of **Ethics and Integrity** in the dissemination of those KERs.

The day continued with a comprehensive review of the current state of the project from the different work packages, including updates on the progress made by each of them since the last Project Meeting. The EURAC Research team shared the perspective of the Coordination team and Inlecom, in turn, gave us insights on **Innovation Management**, introducing the best strategies to identify and exploit outcomes of the project that go beyond state-of-the-art. The Strategic Planning Method-Kit for Ecological Justice **JUSTPlanT** was also presented by the EURAC Research team: this practical guide aims to facilitate collaborative and participatory processes in the design and planning of Nature based Solutions (NbS). Then, **Monitoring Strategies** for specific indicators and measurements were discussed by ABUD, the Technical University of Crete and EURAC Research, who reported on their efforts in life-cycle cost analysis, assessment of the impact of NbS and strategic decision support tools. Their presentation was followed by an **interactive session** with City Practice Lab (CiPeL) representatives on the project's Monitoring Framework, where, among other topics, the categorisation and calculation of indicators was addressed.

Integrated Environmental Solutions (IES), ABUD and the Technical University of Crete shared updates on the development of the simulation processes and the project's **Digital Twins**, as well as the deployment of the governance platform for NbS. This development will not only provide a 3D georeferenced analysis for CiPeLs to assess the cities in terms of outdoor thermal comfort but will also allow them to simulate the impact of future interventions. Then, Inlecom, Crowdhelix and EURAC Research presented the key

results and activities carried out for the engagement of local entrepreneurs and businesses, in view of launching the project's **Entrepreneurial Activation Process**, developing the cities' business models into business plans and promoting a commercial ecosystem that helps local governments to overcome financial barriers faced in the implementation of NbS. An interactive session on Financing and New Business Models opened the discussion and gave space for CiPeL representatives to exchange on the topic.

Next, E2ARC provided a summary of the current **state of the implementation process** of NbS in the CiPeLs, with an assessment of the implementation frameworks as well as the different tendering processes. Together with Prospex Institute and the ISOCARP Institute, they also updated us on the past and planned **cross-learning activities** between CiPeLs and their twin cities, with reflections on ways to improve the reporting methodologies used for these workshops. The presentation was followed by insights from the CiPeL representatives, who reported on the main progress made in their cities throughout the past six months.



## DAY 2

The second day of the Project Meeting started with a presentation made by Crowdhelix, University of Malta and the ISOCARP Institute, where a review of the on-going **communication and dissemination** activities was shared. The partners discussed engagement strategies to reach larger specific audiences and thus better disseminate the outcomes of the JUSTNature project. Then, Prospex Institute presented the key activities and advances made in the last six months regarding the strategy, planning and **operationalisation of City Practice Labs**, including outcomes and lessons learned from Local Stakeholder Workshops, review of project timelines and overall evaluation of the CiPeLs. Their session was followed by insights from the Technical University of Munich, ABUD and the ISOCARP Institute, informing the progress made on the topic of **co-governance of NbS**. They focused on diverse strategies to implement both top-down and bottom-up co-governance approaches, providing methodological tools, recommendations and guidelines for CiPeLs.

Afterwards, Prospex Institute, the Technical University of Munich, E2ARC and the Technical University of Crete held a **Learning Log** session. In it, they reflected on the main take-aways and challenges faced

by the CiPeLs in the NbS design and implementation, such as difficulties in the procurement process and the work with indicators, as well as obstacles in community engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships. The 5th Project Meeting concluded with a series of **three parallel sessions** on the topics of Digital Twins (held by IES), Administrative and Financial Topics (moderated by EURAC Research), and Open Access Practices (held by University of Malta and Technical University of Crete) respectively. Participants had the chance to choose to which presentation to attend, according to their particular needs or interests.

### 3RD COLLABORATIVE CIPEL WORKSHOP

The afternoon gave way to the **3rd Collaborative CiPeL Workshop (CCW)**, where representatives from the project's six City Practice Labs came together to exchange experiences and share valuable insights related to the implementation of the JUSTNature project. In a first session led by Prospex Institute, our partners from Gzira (Malta), Leuven (Belgium), Munich (Germany), Chania (Greece), Merano & Bolzano (Italy), and Szombathely (Hungary) were invited to share personal reflections on several topics in a collective discussion. Some of the questions that opened the debate were:

- Which new skills have you acquired since the start of the JUSTNature project and your involvement in it?
- What obstacles and difficulties have you faced throughout the deployment of the project?
- Which skills would you still like to gain in the remaining time in which the JUSTNature project is implemented?

During the thought-provoking exchange, partners highlighted the importance of having incorporated a sense of justice sensitivity and **social justice** throughout the deployment of the project, as well as having gained insights into Nature-based Solutions and technical knowledge about key performance indicators, among other concepts. When examining difficulties, many encountered similarities in their cities and shared thoughts on the sometimes difficult process of engaging with local stakeholders and inspiring their communities to be more actively involved in the project. It was also a great occasion for partners to share their enthusiasm: being able to gather with representatives from other CiPeLs inspires and encourages the team to continued efforts on this path, knowing that others may face the same difficulties as them, and that many answers can be found collectively.

A second workshop, moderated by ABUD, took place in the afternoon. The main topic of the session was **Nature-building Communities (NbC)**, and this time CiPeL representatives gathered in two groups to engage in **Serious Games**. Focusing on a city-wide scope in one group and on a site-specific scope in the other one, partners went through the experience of behaving, interacting and solving problems in a NbC from the perspective of diverse actors involved or affected by the implementation of NbS and the specific CiPeL interventions. They were therefore able to identify problems from a new perspective and gain a better understanding of different positionalities, as well as examining how compromises between them can be reached. The workshop paved the way for CiPeLs to later conduct the 4th Local Stakeholder Workshop in their cities and be able to implement these Serious Games with stakeholders in their own contexts.



The day concluded with the presentation 'Garden Cities: the role of botanical gardens', held by **Richard Piacentini**, president and CEO of Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, one of the US' oldest and largest conservatories. Piacentini provided an overview of Phipps' work, starting from the construction of one of the first LEED certified visitor centres in Botanical Gardens in the world, and focusing on their sustained efforts and commitment to sustainability in the construction of botanical gardens and energy efficient buildings. He introduced us to The Climate Toolkit and to the seven principles of Regenerative Thinking, inspiring tools to enrich our work at the JUSTNature project.

### DAY 3

The second day of the 3rd Collaborative CiPeL Workshop and last day of our meeting took us to Merano, where project partners visited the **city's pilot site: Garden for All**. Merano's intervention there aims at protecting the historic tree population and biodiversity as well as testing a new concept for public green spaces on the site. Partners had the chance to experience the garden themselves, appreciating the vegetation and discussing its influence on the site's temperature, which will be properly measured thanks to the temperature sensors that the city of Merano will install in the pilot site. With this equipment, the project will be able to gather valuable data and thus measure the impact of the intervention with relevant indicators.



In the afternoon, the delegation went to Merano's Town Hall to continue with the last part of the CCW, after being welcomed by Deputy Mayor and Environmental Officer **Katharina Zeller**. During a first session led by Prospex Institute, CiPeL representatives were invited to reflect on their implementation timelines, looking into their planned upcoming activities and focusing on detecting current and possible future bottlenecks in the implementation process of the JUSTNature project. After discussing among themselves, partners revised what had been written by other CiPeLs and proposed suggestions as to how to overcome challenges faced by others, based on their own experiences. The exchange allowed them not only to better understand other CiPeLs circumstances, but also to learn from them. In a last session, the floor was open for an unstructured discussion where remaining personal doubts and concerns were addressed, looking into the way forward and the next steps for the months to come.

The workshop wrapped up successfully with the announcement of the celebration of the 6th Project Meeting, to be held in Gzira (Malta).

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